

Integrating Clinical Practice and Research

Laurel Milberg
moderator, panel discussion

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I'm Laurel Milberg from Forbes Family Practice Residency in Pittsburgh, PA, USA, and I want to welcome you this morning -- the hardy band still here after a night of celebration and four days of extremely exciting work -- to pull it together, to think back on what we've said, and done. This session is called "Integrating Clinical Practice and Research," and that's a heavy, heavy task, but we have everyone here, on our panel of plenary speakers, to help us.

I wanted to make just a few short reflections of my own, to begin. I came to this meeting with a high degree of ambivalence, curious to meet those whose names I had heard and read, but intimidated at the same time in their presence. Intimidated about what I know and can do of Balint work. Intimidated, wondering if what I think fits or could be recognized or understood by others who have been doing this work far longer than I and closer to the source. I wondered literally and figuratively if we would speak the same language and recognize similar meaning in each other and each other's work.

The meeting began, and Frank [Dornfest] set our goals. I thought it useful to remind ourselves of those: to define what is and is not Balint work, what group processes, what leader and participant roles, what leader behaviors, what outcomes, what essential conditions create those outcomes. He challenged us to examine the Balint process, creating a body of research, first by enunciating questions and then by getting some teaching for methodology by which we may begin to answer some of those questions. Finally, our goal was to articulate Balint approaches and begin to explore ways to adapt them to the methods of a wider group or audience made up of such people as members who might not be doctors, leaders without access to mentors, funders of research, and heads of departments. The discussion began. I heard others confronting the notion of being studied, like some of those bugs in the book, by having their groups researched themselves. I heard them worry about being changed by that process of study, of not being understood, or of being portrayed with distortion.

But here we are at the end of coming together. I have discovered to my delight that we do speak the same Balint language — although we all seem to say "Balint" differently — with different styles and accents. Our differences are not only tolerated, they have been for me marvelously enriching, helping me to see all the common themes of our work. And the researchers -- well, they've turned out to be more like us than we thought they would, with approaches not so unfamiliar after all, and methods that just might help us take the energy from this coming together to position ourselves to be a recognizable movement toward a definable future.

I would like to call our qualitative researchers who have immersed themselves in our work and our thoughts about our work for the past four days. Some of them have had seemingly allergic reactions, but they seem to be o.k. Then there will be a brief time after they present, Michael Courtenay said sort of like six minutes for the plenary speakers, for response or comment by the plenary folk you see assembled in front of you. Then all will be available for what I hope will be a rousing -- despite it being Sunday morning -- time for us to be available to discuss our thoughts, evaluate our progress, choose our future, and plot our next direction. So in an order that only you three know, I'd like to invite you to come up now and tell us what you learned.

Addison: Thanks, Laurel. Penny and Will decided that I would speak for the three. That decision came when I was out of the room for a moment. Shows you never to be late for a meeting. I want to thank everyone for making us all so very welcome here, and it was really an intensely stimulating conference. I just hope I can sleep on the plane today.

Let me begin by framing our invitation to come here. That invitation was to begin to

introduce qualitative research to Balint work. My guess is that we've learned and gained as much as we've given, so again we give our appreciation for that. What we want to do this morning is very briefly open the window through which we observed the conference these last few days and show you a bit of what we saw, heard, smelled, and even tasted through that window.

First, it was an abundant and bountiful gourmet banquet for us. We experienced so much that it was impossible, very impossible, to digest it by this morning. What we don't want to do is prematurely reduce, or objectify, or be superficial, or to close off other possibilities. What we want to do this morning is contribute to a continuing dialogue. We've organized our preliminary thinking into three areas today. First, some core values we observed — that was our process last night — and are impressed with. Second, a few areas of creative tension that we saw. And third, implications or possibilities, for further research in the new world.

But first let me go back briefly to the research design that I presented on Friday for all of you. I want to show you where we were in this process, where Will and Penny and I were in doing all this. Remember we thought it was framing the problem and the problem was really coming here and introducing qualitative research. We formed a research team. We looked throughout these three days at our pre-understandings and we juxtaposed those to our observations as we were doing this.

