

55th ANNUAL MARGARET S. MAHLER SYMPOSIUM ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT



Optimizing Early Development

The Mahler Symposium brings together researchers and clinicians whose work focuses on how to best facilitate early child development. Some of the matters to be addressed are how to best guide and foster successful early relationships, what beneficial developmental experiences may help protect against trauma and compromised development, and what therapeutic means can help to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of trauma. Leaders in the field will present and compare the latest data on these subjects.

Presenters:

Daniel Schechter, MD
Angela Narayan, PhD, LP
Claudia M. Gold, MD

Discussants

Jack Novick, MA, PhD &
Kerry Kelly Novick, FIPA
Jordan Bate, PhD

Moderator

Lawrence D. Blum, MD



SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2026
8:40 AM TO 1:00 PM EDT
VIA ZOOM



\$100 for Admission
\$30 for Full-Time Students, Residents,
& Candidates



4 CE/CMEs Available

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PROGRAM SCHEDULE

THE EVENT IS IN EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME (EDT).

8:40 AM	Welcome & Introduction - PCOP Staff Julia Seixas Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia
8:45 AM	Welcome & Introduction - William M. Singletary, MD President, Margaret S. Mahler Child Development Foundation, and Faculty, Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia
8:50 AM	Welcome & Introduction - Lawrence D. Blum, MD Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Adjunct in Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania; Faculty, Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia
9:00 AM	<i>Interrupting Passage of Traumatic Memories from One Generation to the Next in Early Childhood: Implications for Parent-Child Psychotherapy</i> - Daniel Schechter, MD Associate Professor of Psychiatry (in Child & Adolescent Psychiatry), Lausanne University Faculty of Biology and Medicine, Lausanne, Switzerland
9:40 AM	<i>Benevolent Childhood Experiences (BCEs) and Angels in the Nursery as Resilience Factors to Counteract Intergenerational Trauma</i> - Angela Narayan, PhD, LP Associate Professor in the Clinical Child Psychology PhD program in the Department of Psychology at the University of Denver
10:20 AM	Discussion with Panelists & Audience
10:45 AM	Break - 15 Minutes
11:00 AM	<i>Inside Ordinary Moments of Meeting: Lessons in Early Relational Health from Infants and Caregivers</i> - Claudia M. Gold, MD Pediatrician, Early Relational Health Specialist
11:40 AM	Jack Novick, MA, PhD & Kerry Kelly Novick, FIPA Authors of Freedom to Choose, Working With Parents Makes Therapy Work, and Good Goodbyes
12:00 PM	Jordan Bate, PhD Associate Professor at Adelphi University in New York, where she leads the Attachment & Psychotherapy Process Lab
12:20 PM	Discussion among Panelists
12:40 PM	Discussion with Audience
1:00 PM	END

BIOGRAPHIES

Presenters

Daniel S. Schechter, MD, is an infant, child, adolescent and adult psychiatrist, psychoanalyst and developmental neuroscience researcher. Currently professor and senior psychiatric consultant on the Lausanne University Hospital's Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Service (SUPEA) and Medical Director of PAPILLON: A specialized clinic for children ages 0 to 5 years and their parents, and he co-directs the SUPEA Perinatal Early Childhood Training and Research Group SPECTRE. He completed his medical studies and postgraduate training in adult, child, and adolescent psychiatry, as well as certification in psychoanalysis and completion of an NIH-funded post-doc in developmental neuroscience, at Columbia University in New York, where he was appointed Assistant Professor in Psychiatry and Pediatrics in 2002. His original research focuses on the psychobiological impact of maternal history of exposure to interpersonal violence on the care environment during early development, in a transgenerational context. He is author of numerous clinical and research publications in several languages, and co-author of three books including *September 11: Trauma & Human Bonds*. His awards include the Pierre Janet and Sandor Ferenczi prizes from the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation, and awards from the International Psychoanalytical Association, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the American Psychiatric Association.

Angela Narayan, PhD, LP, is an Associate Professor in the Clinical Child Psychology Ph.D. program in the Department of Psychology at the University of Denver (DU). She received her Ph.D. in Developmental Psychopathology and Clinical Science from the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota with Dr. Ann Masten, who is an international expert on child resilience in the context of severe adversity (e.g., homelessness, war and political conflict, disasters). Dr. Narayan then completed her APA-accredited predoctoral internship and post-doctoral fellowship in the Department of Psychiatry and Child Trauma Research Program at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) with Dr. Alicia Lieberman, who is the developer of child-parent psychotherapy (CPP) for children ages birth to five years who have experienced trauma.

