



RESEARCH GROUP ON THE CONTEMPORARY PANDEMICS (VIRUS, VIRTUAL, HYBRID)

A WORKING GROUP FROM SUMMER 2021 – SUMMER 2022

RESEARCH LEADS: Andjela Samardjic, MA, LP & Marisa Berwald, MA, LCSW

The Pandemic Group originated in July 2021 in the wake of New York City's reopening after arduous and sullen lockdown periods, excitingly awaiting the new in-person future to come.

Group Modalities Summer 2021, Monday 12PM – 1PM

The group met once a week, for 1 hour, reflecting almost free associatively on personal and clinical experiences pre-, post-, peri-pandemic. The sessions were centered around questions regarding: wearing masks (with/without), setting (in person, virtual, hybrid), and transference (countertransference) analysis of affect, thoughts and enactments in sessions (fatigue, disaffection, numbness, uber caring and containing etc.).

Ultimately the group was evolving around questions of *survival* (in time but also clinically) (partially) looking for answers from the group leaders that we interpreted as looking for the structuring/mother (Winnicott) or the Paternal, the Third (Lacan). Some members dropped out, leaving us questioning our format, that was not pre-defined, not /(un-) structured or un-framed.

The emergence of the coronavirus Delta variant caused the group to retreat to predominantly virtual meetings. The "post-pandemic" has become the only peri-pandemic. This precipitated all the more the need for a frame.

The New Pandemic -Working Group Fall 2021, every other Friday 12PM – 1PM

The questions about *survival* were, as we have realized and probably also not entirely, a question about (and a desire for) the structure, frame, the Third. Our foci hence moving forward are precisely addressing and implying a frame i.e. clinical presentations, questions based on our pre-defined interview questions on transference, countertransference, affect, defenses etc. The interviews will be distributed in the group.

We are interested in capturing "the shifts" in time caused by the viral pandemic: all hybrid, all virtual, all in-person. We also deal with technical questions: containing over scansion (scansion Lacan), disavowal, somatizations (fatigue) over repression, concrete speech over free association etc. Finally, we are also curious about an emergence of surprise (surprising elements) as a novel, unthinkable, that may or will enter our discourse as we reflect on our experiences.

The frame will be our Third and all group members are members and leaders, as a foundation of a working group.

The impetus of the Pandemic Working Group is to create a community of thinking, and thinkers on the current unprecedented moment of the pandemic as if to capture and catalog the unspeakable (pre – Après Coup) in an ethnographic fashion. Thus, to create a community of analytic ethnographers.