

# Psychiatry Grand Rounds

WCM Department of Psychiatry

Psychology CE Announcement

## *How Can We See What We Don't See: Mother-Infant Microanalysis and the Legacy of Daniel Stern*

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**Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**11:00am – 12:30pm**

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

**Meeting ID: 928 1203 6154**

**Password: 12345**

1.5 CE credit available to WCM Department of Psychiatry full time and voluntary faculty Psychologists and Social Workers 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 [wempsychiatryce@med.cornell.edu](mailto:wempsychiatryce@med.cornell.edu) for additional CE information

**SPEAKER:** Dr. Beebe 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.

Beatrice Beebe is Clinical Professor of Psychology (in Psychiatry), College of Physicians & Surgeons, Columbia University Medical Center, New York State Psychiatric Institute. She is an infant researcher and a psychoanalyst, known for video microanalysis of mother-infant interaction and its implications for infant and adult treatment. Her frame-by-frame video microanalyses provide a “social microscope” that reveals subtle details of interactions too rapid to grasp in real time with the naked eye. Her research investigates early mother-infant face-to-face communication: the effects of maternal distress (depression, anxiety, trauma of being pregnant and widowed on 9/11), the prediction of infant attachment patterns, and the long-term continuity of communication from infancy to adulthood. More than 150 students have been trained in her research laboratory over the last three decades. Her recent book is: *The mother-infant interaction picture book: Origins of attachment* (Beebe, Cohen & Lachman, Norton, 2016). She is Multi-PI, with Julie Herbstman, R01ES027424-01A1, of Prenatal endocrine-disrupting chemicals and social/cognitive risk in mothers and infants: Potential biologic pathways.

### **Abstract:**

Dan Stern taught me about frame-by-frame analysis of film in 1969. He inspired my love of figuring out how the moment-by-moment process of mother-infant communication works. We can be aware of a great deal of our nonverbal communication if we pay attention to it as it is happening. But another layer of our experience we are largely unaware of because face-to-face relating is too fast to fully capture with the naked eye – Stern’s “split-second world.” The rapid out-of-awareness nonverbal process has tremendous communicative power. When we slow it down or look second-by-second through video microanalysis, we see a world of subtle complex relating that we cannot otherwise grasp. It provides another essential means of sensing the partner, communicating to the partner that she is sensed, and sensing being sensed: all largely out of awareness. In this lecture I will present films and frame-by frame analyses of facial mirroring, chase and dodge, maternal patterns of joining infant distress associated with secure attachment outcomes, and disturbances of maternal recognition of distress associated with disorganized attachment outcomes. I will also illustrate how this process is relevant to adult face-to-face treatment. As Stern argued, microanalysis has changed what we can see, and thus what we can know.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Determine the complexity of early mother-infant interactions, and how each partner influences the other, second-by-second.
2. Analyze patterns of empathic “joining” or “entering” infant distress moments, associated with one-year secure infant attachment; vs. patterns of disturbance in entering infant distress moments, a disturbance of the recognition process, associated with infant disorganized attachment.
3. Discuss analogies between mother-infant interactions and split-second, out-of-awareness nonverbal communications between adult patients and therapists.

### **References:**

1. Beebe, B., Jaffe, J., Markese, S., Buck, K., Chen, H., Cohen, P., Bahrck, L., Andrews, H., & Feldstein, S. (2010). The origins of 12-month attachment: a microanalysis of 4-month mother-infant interaction. *Attach Hum Dev, 12*(1-2), 3-141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616730903338985>
2. Beebe, B., & Steele, M. (2013). How does microanalysis of mother-infant communication inform maternal sensitivity and infant attachment? *Attach Hum Dev, 15*(5-6), 583-602. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616734.2013.841050>
3. Beebe, B. (2014). My journey in infant research and psychoanalysis: Microanalysis, a social microscope. *Psychoanalytic Psychology, 31*(1), 4–25. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035575>
4. Beebe, B. (2017). Daniel Stern: Microanalysis and the Empirical Infant Research Foundations. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry, 37*(4), 228–241. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07351690.2017.1299498>
5. Stern, D. N. (1971). A micro-analysis of mother-infant interaction. Behavior regulating social contact between a mother and her 3-month-old twins. *J Am Acad Child Psychiatry, 10*(3), 501-517. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0002-7138\(09\)61752-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0002-7138(09)61752-0)