

48TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR DESCRIPTIVE PSYCHOLOGY

SEPTEMBER 3RD TO SEPTEMBER 6TH, 2026
REYKJAVIK UNIVERSITY • REYKJAVIK • ICELAND



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 Conference of the Society is an opportunity to share advances in, and applications of, Descriptive Psychology.

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, 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. The conference will include introductory, intermediate, and advanced presentations.

If you are new to DP or our Society, we welcome you and look forward to productive interactions during and after the conference.



The target audience for this conference includes participants in clinical, behavioral, computational, and theoretical disciplines, including participants with any degree of knowledge of DP (including none). A broad range of topics within the behavioral sciences will be addressed. To assist people 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 and comprehensive conceptual approach to their clinical practice and research work.

As we have for several years, this year we are pleased to present the 2026 Annual Conference for the Society for Descriptive Psychology in a hybrid format, in-person, this year for the first time at **Reykjavik University, Reykjavik, Iceland** and online via Zoom.

We are pleased to have the conference co-sponsored by Spekt (Society for Theoretical Psychology) and Reykjavik University.

The Conference Planning Committee endeavored to follow the Conference's established scheduling of presentations and events as closely as possible, while including **many more introductory presentations that cover the interdependent concepts that comprise Descriptive Psychology**. However, for those joining remotely, Zoom will require some new social practices and procedures, including administrative procedures for awarding CE. We will provide detailed information about these practices prior to the start of the conference.

We look forward to sharing our presentations with any interested academician, clinician, or student, whether a familiar face from previous meetings or someone who is only now discovering Descriptive Psychology. In-person attendees are invited to the Society's self-pay Conference Dinner on Saturday evening.

As usual, register for the entire event, attending as few or as many of the presentations as is permitted by your schedule, beginning with Thursday evening's Invited Presidential Address. As part of the registration process, we will be asking that you please indicate if you are a "Society Member,"

There is no registration fee for the conference. This year we are pleased to offer **12.5 CEs**. The fee for CEs is \$100, but that is waived for members current on 2026 dues.

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

Please note the following, including changes to our most recent schedule formats.

To accommodate the inclusion of introductory lectures, as well as the fact that in-person attendees will be on Reykjavik Time (GMT), this year we will have the following schedule:

Thu Sep 3, 2026 - President's Invited Address	6:15–8:00 pm, GMT
Fri Sep 4, 2026 - Regular Sessions	4:00–7:30 pm GMT
Sat Sep 5, 2026 - Introductory Sessions	12:00–2:15 pm GMT
Sat Sep 5, 2026 - Regular Sessions	3:45–7:15 pm GMT
Sat Sep 5, 2026 - Conference Dinner at the Nauthóll restaurant	8:00 pm GMT
Sun Sep 6, 2026 - Introductory Sessions	12:00–2:15 pm GMT
Sun Sep 6, 2026 - Regular Sessions	3:45–6:00 pm GMT

Optional Friday Outing

As you can see from our Conference Program, all in-person attendees will have free time on Friday morning and early afternoon to explore Iceland's many wonders.

To help you with your search for activities that represent what is unique about this wonderful country, **Grace Colp**, a member of the Society Board, has kindly compiled several suggestions for activities that will fit well into the available time slot

Once registration is completed, a separate email will be sent to all in-person attendees with links to suggested activities.

8:00 PM GMT, Saturday Evening Dinner

In the tradition of past conferences, arrangements have been made for in-person attendees to come together for dinner at **Nauthóll**, an excellent local Reykjavik restaurant. This will be a **self-pay event**, with attendees paying when they enter the restaurant. Although the Society will not collect payment in advance for this dinner, the Conference Registration site will ask for your preference about whether you would like lamb, fish, or a vegetarian dish. Once registration is completed, further details will be sent to in-person attendees in a separate email.

Continuing Education Information

This program includes up to 12.5 CE for both in-person and virtual attendees. The University of Denver, Graduate School of Professional Psychology (GSPP) is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. GSPP maintains responsibility for this program and its content.



