



42nd Annual Meeting of the Society for Descriptive Psychology



October 1-4, 2020
Teleconference Meeting

The Society for Descriptive Psychology is a Community exploring the *Person Concept*, an interdependent conceptual framework of *Person, Behavior, Language, and World* to create common ground for the Human Sciences. The Annual Meeting of the Society is intended to be an opportunity to share advances in and applications of Descriptive Psychology within this community.

Topics to be presented at this 42nd Annual Meeting are notably diverse and address a variety of clinical, social, and ethical issues using concepts from Descriptive Psychology (DP). Clinical topics include the use of descriptive concepts to discuss special moments with clients, and a discussion of how a descriptive formulation of emotions generates expanded therapeutic options. A number of presentations draw on descriptive formulations for such relevant topics as whistleblowers, having black-white conversations, and the psychological health implications of COVID-19. Other topics relevant to today's world include a discussion of a Supreme Court Case and the impacts of financial position on one's place in the world. Finally, presentations also include a program on a discussion of what is science, empirical research and looking at a dissertation under Peter Ossorio.

The primary goals of this conference are to continue the exploration of Descriptive Psychology as a conceptual approach to a broad range of topics within the behavioral sciences, neurobehavioral sciences, social sciences, and humanities, to continue building the Descriptive Psychology Community, and to promote further discussion about new approaches to disseminating Descriptive Psychology concepts and applications. This conference will include introductory, intermediate, and advanced presentations.

The **target audience** for this conference includes participants in clinical, behavioral, computational, and theoretical disciplines, including participants with either little or extensive knowledge of DP. A broad range of topics within the behavioral sciences will be addressed. In order to assist those with a developing interest in DP, participants with more comprehensive knowledge will be available for mentoring. The Society particularly encourages attendance by emerging professionals who are interested in a new, comprehensive conceptual approach to their clinical or research interests.

[Click here to register for the Conference](#)

Registration information can also be found on www.SDP.org

There are no fees for attending the conference presentations or attaining the APA CE credits as we introduce everyone, including ourselves, to this novel format for our conference. The Society for Descriptive Psychology is a non-profit organization registered in Colorado. Should you wish to express appreciation for the value of the information in the presentations or for the CE's, please consider going to sdp.org to make a contribution to our student scholarship fund (offsetting expenses for students and emerging professionals to present at conferences) or by contributing to any non-profit organization serving mental health or community service initiatives that improve the general welfare. For current members in good standing (i.e., those who have paid 2020 dues) who register for this conference, there will be a \$35 discount in the individual or family dues for 2021. Information about this will be made available in the next dues notice.

Continuing Education Credit Information

This conference includes 10.5 hours of continuing education.

The Graduate School of Professional Psychology (GSPP) at the University of Denver is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. GSPP maintains responsibility for this program and its content. There will be no fee for continuing education credits!



Conflict of Interest Disclosure: The Society for Descriptive Psychology is a not-for-profit volunteer organization. The Society and all speakers at this conference specifically have

no other personal, business, or volunteer affiliations that may give rise to a real or apparent conflict of interest, relative to the content of presentations. In addition to assuring the conflict free status of speakers, the purpose of this statement is also to protect the Organization's tax-exempt status when contemplating a transaction or arrangement that could benefit an officer, director, or employee. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest that apply to non-profit organizations.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

October 1-4, 2020

THURSDAY, OCT. 1st, EVENING SESSION

PLEASE NOTE: ALL PROGRAM TIMES ARE CENTRAL TIME ZONE!!!

6:15 – 6:30 *Conference Convenes:*

Welcoming Announcements
Introduction of the President

6:30 – 8:00 *Presidential Address:*

SES and Place: Examining the Impacts of Financial Position on a Person's Place in the World (1.5 hours CE credits)

Patricia Kennedy, Psy.D., University of Missouri - St. Louis Center for Behavioral Health

