

# Psychiatry Grand Rounds

WCM Department of Psychiatry  
Psychology CE Announcement



**Weill Cornell  
Medicine**  
Psychiatry

## *Covid, 9/11 and Cancer, Managing Existential Crisis*

**Norman Straker MD, DLFAPA**

Clinical Professor Weill Cornell Department of Psychiatry  
Consultant at Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

**Live Online, Live In-person**

Wednesday, December 4th, 2024

11:00am – 12:00pm

<https://weillcornell.zoom.us/j/92812036154>

Meeting ID: 928 1203 6154

Password: 12345



1 CE credit available to WCM Department of Psychiatry full time and voluntary faculty Psychologists, Social Workers and LMHCs, who sign in with their full name, attend the majority of the lecture and complete a survey which will be emailed following the completion of the lecture. Note the survey must be completed within 30 days of the lecture. Please contact [wcmpsychiatryce@med.cornell.edu](mailto:wcmpsychiatryce@med.cornell.edu) for additional CE information

### *Speaker*

Dr Straker attended medical school at McGill University and did his post graduate training in Adult and Child Psychiatry, and a fellowship in Psychosomatics at the Mt Sinai Hospital. He joined the Cornell faculty and became a psychiatric consultant at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, in 1976 where he participated in the development of first psycho oncology program and the subspecialty of psych oncology. His main interest has been the development of a dynamic psychotherapy for cancer patients. He has written numerous papers and edited "*Facing Cancer and the Fear of Death, A Psychoanalytic Perspective on Treatment.*" He presented two films on the challenges of caring for cancer at Cornell Grand Rounds years ago. He has also chaired a discussion group at American Psychoanalytic meetings on "Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy of Patients with Cancer" for more than 38 years, most recently he has served on the Health Committee of the International Psychoanalytic Association for the last 10 years.

*Financial Disclosure: Dr. Straker has no relevant financial relationship(s) with ineligible companies to disclose and DOES NOT INTEND to discuss off-label or investigational use of products or services.*

### *Abstract*

Psychotherapists today have been confronted with two unprecedented events that have completely changed the traditional framework of therapeutic sessions. 9/11 and Covid have forced psychotherapists to navigate their patients overwhelming fear of dying. How do we manage catastrophes and death anxiety in ourselves and our patients in unprecedented times? Dr. Norman Straker will speak about the effectiveness of the methods of intervention he learned when working with cancer patients. This more flexible approach equips the therapist to effectively intervene in this challenging topic.

### *Learning Objectives*

1. Summarize how to intervene in patients suffering from an existential crisis.
2. Discuss the concept of "Terror Management", the unconscious defenses against death anxiety.
3. Explain the importance of a flexible therapeutic approach when dealing with patients at risk of imminent death.

### *References*

1. Gabbard, G. O. (2020). The analyst and the virus. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 68(6), 1089–1099. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003065120979158>
2. Straker, N. (2020). The treatment of cancer patients who die. *Psychodynamic Psychiatry*, 48(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1521/pdps.2020.48.1.1>
3. Straker, N. (2021). Vicissitudes of death anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Psychodynamic Psychiatry*, 49(3), 384–387. <https://doi.org/10.1521/pdps.2021.49.3.384>

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