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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY



Hotel Accommodations in Reykjavik, Iceland

To assist you with your travel plans, here are some hotels that are located near Reykjavik University or in downtown Reykjavik (most approximately a mile from the conference venue).

Hotel Eyja

<https://www.hoteleyja.is/>

Fosshotel Rauðará

<https://www.islandshotel.is/hotels-in-iceland/fosshotel-raudara/>

Fosshotel Lind

<https://foss-lind-reykjavik.hotel-ds.com/en/>

Center Hotels Laugavegur

<https://www.centerhotels.com/en/hotel-laugavegur-reykjavik>

Please contact the conference managers, listed below, if you require other recommendations.

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.

If you have questions about any aspects of the Conference, please contact the Society President Elect, Ian Newby-Clark at inewby@uoguelph.ca or the Conference Manager, Tricia Kennedy, at triciamariekennedy@gmail.com, or Martin Smedlund at martinsmedlund@gmail.com.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

September 3rd to September 6th, 2026

PLEASE NOTE: ALL TIMES ARE IN GREENWICH MEAN TIME (GMT)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2026

**CONFERENCE CONVENES
AND INVITED PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

6:15 - 8:00 PM GMT

WELCOMING ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRESIDENT'S INVITED ADDRESS (1.5 CE)

6:15 - 8:00 PM GMT

Title:

An Introduction to Descriptive Psychology and Status Dynamics
for Conducting Psychotherapy:
Concepts, Strategies & Techniques

Presenter:

Fernand Lubuguin, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Clinical Practice
Department of Psychiatry
University of Colorado School of Medicine

Abstract:

This presentation will introduce the intellectual discipline of Descriptive Psychology (DP), which is a comprehensive conceptual system that explicates persons, behavior, and the world. This introduction will focus on the DP concepts that are particularly relevant and applicable to conducting psychotherapy. As a subdiscipline of DP, Status Dynamic Therapy (SDT) is a distinctive psychotherapeutic approach that alters a person's statuses and corresponding behavior potential, as compared to primarily resolving a person's emotions, cognitions, and behavior. The relevant DP concepts, as well as SDT strategies and techniques will be illustrated through clinical examples.

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PLEASE NOTE: ALL TIMES ARE IN GREENWICH MEAN TIME (GMT)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2026

FREE TIME TO EXPLORE ICELAND

ANY TIME PRIOR TO THE CONFERENCE

START AT 4:00 pm GMT.

SEE PAGE 3 FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

REGULAR SESSION

4:00 - 5:00 PM GMT (1.0 CE)

Title:

The Use of Therapeutic Policies in Descriptive Psychology Based Psychotherapy

Presenter:

Raymond M. Bergner, Ph.D.
Professor, Illinois State University

Abstract:

This presentation introduces an alternative way to conceive the overall enterprise of psychotherapy, one built upon a structure of discrete modules rather than discrete theories or schools of therapy. These modules are therapeutic policies, i.e., recommended procedural guidelines for the conduct of psychotherapy. This approach (a) places greater than usual emphasis on logical and pre-empirical factors in psychotherapy; (b) embodies an integration of what are currently considered divergent and competing schools of therapy; (c) provides a substantial number of common factors that are applicable to virtually all of psychotherapy; (d) lends itself to enhanced flexibility and creativity in the practice of psychotherapy; and (e) has a modular structure that permits easy expansion via the addition of new policies.

5:00 – 5:15 PM GMT Break

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2026

REGULAR SESSIONS

4:00 - 7:30 PM GMT

REGULAR SESSION

5:15 – 6:15 PM GMT (1.0 CE)

Title:

Humor Demystified Using Descriptive Psychology

Presenter:

Jane R. Littmann, Ph.D.

Professor of Clinical Neuropsychiatry & Behavioral Science (R)

University of South Carolina School of Medicine

Clinical Psychologist, Private Practice

Abstract:

What is Humor? Why do individuals have different senses of humor? How can humor have both the power to uplift and degrade? No existing theories of humor (e.g., Superiority, Incongruity, or Relief theories) give adequate accounts of these matters.

