



Call for Proposals

14th International Sándor Ferenczi Conference

Psychoanalysis between Catastrophe and Creation: Emerging Perspectives

May 29 - June 1, 2024

Hosted by the GBPSF in São Paulo, Brazil

Official languages: English, Portuguese, Spanish

Proposal Submission Deadline: October 15th 2023.

Ours is a time of trauma. After centuries of destruction through slavery, war and genocide, there is rising nationalism, fear, and hatred, mixed with violence, all around the world. Existential threats—climate change, ecological disasters, and the pandemic—intensify inequality, racism, fanaticism, terrorism, and worse. Sándor Ferenczi’s contributions are exceptionally helpful in our understanding of current global challenges.

Throughout his working life, Ferenczi consistently showed deep understanding of the complex and traumatizing dynamics of power and human vulnerability. The differences between healing words and traumatizing words are envisioned in Ferenczi’s concept of the *confusion of languages*. His *language of tenderness*, the expressive and evocative constructs of care, recognizes the dignity and the humanity of the vulnerable other, and, thus, favors generating meaning for a more creative existence. His *language of passion* describes the toxicity of an authoritarian narrative and the traumatic denial through which words can wound and humiliate the vulnerable. A culture catastrophically harmed by toxic words must relearn or learn anew the language of tenderness, empathy, and recognition, in order to address integration, inclusion and sensitivity, the experience of moving forward, and a chance to heal.

We suggest that Ferenczi's clinical work includes social and political dialogues about trauma and its treatment as part of the many ways of connecting with others. His notions of disavowal, fragmentation, identification with the aggressor, as well as his progressive clinical work in responding to traumatic experiences reflect contemporary egalitarian ideals and enhance our capacity to think and act with others.

The 14th International Sándor Ferenczi Conference in São Paulo, Brazil, will bring together clinicians, scholars, researchers, students, and colleagues from other fields of knowledge for open, and collegial discussions. We ask how psychoanalysis may add to our capacity to think about the disruptive social, personal, political, environmental, and clinical situations that we are facing today.

The Themes of the Conference show the rich and fertile basis for a creative and critical understanding of the catastrophes in our time, using Ferenczi's contributions and how those contributions enrich our psychoanalytic perspectives to respond to the destabilizing upheavals in our world.

Theme 1: Emerging from Catastrophes. Social and Environmental Transformations.

Psychoanalysis can provide a more livable life for each subject. A more livable life is not just a matter of the individual, it also includes the recognition of an interdependence between humans, non-humans, the atmosphere, climatic conditions, and the universal right to breathe and exist. Ferenczi's perspectives value multiplicity and refuse to think in either/or dichotomies, such as nature/culture, body/mind, internal world/external world, progression/regression, creation/destruction, etc. (see his bioanalysis and utraquist method). In his works there are discoveries of the multiplicities of the Self, Others, and the World through interdependence and welcoming innovative relations within the analytic relationship and in relationships with the world. We invite papers that explore these perspectives.

Theme 2: The Clinical and the Sociopolitical. Challenges for Psychoanalysis in Times of Trauma.

Ferenczi was a consistent critic of power inequities in society, in the family, and in the psychoanalytic situation. In a world where authoritarianism is rising, and the distortion of truth has a narcotizing impact on many, Ferenczi reminds us of the ethical in the human encounter, and the importance of respect for human dignity. We welcome papers that explore how sociopolitical dynamics in a polarized environment may contribute to the human suffering we see in our clinical practices, where we work to understand individual and social trauma. To facilitate our understanding of what our responsibilities are, we must ask what aspects of our work we are willing to challenge and what aspects we want to safeguard? We ask colleagues to contribute papers about transgenerational and acute trauma, social or individual trauma, witnessing, and testimony from clinical and/or theoretical viewpoints. We also encourage papers on technique, transference and countertransference, and contemporary models of therapeutic action that grasp Ferenczian ideas such as tact, empathy, elasticity, and mutuality in the analysis of persons living with today's traumatic challenges.

Theme 3: Fragmentation and its Consequences on Psychic Life.

Trauma, actually experienced, in the external world has consequences on the internal world of psychic reality. Fragmentation of the Self and the multiplicity of self fragments can result in terrifying, somatized, or dissociated experiences revisiting the subject as phantoms of past traumas buried in the psyche. For Sándor Ferenczi, the legacy of trauma is not only the memory of an event, but also its recognition by the other, and whatever creative changes in the therapeutic process of becoming, that are opened up to the subject, harmed by disavowal, historical discontinuity, and the fractured Self. Participants are invited to submit papers in search of a narrative which captures the traumatizing and fragmenting experiences of people, as well as about possible integration from fragmentation to a capacity for internal conflict, reflecting post-traumatic creative processes of psychic growth.

Theme 4: Confusion of Tongues. Tenderness, Trauma and Toxicity.

Distinctions between the healing word and the traumatizing word are envisioned in Ferenczi's concept of the *confusion of languages*. The *language of tenderness*, expressive and evocative, recognizes the dignity and humanity of the experience of the vulnerable other, and, thus offers the potential for a more creative existence. The *language of passion* humiliates the vulnerable with toxic words. Language collapses, there are no words to remember, and there is confusion between meaning and voice for the person catastrophically harmed by toxic words. In the Ferenczian perspective, when language collapses, psychic change is possible. We invite papers on language in the culture of hate as a clinical social phenomenon, and how elasticity in treatment can counter rigid word systems to facilitate the emergence of play, new thinking, new language, and more compassionate ideas about otherness, as the person learns (or relearns) the language of tenderness, empathy, and recognition.

GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS:

The conference invites psychoanalytic colleagues, trauma specialists, neuroscientists, and academics to submit proposals to be considered in the sessions of the Sao Paulo conference. Both clinical and theoretical papers are encouraged, and students, if they prefer, may also submit a poster presentation. Presenters, as all participants, have to register for the conference.

Abstracts for individual presentations and panels, relevant to one of the four conference themes, either in English, Portuguese, or Spanish may be submitted to the web site:

<https://www.ferencziconference14.com/en>

Each submission should include the title of the presentation, name, degree, regular and email addresses, phone number and professional affiliation (association, society, institute, organization, etc.) of the presenter.

Abstracts for individual presentations should be a maximum 400 words. The conference presentations should be no longer than 3,000 words (for a 20 minute presentation).

Panel proposals (3 panelists) should outline the main theme of the panel in 150 words. In addition, include the names, degrees, regular and email addresses, professional affiliations (association, society, institute, organization, etc.) and a 400-word abstract for each individual

presenter of the panel. Each presentation should be no longer than 3,000 words (20 minutes) within the panel.

The Deadline for Proposal Submissions is Sunday, October 15th, 2023.