Dr. Narayan directs a program of research that examines how childhood adversity and positive childhood experiences have enduring effects on development across the lifespan and in populations with diverse backgrounds. She has published over 80 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters.

Claudia M. Gold, MD, is a pediatrician and writer who practiced pediatrics for over 20 years and now specializes in early relational health. She has over three decades of clinical experience in a wide variety of communities and currently works for a volunteer clinic in rural Western Massachusetts. She is on the faculty of the Brazelton Institute and was on the faculty of the UMass fellowship in Early Relational Health for ten years. Her new book is *Getting to Know You: Lessons in Early Relational Health from Infants and Caregivers* (Teachers College Press, March 2025.) In addition to 3 other books, she co-authored, with renowned infant researcher Ed Tronick, *The Power of Discord: Why the Ups and Downs in Relationships are the Secret to Building Intimacy, Resilience, and Trust* (Little, Brown Spark 2020). Dr. Gold speaks frequently to a variety of audiences including parents and professionals both in the US and around the world.

BIOGRAPHIES

Discussants

Jack Novick, PhD, and Kerry Kelly Novick, FIPA, are life-cycle psychoanalysts on the faculties of numerous psychoanalytic centers. Trained with Anna Freud in London, England, and at the British Psycho-analytical Society and the Contemporary Freudian Society, in addition to their clinical work, they have been active in teaching, research, professional organizations, and the community. They joined other colleagues to found the award-winning non-profit Allen Creek Preschool in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Separately and together, the Novicks have written extensively since the 1960s, with many book chapters and articles published in major professional journals. Their eight co-authored books have been translated into many languages.

Jordan Bate, PhD, is an Associate Professor at Adelphi University in New York, and leads the Attachment & Psychotherapy Process Lab. Her primary research interests are in the applications of attachment theory and mentalization to psychotherapy process research with children, adolescents and parents, and in training clinicians. She is on the voluntary faculty of Lenox Hill Hospital, where she was involved in establishing the Reproductive Mental Health Program, and is now co-investigator on a pilot study of Mentalization Based Treatment for Children and Young People (or MBT-C). She is a trainer in MBT-C and co-authored two books: *Working With Parents in Therapy: A Mentalization-Based Approach*, and *Deliberate Practice in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy*. She is chair of the Child, Adolescent and Family Therapy Research Special Interest Group of Society for Psychotherapy Research, and past-president of Section II, the child and adolescent section of APA Division 39, the Society for Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy. She also maintains a small private practice in Manhattan.

Moderator

Lawrence D. Blum, MD, holds appointments as a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Adjunct Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, where he helped to initiate and co-directs the undergraduate minor in Psychoanalytic Studies. He also teaches at the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia, where he was recently made an honorary member of the Child Psychoanalytic Faculty.

Planner

William Singletary, MD, is a child, adolescent, and adult psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, a member of the faculty and supervising child analyst of the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia, and President of the Board of the Margaret S. Mahler Child Development Foundation. He is in private practice in Philadelphia, PA. A major focus of his work has been on understanding how building relationships contributes to changing the brain as well as our psychological structure and on developing the capacity to use available love as a major goal of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. He and Timothy Rice recently published "Two diverging paths in psychological and neurobiological organization: Using or refusing love" as a Target Article in *Neuropsychoanalysis*.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the latest research on benevolent and adverse childhood experiences.
2. Apply new techniques for intervening to prevent the intergenerational transmission of trauma.
3. Demonstrate strategies to help parents support young children in developing relational skills.

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION/CONTINUING EDUCATION Continuing Medical Education (CME):

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the joint providership of American Psychoanalytic Association and the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia. The American Psychoanalytic Association is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

The American Psychoanalytic Association designates these Live Activities for a maximum of 4 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

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Continuing Education for Psychologists (CE):

The Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia maintains responsibility for this program and its content. Every session of this program offers CE credit for psychologists.

Continuing Education for Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Professional Counselors (CE):

In accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth of PA dated 12/23/06 [PA Code: Title 49, Ch. 47-49], The State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Professional Counselors recognizes the American Psychological Association (APA) as a preapproved provider of continuing education programs for social workers and clinical social workers, marriage and family therapists, and professional counselors in the State of Pennsylvania. The Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education programs.

For more information, please contact the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia:

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