Using Descriptive Psychology, I'll delineate the Concept of Humor that we share that enables us to disagree about instances. I'll make sense of the broad range of phenomena we find humorous though lacking a singular structure or ingredient. I'll clarify the relationship of humor to emotions and our varied responses to instances of humor. And occasionally, I'll present examples of humor.

6:15 – 6:30 PM GMT Break

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September 3rd to September 6th, 2026

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2026

REGULAR SESSIONS

4:00 - 7:30 PM GMT

REGULAR SESSION

6:30 – 7:30 PM GMT (1.0 CE)

Title:

The Self-Concept: Elaborations and Applications

Presenter:

H. Joel Jeffrey, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus, Northern Illinois University

Abstract:

Descriptive Psychology articulates self-concept as a summary formulation of a person's status, i.e., his or her place in the world. In this talk we "unpack" that summary formulation, in three ways. First, people are always members of several communities, and in those communities have statuses that are important constituents of their self-concept. Second, people are always possible members of many other communities and so have many more possible statuses that are also constituents of their self-concept. This group of statuses is "all that we could be," and is limitless and ultimately unknowable. But it does not include every possible status. We examine the question of limits on one's self-concept, arriving at a novel formulation of the long-standing problematical notion of "the real me" or "innermost self" as the boundary conditions on a person's self-concept.

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September 3rd to September 6th, 2026

PLEASE NOTE: ALL TIMES ARE IN GREENWICH MEAN TIME (GMT)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2026

12:00 - 2:15 PM GMT

INTRODUCTORY SESSION

12:00 – 1:00 PM GMT (1.0 CE)

Title:

The Person Concept

Presenter:

Wynn Schwartz, Ph.D.

Faculty, Harvard University Extension School

Lecturer in Psychology, Harvard Medical School

Abstract:

The Person Concept is the foundational subject matter of behavioral science yet remains mostly implicit or subject to argument. Descriptive Psychology clarifies that subject matter and does so in a manner a competent critic should recognize as reasonable, and as a framework for systematic agreement and disagreement. Paradigm Case Formulations and Parametric Analysis are central conceptual tools for this work. Together they provide a top-down, theory-neutral framework for identifying what any adequate account of persons and behavior must encompass, something prior to both empirical inquiry and theory: not establishing what actually occurs, nor explaining why only certain patterns emerge, but mapping the full range of what is possible in the first place. That framework is built from a set of complex, interdependent component concepts, each of which requires the others to be fully intelligible: Individual Persons, Behavior as Intentional Action, Language and Verbal Behavior, Community and Culture, and World and Reality. These are not modular pieces to be understood separately and then assembled; they are more like aspects of a single map, where grasping any one of them already presupposes the others.

1:00 - 1:15 PM GMT Break

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September 3rd to September 6th, 2026

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2026

12:00 - 2:15 PM GMT

INTRODUCTORY SESSION

1:15 - 2:15 PM GMT (1.0 CE)

Title:

What Is Descriptive Psychology?

Presenter:

H. Joel Jeffrey, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus, Northern Illinois University

Abstract:

This presentation is an overview of Descriptive Psychology, a unique approach to psychology that is not based on any stipulative definitions or theoretical assumptions. It is, rather, a precise, systematic, comprehensive formulation of the concepts of person, behavior, and the real world, and their relationships. Beginning with a discussion of the origin of Descriptive Psychology, we continue with articulations of the concepts of person and behavior, and constituent concepts of intentional action, deliberate action, reasons for acting, relationships, status as place in the world, status dynamics, emotional behavior and emotional states, and a person's world. We show how feelings and neurophysiology, contrary to most formulations today, are secondary phenomena, useful as indicators of what is happening but not what is happening, with people and their behavior.

2:15 - 3:45 PM GMT Long Break

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

September 3rd to September 6th, 2026

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2026

3:45 - 7:15 PM GMT

REGULAR SESSION

3:45 - 4:45 PM GMT (1.0 CE)

Title:

Can Descriptive Psychology Make Room for the Space of Causal Powers?