About reviewing the literature. We've all been reading literature both in Balint training and other things — I probably more than the other but we've done a bit of that. I wrote this in a linear fashion but it would have been better if I had written this with a big circle and lots of little circle on the periphery. This is a circular process and that's why when we skip stages, we'll come back and pick up those states later. So we never did a focus group, but we've done Balint groups this whole time. So we've done some group work, and we've done a lot of observation of little Balint groups. Now about half of you had one of us in your groups observing, and half of you didn't -- because we wanted to see the development of a group over time. We thought that was more important than just sampling different groups because we get some of that in the fishbowl.

We have begun to start analyzing the data. We did a lot of that post-banquet, if you can believe it. Part of doing that is exploring the background conditions of Balint training. What we need to do is more of all of that, continue doing that, so as we go around in the circle, we circle back and circle forward again. We need to do more looking at contrasting cases, and we'll cover that when we talk about research possibilities a little bit. What we're going to give you today is some preliminary thoughts we have. I can't really call it an account because we didn't get that far, but that's where we would go with this, to an account -- read it back to you and begin refining it a little bit. So this is the opening of the dialogue and that's where we are in this circular process.

As far as the first area of core values, here are some of the core values that we perceived and interpreted. One is valuing continuity. Balint work very much values continuity and along with that we call it being a part of a community over time. I think that's very important.

The second is valuing of the relationship. The relationship is something that is very important, too. These are what we observed, really, in these three days. This is not an exhaustive list but it'll be something for you take home and, again, remember, this is the opening, this is the dialogue so we want you to help us with this.

Third would be what we call respect for others, for the interpretations and feelings of others. Fourth would be valuing of unconscious processes. Fifth, we observed and interpreted a focusing solely on the professional ego. Sixth, we focused on a tolerating of ambiguity. Seventh,

we saw the valuing of meaning in one's life work: this valuing you all do so very nicely, as you gather the importance of giving meaning and of finding meaning in what you're doing in your work, in your life work. Eighth is valuing the holding environment, especially the small group, and ninth, which is what I call valuing the clearing, which allows for the exploration of possibilities. Let me just leave it there. If you want to talk about it, we can talk about it afterwards.

Now, in the second area that we categorized and divided up we talked about creative tensions. We have about six of these that we want to talk about. First, is the creative tension of looking toward the one right answer to a case and multiple levels of meaning. Second, the tension between hierarchy and partnership. Third, the tension between tradition and change. Fourth, the tension of specialness and expansiveness. Fifth, the tension of comfort and anxiety. Sixth, the tension of the grieving process.

Last, in the third area we want to feed back some research possibilities to you for Balint training in a new world employing an approach that very much fits the method of the training that you have. So one possible area of research is to continue the process begun in this conference, the research process that we're doing right now, to carry that on. Second, is to investigate what makes for a good leader, the kind of rough outline I gave, the kind of work Joel Merenstein is doing. That's already more than just a possibility, Joel's work. That can even be tied into the credentialing process that you're interested in. Third, to investigate the Balint process itself. Fourth, to look at the different aspects of the story that Will talked about in his talk yesterday, the structure, the content and the quality of the story. That would make a fascinating study. Fifth, to look at the training process itself, the whole of the process, and that also can tie in with the credentialing that's happening. Sixth, to look at or investigate specific clinical topics, such as repeat prescriptions, such as accidents, such as any situation that calls to you, something that grabs you, something that you're interested in, something that you care about, but it can be something very specific like this in a clinical situation. It's a little hard, we had a wonderful lunch with the British research group and talked about that and I hope something good comes about that. Seventh, what we call compare and contrast with other types of groups. Perhaps this compassion could center around specific issues such as the boundary between working on the professional ego and the personal ego in the learning type situation on the doctor-patient relationship and what other types of groups in training do with this boundary, or other things, but that's the contrasting cases that can be helpful in a research design. One explores outward, to look at different settings and to look at different types of ways of doing this work. Describing how they're different could help to elucidate what you're doing here.

That's all that I want to do as an introductory statement for us. I'll let the other speakers and the audience respond to that.

Voice from audience, cannot hear.

The one thing that just caught my imagination was the image of the clearing and I immediately thought of the space that's created in a group, that potential that's allowed to be filled and the whole image of what we do as a container. We contain the patient for a period of time. And yesterday, the last couple of days, we filled that space with electronic umbilical cord back to this larger group. There's some powerful image there, I think.

_____? I need some more time to think about it.

_____? Yeah, I think there's a lot for us to go on there. Just maybe one very minor point, but

I think it is a sensitive one for us, is that unconscious processes were listed as a core value. It is a bit of a hot potato in the Balint movement. So I'm just recording that for the moment, and could speak about it some other time again. Thanks.