Pathological states may occur in various SES categories, though being in a particular SES position does not constitute a pathological state. A previously developed parametric description of SES will be discussed to provide clarity to a concept widely utilized in social science research. An assessment measure examining the specific impacts of a person's SES position will be presented. Resiliency in response to disruptions in Basic Human needs may "protect" against pathology and may occur due to social practices, community involvement, and individual responses to such disruptions. Persons of color experience low SES positions more often than others and discriminatory practices in social interactions and institutional settings cause status loss. The intersection of race and socioeconomic position will be formulated using DP concepts and treatment considerations for working with individuals experiencing racial discrimination or negative impacts of their SES position will be discussed. In summary, this presentation will help participants understand the parametric analysis of SES, ways to apply this description to the everyday world of persons, facts about racism and SES, as well as potential impacts on treatment and the treatment relationship.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 2nd, MORNING SESSION

PLEASE NOTE: ALL TIMES LISTED ARE IN CENTRAL TIME ZONE!!!

9:00 – 10:00 ***Emotions Revisited: How the Descriptive Formulation Generates Expanded Therapeutic Options*** (1.0 hour CE credit)

Ray Bergner, Ph.D., Professor, Clinical-Counseling Psychology Program, Department of Psychology, Illinois State University, and Private Practice, Normal, IL

This presentation has three objectives. The first of these is to show that our traditional understanding of the nature of emotions, which equates them essentially with feelings, is incorrect. The second is to present an alternative conception of emotion as a certain kind of perceived relationship between oneself and some object (e.g., some person, event, or state of affairs). The third is to demonstrate how this relational conception of emotions generates a greater range of alternative therapeutic procedures than does the traditional view.

10:00 – 10:10 ***Break***

10:10 – 11:10 ***Enemies of the People: Whistleblowers and the Status Dynamics of Community Critics*** (1.0 hour CE credit)

Charles Kantor, PhD. Clinical Psychologist and psychotherapist (retired)

The whistleblower is a critic of her community, a community regulator claiming that a set of core values, choice principles, social practices or statuses have been violated by leadership in a community, organization, or institution. My intent in this presentation is to examine the particular status of whistleblower in various communities with the goal of understanding the regulatory statuses in communities that serve to maintain, sustain, and advance the life of communities. Tony Putman contributed major papers and volumes regarding community, organizations and the life and death of communities and in these he noted the kinds of conditions that exist to understand the viabilities of communities from the smallest two person dyads to the largest institutions. I plan here to examine how the emergence of and the plight of whistleblowers gives us insight into community regulation.

11:10 – 11:20 ***Break***

11:20 – 12:20 ***Having Black-White Conversations Go Right*** (1.0 hour CE credit)

H. Joel Jeffrey, Ph.D.

Using the Relationship-Behavior and Relationship Change Formulas, the problem of how to have fraught conversations between Black and white people go right is addressed. “Have a conversation” is a performative description, which leaves the behavior, including the Significance, unstated. Using the Relationship formulas helps navigate these ambiguous waters, providing a useful formulation of the current state of affairs between the participants, a key

outcome that, paradigmatically, both share, and reminders of what actions to take and which to avoid in order to achieve that shared goal. The Relationship formulas are used to develop specific ways to proceed and pitfalls to avoid.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, MORNING SESSION

9:00 – 10:00 ***Psychological Health Implications of the Coronavirus Pandemic As a State of Siege*** (1.0 hour CE Credit)
Walter J. Torres, Ph.D.

States of military siege provide an illustrative background that is of heuristic value for understanding the features and the psychological effects of a pandemic. The historical record of states of siege suggests threat features, factors that strengthen or undermine defenses against the threat, effects of the state of siege on psychological function, versions of psychological deterioration, and avenues for nullifying or mitigating its harmful effects.

10:00 - 10:10 ***Break***

10:10 – 11:10 ***Kahler v. Kansas: Why SCOTUS Needs Descriptive Psychology*** (1.0 hour CE credit)
Paula Holt, JD, MBA, MS, Attorney at Law and Associate Professor at the University of Denver, Daniels College of Business, Department of Business Ethics and Legal Studies, Denver, CO.

In the United States, if defendants successfully assert the insanity defense, they are not held criminally liable for their actions. However, there are five different standards by which insanity is defined and evaluated, differing in application from state to state. Because this raises Constitutional concerns, the concept of insanity found its way before the U.S. Supreme Court this past year. I will review and analyze the Court's decision using resources from Descriptive Psychology. My analysis shows that Descriptive Psychology offers an effective and comprehensive approach to evaluating persons asserting the insanity defense.