Presenter:

Tobias G. Lindstad, cand. psych.
Clinical Psychologist and Independent Researcher

Abstract:

There has been more than one apt call for psychologists to work more thoroughly on articulating what it involves being a person in a world of persons and their ways. In particular, Ossorio's seminal call for Descriptive Psychology shares this concern with Harré's Hybrid approach, Psycho-logic as suggested by Smedslund, Valsiner's urgings for Cultural Psychology, and Brinkmann's Personism. However, these other approaches have questioned the relevance of causal explanation for psychology. I argue that they have rightly denied the relevance of Humean perspectives on causality, but that Descriptive Psychology seems to have the potentials to bring them all into clinically relevant liaison with recent philosophical advancements of Dispositionalism and the understanding of causal powers.

4:45 - 5:00 PM GMT Break

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

September 3rd to September 6th, 2026

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2026

3:45 - 7:15 PM GMT

REGULAR SESSION

5:00 - 6:00 PM GMT (1.0 CE)

Title:

The Caucus Race in Wonderland:
Some Thoughts on Mechanism of Change in Psychotherapy

Presenter:

Pétur Tyrfingsson, cand. psych.

Abstract:

Researchers and practitioners in the field of psychotherapy seem to agree that we know that psychotherapy works. On the other hand, the consensus seems to be that we don't know how it works – what the “mechanisms of change are”. No wonder. Researchers mistake common factors, such as therapeutic alliance, for mechanisms of change, confuse interventions in psychotherapy with mechanisms of change and finally mix up the changes themselves and the mechanisms of change. The reason for this is complete negligence of conceptual clarification on the one hand and the methodological frame of mind on the other. A definite mechanism of change will not be proposed. Instead, a general principle will be put forth that may help us ask the right questions. This will be done by exploring the developmental theories of Vygotsky and the so-called “activity theory”. We are dealing with persons. They change by learning how the world works through their active interaction with the world and other persons. We will discuss how these considerations fit into the conceptual framework of Descriptive Psychology.

6:00 - 6:15 PM GMT Break

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

September 3rd to September 6th, 2026

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2026

3:45 - 7:15 PM GMT

REGULAR SESSION

6:15 - 7:15 PM GMT (1.0 CE)

Title:

An Eye on the Inner

Presenter:

Mary Roberts, Ph.D.
Independent Scholar

Abstract:

Critical analysis from the middle of the 20th century shows that using the inner-outer model can limit and distort our understanding of persons. Nonetheless, psychological studies in the 21st century abound in talk about inner worlds, inner lives, inner selves, inner dramas and inner narratives. The model “holds us captive,” and our language “repeats it to us inexorably.” By way of contrast, I introduce the core components of the Person Concept and show how “the inner” is handled with respect to each component. Traditional examples of talking about “the inner” are redescribed using these basic concepts.

CONFERENCE DINNER

NAUTHÓLL RESTAURANT
8:00 PM GMT

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

September 3rd to September 6th, 2026

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2026

12:00 - 2:15 PM GMT

INTRODUCTORY SESSION

12:00 – 1:00 PM GMT (1.0 CE)

Title:

The Social Worlds of Persons:

The Concept of Community in Descriptive Psychology

Presenter:

Charles Kantor, Ph.D.

Clinical Psychologist, Retired

Abstract:

This talk presents the systematic account of community and culture within Descriptive Psychology, showing how its core conceptual tools illuminate how persons learn about, navigate, and transform the worlds they inhabit.

Building on Anthony Putman's 1980 delineation of community parameters and Peter Ossorio's 1982 elaboration in "A Multicultural Psychology," this framework has been applied to acculturation, immigration, refugee experience, and basic human needs as well as police precincts, conspiracy communities, and large medical centers to name just a few. We examine how community parameters connect to the foundational concepts of person, behavior, language, and reality, and how Ossorio's maxims clarify interconnections among them.

Central to this framework is the concept of status or place, which brings into play the relationships persons hold, the circumstances and choice principles shaping their actions, the reasons available to them, and the social practices through which relationships are enacted. Community membership is not fixed but dynamic: persons enter, alter, and create communities and worlds.

We explore how children acquire the competence required by community membership through mentorship, discipline, participation, and observation.