_____? It interests me very much because when we talked with Frank for the first time it was at an officers' meeting in Brussels, and when he talked to me about wanting to introduce quality control into the Balint work I really was amazed, thinking I could not see the way it could be done. At that time I was struggling with another group, not at all a Balint group, group of general practitioners (GP's) who had the task to speak about x-ray quality control because in Switzerland many of the GP's do their own chest x-rays. It was so difficult to find a method, there were plenty of papers and diagrams and scales -- it was so difficult to do quality control for chest x-rays that I could not see how it could be done in Balint work. So it interested me very much from the first day.

_____? Well I want to thank the research team for what's been a tremendous x-ray. They really have got right through the process. It gives us a very good view. I thank them, too, for introducing qualitative research in such an exciting and vital way, with very little control -- which was rather nice.

I'd just like to say for a second that the council met, the International Balint Federation, and has put in process the whole idea of credentialing. In fact, Michelle, myself, and Margarette Stuber have started to meet together to discuss how we start that process of credentialing on an international basis, respecting certain very important issues. The credentialing process must have built into it a process for development, as opposed to merely a boundary for keeping people in and out. So that's a very important component. Some people won't want to participate at all, understanding all that.

And so we're in the process of putting together the two systems of credentialing that already exists. One of them is a very complex system from Germany, and the other is a very complex system from France. Maybe just the language is complex -- I'm still trying to decide -- we're looking at the core value in the systems.

I met briefly with our qualitative researchers to see how we could use the process you've just seen a few moments ago. And what that brings into very sharp focus is that if you start looking at it and trying to decide what it is that you want from the process of credentialing, you begin to discover that what you need is more than just a process, more than just a process that people will go through -- but defined learning objectives, defined competencies. An interesting place to start would be defining the qualities of a Balint leader. What are the competencies? So that's a real challenge, particularly to do that on an international basis, but it's very exciting.

_____? Preliminary note. The different of pronunciation between Balint and Balint is entirely Michael Balint's fault. In Hungarian there is a circumflex accent over the "a" which he dropped when he became British and there I know he called himself Balint but you're absolutely entitled to call it Balint. David _____, who wrote a book on brief psychotherapy, always used to say: when Michael Balint walked into a scientific discussion, science left by the other door.

The reason for this was that he tried, as I think many of us tried, rather conditioned by the fact that if you can't count it, it doesn't exist. Therefore this conference is absolutely a watershed, for me anyway. At last, people came and said you don't have to count the damn things, you can actually do it in an entirely different way. I now see before me -- I only wish I was younger -- that you could actually research Balint work in a proper and meaningful and significant way, and oh,

dear, I envy you all.

_____? I too want to thank our team of researchers. I was very impressed with what they've brought because I think they just said what we all thought for ages and years but couldn't put it so well. Maybe I would insist on one point which they have stressed. It's something about - I don't know if I can say it exactly as I feel it - about our differences. I mean, that what they say _____ very important that it's not a question that we will arrive at the end of a grinding process (even if it's a very clever and pleasant one) to a model that will suppress all the differences. But, on the contrary, it's to enhance everybody and every doctor's and every patient's difference, that we can work on all of those points and bearings you gave us. I think it's extremely important and maybe makes all the difference. And to take again what Michael Courtenay said, I think maybe it's not a question of counting but of accounting in the sense of recounting a story, and that accounting I think you did marvelously well.

_____ : I felt such a precious gift we were given: to be not only let in, but welcomed in to your whole process, to your whole kind of life-world here. And I think the reason we were willing and eager to work long hours was because we felt the preciousness of the responsibility to give back with respect what you'd given us, and to really be able to say it clearly as we could at this point, which felt at times overwhelming. I actually feel quite moved at what you said, Michael, because those are the words that I so wanted to hear, myself, and it makes staying up late worthwhile.

_____ : We have been moved. It was very hard last night. We felt as if we had been given a beautiful, fragile piece of china and we suddenly felt we weren't researchers anymore for we had been given the care of something as well, and so I hope you have sensed our caring for what it is that we have been blessed with, with your invitation and then your reception here. I was very touched by what you said, Michelle, because we worked very hard when we were looking at how to share with you the creative tensions and we really came on the side of -- these are differences that are good, and so we used "and" to talk about the tensions and the "and" is a keeping them together. It's not a choice, it's that both of those somehow when they work together in the same glass -- interesting things happen in different ways -- but they are all Balint.

