Belonging in the Shadow of the Pandemic

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As we attempt to emerge from the trauma of the pandemic, we have the opportunity to reflect on how this trauma has impacted our sense of belonging: to DSPP, to our families, and to everything we love. Since we last met face-to-face, DSPP has witnessed the deaths of three of our past presidents, Pat Wood, Judith Samson, and Bill Gordon. In the shadow of these losses and the ongoing trauma of the global pandemic, we are presented with an opportunity to explore group attachment and what it means to belong. For our tenured members, DSPP has been a secure home from which we explore old and new ideas about the development and healing of the mind. Hopefully, our newer members will come to form secure attachments to the group and benefit from it in a similar fashion. Dale and Melissa represent these opposite poles—Melissa is relatively new to the group and Dale has been there from the start. It is our hope as presenters that representing the spectrum of membership in DSPP will aid in exploring the various experiences of belonging to the group.

All of us bring to the task of belonging unconscious social and cultural constraints. The ways in which we belong (or feel estranged) in our families, our schools, and our communities of faith make up part of our social unconscious and contribute to how we form attachments to an organization like DSPP. To what theory do we belong? What theory belongs to us? Or do we eschew theory in the service of being free? We all started out knowing nothing about theory. As we move from one theory to another, we are bit like immigrants, feeling awkward and wondering if we will ever be at home.

After some brief opening remarks, Melissa and Dale plan to invite the group into a conversation about the meaning of belonging in the context of DSPP as a professional home.

Learning Objectives—We plan to convene a conversation on the following:

1. Reflect on how the pandemic has impacted your relationship to organizations like DSPP.
2. Consider how your personal attachment style interacts with your organizational attachment style.
3. Think about how attachment to DSPP effects your work with patients.

Kinley, J.L. and Reyno, S. M. The price of needing to belong: Neurobiology of working through attachment trauma. *Psychodynamic Psychiatry 47,* 39-51