In one of his final papers "When Worlds Collide" (2013), Tony Putman addressed the fact that persons rarely act in one community isolated from others, that membership in multiple communities is the rule not the exception and the dynamics of persons behaving, acting deliberately in relation to one another must take into account the shared and conflicting worlds in which each person has a place.

1:00 - 1:15 PM GMT Break

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2026

12:00 - 2:15 PM GMT

INTRODUCTORY SESSION

1:15 - 2:15 PM GMT (1.0 CE)

Title:

Understanding and Applying the Concept of Psychological Trauma

Presenter:

Ralph C. Wechsler, Ph.D.
Department of Veterans Affairs Psychologist (Retired)
and Private Practice Psychologist (Current)

Abstract:

I will first describe a general model of trauma applicable to physical and psychological injuries and discuss what makes an injury a traumatic one. I will then compare and contrast traumatic physical injuries with traumatic psychological ones, thereby elucidating what gets “damaged” in psychologically traumatic injuries. This model, grounded in Descriptive Psychology ideas, helps traumatized people begin to see what changes have occurred in their World Concept and Self-Concept as a result of their traumatic life experiences. It also provides essential conceptual tools that help them understand and examine the conclusions and assumptions they have made about themselves and the world. It is these conclusions and assumptions which have made their lives highly problematic. The model provides a way for people with PTSD to explain themselves that promotes deeper understanding, empathy, and compassion in their loved ones, and that results in more effective support. I conclude by involving the audience in an experiential exercise, in which I use a paradigm case of psychological trauma to provide practice with the formal concepts I introduce.

2:15 - 3:45 PM Long Break

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

September 3rd to September 6th, 2026

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2026

3:45 - 6:00 PM GMT

REGULAR SESSION

3:45 - 4:45 PM GMT (1.0 CE)

Title:

Shame and Guilt in the Context of Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Presenter:

Sævar Már Gústavsson
Clinical Psychologist (MSc)
Ph.D. Student in Psychology, Reykjavík University

Abstract:

One attempt to formulate the problem of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), using the cognitive framework of anxiety problems, states that people with GAD tend to overestimate their responsibility and control over the outcome of everyday tasks. This formulation of GAD creates a new problem for the disorder specific framework of mental health problems as this formulation blurs the line between GAD and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). In this presentation we will discuss that to understand the differences and similarities between GAD and OCD we cannot think of these problems only as anxiety problems but must understand how shame and guilt are a part of the experience of people which are put under these diagnostic labels. Using descriptive psychology as a framework we hope to untangle the role of shame and guilt in GAD and OCD.

4:45 – 5:00 PM GMT Break

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2026

3:45 - 6:00 PM GMT

REGULAR SESSION

5:00 - 6:00 PM GMT

(CE is not offered for this presentation)

Title:

Descriptive Psychology in the Wild

Presenters:

Julia Wechsler, B.F.A.
Paula Holt, J.D.

Reykjavík University Students:

Íðunn Soffía Agnadóttir
Magnús Örn Brynjarsson
Sara Gunnlaugsdóttir

Moderator:

Ralph Wechsler, Ph.D.

Abstract:

What does it mean to grow up in a world shaped by Descriptive Psychology? In this engaging panel discussion, Paula Holt and Julia Wechsler, raised by Descriptive Psychologists, will reflect on the unique experience of having the concepts, language, and practices of Descriptive Psychology woven into everyday life. Additionally, students of Reykjavik University will share their personal stories of how learning and using DP has shaped their world and circumstances. The panelists will explore how ideas such as persons, behavior, and competence were not simply academic concepts, but practical tools for navigating personal dynamics, conflict, identity, and life.

The discussion will offer a unique look at how Descriptive Psychology influenced the way the panelists understand themselves, approach challenges, and make sense of the world around them. Designed for both those familiar with Descriptive Psychology and those new to it, this conversation will highlight the lived, personal side of the conceptual framework — demonstrating how Descriptive Psychology can move beyond classrooms and professional settings to shape everyday human experiences.

6:00 PM Conference Ends

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

Information about 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, plus many presentations and 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. Please consult with your tax advisor. There is a "Donate" button on the SDP website to facilitate donations.