

Psychiatry Grand Rounds

WCM Department of Psychiatry

Psychology CE Announcement



**Weill Cornell
Medicine**
Psychiatry

SELF-LOATHING : ORIGINS, PSYCHODYNAMICS, AND TREATMENT

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Zoom:

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October 1, 2025



11 AM - 12 PM



Live Online

ABSTRACT

This presentation will describe the affective, cognitive, and behavioral manifestations of self-loathing. It will then delineate four overlapping but nonetheless different origins of this malady: primal, shame based, guilt based, and regret based. It will also highlight specific therapeutic strategies (e.g., bridging the consciously held but sequestered positive self-views with the core negative self, interpreting defenses against one's own goodness) for helping individuals afflicted with this tragic condition.

SPEAKER

Salman Akhtar, MD is Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and a Training & Supervising Analyst at the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia. He has nearly 500 publications to his credit which include 117 authored or edited books. Dr. Akhtar has served on the editorial boards of all three major psychoanalytic journals, including the Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, International Journal and Psychoanalytic Quarterly. He has delivered Plenary Addresses at the Meetings of the American as well as the International Psychoanalytic Associations. Dr. Akhtar has received numerous honors, including the highly prestigious Sigourney Award (2012) for Distinguished Contributions to Psychoanalysis. He has published 18 volumes of 2 poetry in three languages and serves as the Scholar-in-Residence at the Inter-Act Theater Company in Philadelphia.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe and enumerate the major types and clinical presentations of self-loathing (e.g., body-directed, performance-related, identity-related) and give examples of each.
2. Differentiate among common etiologies and contributing factors of the syndrome (biological, psychological, and social) and select appropriate diagnostic considerations for each.
3. Demonstrate improved empathic communication by applying at least two evidence-based strategies when interacting with patients who experience self-loathing (e.g., reflective listening, validating language), as measured by case-based assessments or observed role-play.

REFERENCES

1. Ferenczi, S. (1929). The unwelcome child and his death-instinct. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 10, 125–129.
2. Joseph B. (1982). Addiction to near-death. *The International journal of psycho-analysis*, 63(Pt 4), 449–456.
3. Austin, S. (2016). Working with chronic and relentless self-hatred, self-harm and existential shame: a clinical study and reflections. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 61(1), 24–43. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5922.12193>

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