_____ : If I could just hijack the microphone again on the way back. I actually thought first I might be just commenting specifically on specific points of paper. So now I'd like to say something more general. I think it is important to say that as a discipline general practice, family medicine, it's been absolutely a lot, if one could use that word, to have to interact with other disciplines, specialist disciplines in terms of Balint movement, psychoanalysis, and now our new sisters instead of brothers the qualitative researchers. I think it's important to say that our relationship with these other disciplines hasn't always been such a creative tension because there have been a lot of feelings which haven't always been articulated. One the one hand, I think historically as a kind of second-class citizen it's been dealt with in various ways. One of them has been a kind of slavish subservience to the specialties. We are only GP's. Then there's a kind of reaction formation and we adopted a kind of superiority that we know it all and they're only specialists. And hopefully we are beginning to try to mature towards a relationship which is more one of mutual respect and working together. And this is what I think we were so fortunate _____ with the Balints, and what I have discovered, perhaps I knew it appear a little bit before but I've now been able to see, is that what it depends on is not so much the nature of the discipline, although of course it is related, but the people who are doing it, And having come here with some reservations about how we were going to work together I think the quality of the people that worked with perhaps even more, and I'm not in any way minimizing the value of what they have to offer us as a discipline, makes me feel very optimistic, but our new siblings, perhaps we're

mourning the loss of our parent at this Congress, and perhaps the new siblings that we've formed are the qualitative researchers will compensate us and help us move forward.

Milberg: Anyone else up here want to make a comment? Well, since this is a circular process -- remember we were taught? -- it's time, I think, to bring it around and let you chew a little bit on some of the creative tensions, the central themes, or the research directions, or anything else that you'd like to respond. Can you do that without literally being in a circle? Since we're not here to jog or yell _____.

Erica? I really just wanted to quote an English poet who wrote in an essay, not a poem, about the living with the consciousness of opposites but do not need to be reconciled. I feel that sort of says it all that we really need to hold the awareness. I can't say it better than Keats anyway.

Alan Johnson: Erica, let me punctuate your thought with the light bulb joke — how many zen priests does it take to change a light bulb? Two, one to change the bulb and one not to change the bulb.

_____: I'm not sure I'll make sense. These are difficult ideas. But the imagery in my mind listening this morning is more about marriages than about brothers and sisters. I'm picking up something I think Alan said about the space which was one of the core values under the title of the clearing and then the question about unconscious processes. It's always seemed to me that one of the very important aspects of our work has been that we are the fruit of a marriage between a discipline that understands things about the unknown and the unconscious in psychoanalysis and our own everyday work as GP's, and that that marriage has a great deal to do with the creation of the space, the thinking space, in which new ideas can be born in the group. And I think this conference is the beginning of a new marriage, not to do with the central fact of our group work but to do with a marriage which will bring about a way of articulating and researching and understanding our own work and our process, and I think it's very exciting.

_____: There are so many parts to this conference, it's different to pick on one particular area that I have enjoyed more than any other, but one thing that Michael said last night in his beautiful eulogy to Mrs. Balint was the elusive nature of her leadership and personality, and it reminded me of my own inadequate feelings about being a leader and how to achieve some more concrete understanding of the role of the leader, and it reminded me of that Arabian proverb about the eunuch in the harem who sees it done every night, who knows how it's done, but in fact when it comes to doing it himself, he can't. I have these concerns for the credentialing group, of how they are going to credential leaders who are still developing. I've enjoyed all the parts of the conference. Some parts are more elusive than others and very difficult to crystalize in words.

Milberg: Anyone else on the subject of impotence?

_____: That does give me an opening to something I was going to say on a much more serious note. We've been speaking about the positive things and the good things but what concerns me is that one of the core values of Balint work is the unconscious, is psychoanalysis. But in the United States, at least, this stuff is as dead as a doornail. Psychoanalysts can't get paid to see patients. Nobody's training in psychoanalysis. In more general therapy, the movement is away from analytic thinking and very much towards other modes of thinking. In the psychiatric profession, the movement is away from analytic thinking towards medications and that kind of work. So that if part of our sort of spiritual rootedness is in a deep sense of the unconscious, of resistance, of conflict, of all those kinds of key, key values in understanding this, we are in very, very troubled times. It applies to the field in general, but it certainly applies to Balint work.

