



**Toronto Institute for Contemporary Psychoanalysis**  
*presents*

# **The Long Haul of Teletherapy in a Pandemic: Making it Work**

**Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**Via ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**Free event available only to TICP members, faculty, guests and candidates**

## **ABOUT THIS PRESENTATION**

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Providing a safe space, an intimate and empathic connection, and continuity is at the core of what we do with our patients. How to do this during the COVID-19 pandemic is no small challenge. The spaces in which we work, the way we think about safety, how we think about and immerse ourselves in patients' inner worlds, and how we provide continuity have all been radically altered. This webinar will be a chance to think together about these issues by exploring the clinical gains and losses subsequent to our rapid, near-total conversion to tele(mental)health and the ongoing challenge of enduring this change in the face of uncertainty and loss.

Before the pandemic, psychoanalytic clinicians were grappling with how to make informed decisions about using technology for patient care. We had the leisure to examine emerging research in neuroscience, virtual reality, human-computer interaction, and communications theory and then let that inform our thinking. However, forced by COVID-19 abruptly to adopt technologically mediated treatment as the safest way to practice, clinicians have immediately moved treatment, supervision, and classes online. With no transition period, no choice, and no clear path forward, the move to distance treatment and training has left many feeling uncentered, unprepared, and vulnerable.

In this seminar, Gillian Isaacs Russell, author of *Screen Relations: The Limits of Computer-Mediated Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy* (Karnac, 2015) and Todd Essig, currently co-chair of APsaA's COVID-19 Advisory Team, will share their thoughts about how to make informed decisions while leading a discussion of the impact on clinicians of pandemic-based screen-mediated treatment. They will explore differences between screen relations and actual presence; how those differences influence clinical processes and outcomes; and what concepts, skills, and strategies can be developed to help make remote treatment work. Finally, they will engage a discussion of what might happen, once it is safe to do so, when we re-emerge into a very different post-pandemic world.

### **Request for Clinical Vignettes**

The presenters are requesting that participants submit clinical vignettes (250 to 500 words) about challenging or curious experiences encountered while providing teletherapy during the pandemic. Several of these will then be presented and discussed during the webinar.

Zoom videoconference link available upon receipt of registration.

### **ABOUT THE SPEAKERS**

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**Todd Essig, Ph.D.**, is Training and Supervising Psychoanalyst at the William Alanson White Institute. Known as a pioneer in the innovative uses of mental health technologies, he publishes and lectures widely. He has served on editorial boards for *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* and *JAPA* and recently co-edited along with Gillian Isaacs Russell a special issue of *Psychoanalytic Perspectives* on psychoanalysis and technology. In the aftermath of 9/11 he was Board Chair for the NY Disaster Counseling Coalition (NYDCC) providing free mental health care to first responders and their families. He currently serves as Co-Chair of the American Psychoanalytic Association's Covid-19 Advisory Team. He writes "Managing Mental Wealth" for *Forbes* where he covers the intersection of technology, psychology, and culture. His practice is in New York City where he treats individuals and couples, almost all of whom (used to) come to his office.

**Gillian Isaacs Russell, Ph.D.** is a U.K.–trained psychoanalyst. She is a member of the American Psychoanalytic Association, the International Psychoanalytical Association, and the British Psychoanalytic Council. Her book, *Screen Relations: The Limits of Computer–Mediated Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy*, was published by Karnac Books in 2015. She has served on the editorial board of the *British Journal of Psychotherapy* and is currently on their reviewing panel. She recently co–edited a special issue of *Psychoanalytic Perspectives* on psychoanalysis and technology. Dr. Russell writes, speaks and teaches internationally on technology and its impact on intimate human relationships, particularly in psychoanalytic treatment. She currently serves on the COVID–19 Advisory Team for the American Psychoanalytic Association. She practices in Boulder, Colorado, USA.

### **SUPPORT THE TICP COMMUNITY CLINIC**

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There is no fee to attend this presentation. Donations are encouraged in support of the TICP Community Clinic. To make your donation, please visit [www.ticp.on.ca](http://www.ticp.on.ca)

### **ONLINE ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

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