11:10 – 11:20 ***Break***

11:20 – 12:20 ***Special Moments with Clients*** (1.0 hour CE credit)
David Bender, Ph.D., therapist

This session is a panel discussion of memorable moments in psychotherapy, illustrating a variety of therapeutic interventions and their clinical effectiveness. Foundational concepts for this discussion section will be drawn from the work of Peter G. Ossorio, Ph.D., his students and others. This collection of work has been designated Descriptive Psychology. Participants will recognize the power of these concepts in making quick and significant therapeutic change in the lives of psychotherapy clients. Participants will be encouraged to contribute their own “moments” as well.

SATURDAY, OCT 3rd, EVENING

5:30-6:30 *Business Meeting*

6:30-7:30 *Society Social Hour*

Announcements and Celebration

SUNDAY, OCT 4th, MORNING SESSION

9:00 – 10:00 *What is Science For? What is Psychology For? Descriptive Psychology Encounters Nicholas Maxwell's Philosophy of Science* (1.0 hour CE Credit)
Ian Newby-Clark, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, University of Guelph,
 Guelph, Ontario, Canada

Descriptive Psychology (DP) offers the means by which a person-centered science of psychology can be pursued in a systematic and rigorous way. Although DP rules out certain scientific endeavors (e.g., 'box' social cognition), which particular investigations one conducts, and which particular theories one constructs, cannot be determined fully by DP. Nicholas Maxwell provides important guidance that should prove of use to Descriptive Psychologists. I outline Maxwell's argument that all sciences should move 'from knowledge to wisdom.' Using my work on daydreaming as an example, I highlight some important points of contact between Maxwell's arguments and those of Ossorio and others.

10:00 – 10:10 *Break*

10:10 – 11:10 *My Dissertation Journey with Peter Ossorio: A Personal and Conceptual Story*
 (1.0 hour CE credit)
Ralph C. Wechsler, Ph.D., Rocky Mountain VA Medical Center

I will be describing the precision and rigor in developing the conceptualization, as we articulated the significance of manic behaviors, as well as the research methodology that we developed to test our hypotheses. Beyond a profound education in practical epistemology, the doctorate was also a profound personal education. I hope to convey my intellectual and personal journey while completing a doctoral dissertation with Peter Ossorio, my advisor at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Although I took this journey 39 years ago, I have a verbatim transcript of the experience to refresh my memory. I recorded each session and transcribed them between our meetings. I could not absorb "on the fly" all that he conveyed in those on-hour meetings, so this strategy allowed me to immerse myself in Descriptive Psychology in general and my clinical topic (manic states) in particular.

11:10 – 11:20 *Break*

11:20 – 12:20 *A Revolution in the Conception of Empirical Research in the Behavioral Sciences -- The Virtues of the Pragmatic versus the Semantic Paradigm*
(1.0 hour CE credit)

Keith E. Davis, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, University of South Carolina and H. Joel Jeffrey, Ph.D.

In the mid 1960's, Peter Ossorio developed a revolutionary formulation of behavioral research. We discuss the distinctive new paradigm of research, the Pragmatic Paradigm. The paradigm is a direct outgrowth of the Person Concept, especially the notions of Deliberate Action, Significance, and acting as a member of a Community. He distinguished the classical Semantic Paradigm of research (theory-hypothesis-operationalization-confirmation) from a new way to proceed, the Pragmatic Paradigm (conceptualization-decision-action-vindication), focusing on expanding behavioral potential. Three examples illustrate the Pragmatic Paradigm: the Classification Space work, the MENTOR work of Jeffrey and Putman, and work by Jeffrey, "Pragmatic Design of Meetings and Presentations."

12:20 – 12:30 *Meeting Adjournment and Announcements*

Further Information about the Society, Descriptive Psychology, and Student Support

Information on The Society for Descriptive Psychology can be found on the Society's website: <http://www.sdp.org>. A wealth of publications, including books, articles, and presentations by Peter Ossorio as well as publications by SDP members are available on the website.

Please consider supporting student presentations by donating to The Student's Fund. The Society for Descriptive Psychology is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations may be tax deductible, but please consult with your tax advisor.