_____: Thank you. I'm grateful for the opportunity to respond. This is an issue that I had the occasion to discuss in quite a lot of detail and depth with Enid Balint. I think it needs to be clear that we are not about being psychoanalysts or minianalysts, imitation analysts or anything like that. The special contribution that the analyst had for us was their training and observation and this is why it seems kind of a propitious _____ to have _____ because this is a lot of what they are telling us about. It's about a special way of observing. And if one looks at the work and the script, the transcript of group work by analyst leaders, one never heard reference to the unconscious, o.k.?, and Enid personally was particularly scathing about attempts to introduce that into the work. I see all the British group leaders nodding their heads here. I think we -- yes, you want to clarify?

(Voice from audience, cannot be heard)

We can, because the idea is that you don't have -- what we need to learn from them is a special way, that _____ observe, perhaps to understand interactions, perhaps to be able to observe not so much what is said but what is not said, what is happening in group process and so on. But I think they were very careful not to actually have it to be anything more than that. I don't think that the fact we, the United States, that there appears to be a movement away from it needs to mean that we want to distance ourselves in any particular way from what psychoanalysis has contributed to the understanding of human beings and understanding of health. I just say that on a very personal level. I'm quite unapologetic about that. But I don't think that should be confused with what we are doing in Balint groups and we need to be very clear in our own minds. This is why I didn't want to see nitpicking but this is why I initially responded specifically that unconscious process is not a core value of Balint group. It's something that we're aware of and by our very nature interested in, if we're going to be honest, but certainly not what one would regard as a core value as an integral part of our work, and it can be not only unproductive but quite dangerous for people to be propagating that when this isn't what we're really supposed to be doing.

_____: I just want to say we missed you yesterday, Stanley.

Milberg: Hang on. I think we can. Let's just get a few more comments.

_____: I started off by thinking I thought Stanley was missing the point. I know now that I actually positively disagree with him. I am absolutely devastated by the news that Dr. Margo has given me. I don't believe with Stanley that familiarity — I don't know what other word to use with unconscious processes — is alien to the Balint leadership. In fact, I think it's integral, and what is more, we've lived in Britain with a dearth of psychoanalysts — I don't think there have been more than 300. The thought that psychoanalysts are becoming attenuated or starving, begging on the street, fills me with gloom and despondency because I believe that one of the twin life blood streams for the Balint movement comes from psychoanalysis and I can only say I am appalled.

(Voice which cannot be heard)

_____: O.k. well let me go to the other side. I think I can speak, being a 4th year candidate in psychoanalysis with one of the Denver institutes. Before I say more I would like to say that I thought you were asking for a divorce and that perhaps — I may have misunderstood you -- but perhaps the second wife was going to be the researchers. And those of us who have tried to find a way to integrate psychoanalytic thinking with family medicine were being eased out, because the researchers could observe the process. I hope that's wrong.

Let me say this, Geoffrey. I think that finally psychoanalysis in America has caught up with Michael Balint because the emphasis now, particularly at my institute call it contemporary psychoanalysis, relational, intersubjective. It means that finally we're going to get around to including the therapist in the therapy. [The therapy employs] a two-person model, rather than a one-person model, and Michael Balint was way ahead of his time. I'm more encouraged right now. I have to be because of the training.

SIDE 2 OF TAPE

_____: I was going to jog across the room rapidly. I think that this is important, you know we haven't really talked about _____ and some of the inner subjective people that come out of self psychology, which is I think is a very, very productive direction to look at in terms of research. Jeff, your comment before about what's happening in the United States today -- I share your concern about it. It's very, very disturbing. I don't know what to do about it either, but as a practicing psychologist I feel very pushed out and extruded by that.

Megeen: I guess what I heard in Geoff's comment that really made me feel despondent was -- I don't think you were talking about the state of psychoanalysis in the United States but rather its influence on medicine and the practice of family practice, and I think he's speaking very truly that if you don't have that sort of seed to think about practicing medicine in a different way, just as we've in this conference have the seed of thinking about research in a different way, then it's hard to make Balint work. That's what I heard in his comments and I think we've really encapsulated that in this conference, that if you think that a drug can fix someone's mental health, a person is reducible to biochemistry and physiology and that's what counts. It's not the hidden thing that we look for in Balint work -- that can't be captured -- it can only be revealed if you collect the right information and sort it correctly so that other people can begin to sense the feelings and the experience that you had when you went through it in the first place. I don't want to speak for Geoff, because he's perfectly capable of speaking for himself, but that's what I heard as a family practitioner who does Balint work from a psychoanalyst who does Balint work.

