MENTALIZING FEAR: TRANSFORMATION AND INTEGRATION

This talk will focus on ways that the therapist’s capacity to mentalize early threat and fear can lead to the modulation of intense and dysregulating patterns of arousal and affectivity that are grounded in the individual’s neurobiology and derived from early relational experiences. Despite the fact that threat detection plays a key role in survival across a number of species, and that the regulation of early threat and fear has long been seen as central to attachment security, there has been little interest in fear within the psychodynamic literature. Prof. Slade will argue that the therapist’s and ultimately patient’s capacity to recognize and mentalize both fear and the search for safety can play a crucial role in promoting psychic change and reorganization.

ARIETTA SLADE BIO

Arietta Slade, Ph.D., Professor of Clinical and Developmental Psychology, City University of New York, and Visiting Research Scientist, Yale Child Study Center, is an internationally recognized attachment theorist, researcher, and infant mental health specialist. Her research on mother-infant attachment led to the development of the The Parent Development Interview (with Aber, Berger, Bresgi & Kaplan), as well as the elaboration of the construct of parental reflective functioning, both of which have had a significant impact in the field of infant mental health and attachment. For the past 10 years she has been co-directing Minding the Baby, an interdisciplinary reflective parenting home visiting program for high-risk mothers and infants at the Yale Child Study Center and School of Nursing; this intervention is now being tested in a federally funded RCT, as well as a large scale replication in the United Kingdom. She has presented her research and clinical work around the world, and is the author of over 50 articles and book chapters. She is editor, with Dennie Wolf, of Children at Play: Developmental and Clinical Approaches to Meaning and Representation, (Oxford University Press, 1994), with Elliot Jurist and Sharone Bergner, of Mind to Mind: Infant Research, Neuroscience, and Psychoanalysis (Other Press, 2008), and with Jeremy Holmes of the forthcoming Attachment Theory (SAGE Publications).