_____: Yeah, I think that's getting closer to what I mean. I'm not meaning that Balint people should be analysts, I want to make that absolutely clear. What I'm meaning is that if you're not steeped in the idea that the unconscious matters, that there are conflicts in people, and these conflicts, these issues are what cause a lot of the difficulties. If you can understand them, we can get to the root of the problem. What I'm saying is that kind of thinking seems to be going out of style in the United States. We're much more into the quick fix and so on.

_____: I was struck by Will's image of us as being china, which gave me a sense of fragility and I was trying to toy with that idea, I'm starting to get a picture of what the fragility looks like. I don't like to look at it but, part of my response is that I really don't like to look at it, but I'm disturbed by the term despondency. I think that's our danger. I think of the important work of Balint and I don't feel despondent I feel encouraged because I think this is the forum to fight what you're talking about. And rather than feel despondent I would hope that we feel that this is our life's work. And this is what we're about and we're crucial to family medicine and primary care and all that kind of stuff.

_____: I have to respond. This is why we're married to each other. I get depressed, and she gets encouraging and we survive.

_____: And I get the microphone.

_____: This is not a plug for psychologists, but I would say that psychologists as a group do see the movement for psychiatry toward the biological orientation. Lots of the trainees now in psychoanalytic institutes are in fact psychologists, social workers, anthropologists. I think that family medicine provides a beautiful refuge for those who are interested in the unconscious because one of family medicine's core values is the biopsychosocial approach. So while American psychiatry may be moving more biological, they're going to need to respond eventually to the people that send them patients, which will be the family physician, general practitioners.

_____: I would be deeply despondent if our observers had not observed the fact that the unconscious was a core value of the Balint movement.

_____: I just wanted to complete the analogy with the china. I guess everyone that works in the kitchen realizes that fine china is actually much stronger than pottery or cheap china.

_____: I particularly like both those last two comments, but I what I wanted to say was this is marvelous what I see going on. We struggled over the word to use. You don't need to feel despondent. We did observe what we have called unconscious processes. We did struggle that that word in fact connected to the history of psychoanalysis and it put a name that came from a discipline, which is what I hear Stanley saying, that we don't need the name from the discipline. But we didn't have yet another word and that word captures something so big and powerful that we could see and feel and taste and the different metaphors of senses. It was everywhere. This is a good dialogue.

_____: And I don't know whether people notice or not but we explicitly did not say "the" unconscious. Some people noticed. We talked about unconscious processes, not assuming that there's a place or a repository called the unconscious. But that it is a process and part of the process of it is making unconscious processes more conscious.

Milberg: Frank has a translation point.

_____: Sorry. It was just pointed out to me that the word despondent doesn't translate very well. The word, I think, is like concerned, is the closest I could get to it.

Milberg: With some sadness, right?

Brock: Being a bit of a peacemaker by nature, I can see a reconciliation between the discussants here. I don't care what you call unconscious processes. All I'm interested in is that they do have clinical manifestations and that these clinical manifestations we observe. I don't know of another name for the determinants of these clinical observations and so I would stay with unconscious until something else is more meaningful. But there are clinical manifestations of whatever it is that we're talking about which we as leaders have to observe. It's not magical.

_____: I think that we didn't speak about why _____ did Michael Balint the first group in Hungary. In that time there was a very difficult economical situation in 1927 and the people were very poor. And they were not able to pay for the psychoanalysts because it was very expensive for the poor human being and he wanted to help by the doctors to them, to bring up the doctors from their "pills- thinking" to the human being. Be a natural human being to the poor people. It was his idea in the first time. It was very, very nice because he could help the poor people through their doctors and he could help by his analytical thinking the people who were not able to go to an analyst. It was a very, very important idea. And my second wondering: that we didn't speak

about burning out syndrome of professionals. [Burn-out occurs] very, very often and a good Balint group is very good against burning out syndrome of professionals because they can find other people who can help them and they can express it. And they can recognize it early. It is very, very important. Thank you.

_____: I always say we cannot be barefoot on ice. We cannot GP, Balintize, GP; and be barefoot on ice.

_____: I'm not disagreeing with that. I'd just like to add another -- with our Hungarian colleague who I gathered not only a difficult economic situation in Hungary but at the time also an autocratic government and that meetings of more than three people in a public place were illegal without special permission. So you had to get special permission in order to hold the group and the condition put by the haughty government at the time was that a member of the secret police should be present at the meeting and so Michael's first group had a member of the Hungarian secret police. Now, what was wonderful was that the secret policeman became his patient.

Chessman: For me the unconscious is that which is not present and it's very hard for us to be talking about something that's not present. We see the clinical manifestations as Clive phenomenologically put so it's that stuff that gets created for me in that clearing the stuff that I see some evidence of and feel some evident of that on one level I don't know the hell we're talking about but we're talking so it's interesting.

_____: Now that I'm sitting next to you I can grab the mike. All I was going to say is that it's o.k. not to know what the hell the analysts are talking about, but as I said earlier, and I can't understand why Mike felt that I disagreed with him, we need an analyst to explain that, is that doesn't preclude our deep respect and value for what they have to contribute. Mike said it is a life blood. It's a kind of life blood or perhaps the vein that it's coming through which is at issue. It isn't the specific technique with which they work which is so crucial as perhaps the particular aspects which we can learn from them and interact with them about. Thank you, Mike.

_____: I have the feeling that I'm looking at or that we are reenacting a kind of primitive scene because as long as I've done Balint work and it's quite a long time -- somebody stressed yesterday that it was 20 years -- I think it's even more -- I've never been to something important about Balint without people, and I don't know if it's GP or, well, how would I say, somatic doctors, maybe, having a kind of feud that they have against psychoanalysts. There is always a moment in the session where something starts against or with psychoanalysis and I still wonder why, because as somebody very aptly put it, I think we cannot work one without the other. And about the secret police, that's why on the first day, I thought maybe that our researchers would be something like the people looking at us. But they weren't secret at all. Still they might have been a kind of police, and they were not. And maybe sometimes we see our unconscious as a kind of police of which we are afraid. Something we don't know, we don't see, we don't hear about, but it's up there somewhere. And our unconscious enacts sometimes a kind of treachery, telling other people something about us that we don't even know. And maybe that's something we have difficulty coping with, especially as we are accustomed with the body to see things, to know where they are, and the unconscious (that hidden thing we just hear about from psychoanalysts) is something hard to live with or to manage. But how can we forget that what we do in a consultation, what we do in a Balint group, what we are doing here, is nothing but the encounter of all our unconscious or imaginary, or whatever we want to call them.

_____: I've been thinking about what Stan said. I think it's from the general practice view or from family medicine point of view that perhaps family medicine now in Sweden is that mature that

we can meet other specialists in a fertile way, and I hope that will make it easier to deal with this question about how to handle the analysts and psychoanalysts in a good way. Because I also feel and I also know that when we start up talking in our Swedish Family Medicine Association about how to deal with this [issue], I think now we're going to be so mature that we can have a good relationship. I think we need it.

Balint groups have to have contact with psychoanalysts' theory, psychoanalyst-thinking doctors, whatever, so I'm also very concerned that psychoanalysts in the States are diminishing. In Sweden [the number of psychoanalysis is] also diminishing, but still Swedish psychoanalysts get paid for treating patients and they get money for training actually new psychoanalysts. But when we get mature in family medicine I think we're going to deal with it in a bit better way.

Johnson: The joke I told you about the light bulb wasn't told me by a zen priest. The training I did was at the Jung Institute which is also a tradition of the unconscious and Freud was honored there. I read the cocaine papers of Freud purchased at the Jung Institute in Zurich. But let me try to speak to some different issues that have come up.

Michelle, to speak to your question: I think the antagonism toward psychoanalysis is due to the fact that one group of people have decided that they have the definitive word on what we don't know. And I resist that in any form, coming from Freud or Jung -- either one. So I think the question is how are we going to talk about what we don't know.

And I would want to encourage you — I think this is what prompted my comment — there are a lot of people today talking about the unknown and doing it in a very helpful way. Your psychoanalytic training in Denver when you begin to look at a two person model, but what I would call to your attention is that the Balint Society forming out of the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine has had a very, I want to say a very good, competitive relationship with another group of people who believe that the training of the family doctor relies on knowing something about family systems. And no one has ever seen a family system. That's an abstraction. But when you begin to talk about system and take it seriously it would be looking at a family with bad child and good child, where splits begin to occur, where there's no executive system or there's only executive system, or mom and dad have given up being husband and wife.

So there are many traditions that are teaching people to think about the whole and where parts of it are missing. And I don't think we need to go to psychoanalysis to find that. In other words, in a system something becomes unconscious, but no one who talks systems theory says let's go around and find the unconscious. They simply say, what's missing in this system? What's missing in the consultation? What's missing in terms of certain affect? So I think there are a lot of ways that we can take faith that Balint can move ahead whether in the hands of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Virginia Satir, Fritz Perl or so forth, or whoever it was that told me the light bulb joke, as I say it wasn't a Zen priest. So there must be some people with a sense of humor about the unconscious.

_____: I think, too, part of what is going on here to just state the obvious, is that in the United States I think the vast majority of people who are doing Balint groups with family doctors are psychologists of different ilks than psychoanalysts. And so it's already people doing this, and it takes on the [feeling], do I belong at the table, should I back off and go find a psychoanalyst. It's already there. So that's part of what's going on here.

_____: I think what's going on here is tension. And it's taking a long time to learn that — one of the most difficult learnings for me in Balint training has been to look at the positive as well as

the negative. I always tend to look at the negative and find some way to fix it. And one of the nice things about what you gave us this morning is to highlight for us that the tension is creative. I like the way we're talking to each other. It's less sugar-coated, it's more direct, and I hope we never resolve the issue because it's a wonderful way to talk to each other.

_____: I was just thinking that another word that we might use instead of unconscious or psychoanalytic is just plain human. Freud commented somewhere that he didn't take any credit for discovering the unconscious but the poets and philosophers as he put it had been there before him, and I would include with the poets and philosophers the great novelists like Tolstoy. If you read something like Anna Karenina you can find all sorts of things about human beings and how they function and how a lot of the things that motivate them and determine their actions and feelings are unknown to them. I think there was something in Will's paper about important truths, generalized truths, about human nature and human beings have to be there somewhere. I also remember someone who later turned out to be an antagonist of Freud so that doesn't matter, saying that the revolutionary thing about some of Freud's early case histories was that they were actually human stories about human beings with very little technical language. This was something that had never been seen before in psychological literature. So I think that what we have to hang on to are these human values, seeing our patients as fellow human beings, not as a bit of machinery that needs to be fixed. And I think psychologists can sometimes be in as much danger as a biological doctor of trying to do that. So the word unconscious to me stands for all the human values, the idea of relating to our patients as human beings and enjoying the richness and splendor of human life as the great novelists and poets have described it to us.

David Sanders?: The first time I learned about the unconscious was a Hasidic story of the founder of that movement who talked clearly about projection and that we don't like things in other people because we don't like those things in ourselves. So that predated Freud for about 200 years. One thing I find interesting and this is to dovetail, I wrote down what Alan said, no one has definitive answers about the unknown. And I think that it's the process of how you get to understanding the unknown that is equally important and in the listing of all the core values it sounds to me like you were describing a lot of what are core values of psychoanalysis as well. Continuity, relationship, respect, observing ego, albeit professional ego, tolerating ambiguity. These are lots of core values that I was taught in terms of psychoanalytic training. So I guess one thing I'm taking away from the conference also, does anyone have the definitive answer about the process to getting to the unknown? And that sounds to me to be the tension as well in, you know, is there only one way to do Balint group?

_____: Unintelligible

_____: I want to just respond to that. In harkening back to John's comment of a minute ago, yes, I think that the Balint movement owes something to psychoanalysis, but there's another way of interpreting some of the core values; as a more basic being in the world, and how we are with other people. And the sort of unconscious processes that I talked about, remember on Friday I talked about that in terms of noticing what isn't noticed, understanding what is not yet understood, looking around in the atmosphere that's with us all the time. So it's not this deep hidden truth that comes up but it's more of a way that stays closer or tries to stay closer to the natural phenomenon, natural being in the world with others that we are already in at the moment. Stanley asked for the microphone.

Stanley: I just want to say I like John's comment about "human." Another very good word which has been used in this context is personal patient care which also brings us nearer to being human. Just one comment about the despondency about the decline of psychoanalysis in the

United States: I do feel that we must take heart from the fact that we're having a Balint conference here which does make me believe that civilization will finally reach the United States.

_____: I much prefer poets to Freud in spite of what my training is and this keeps coming through my mind so I'm going to say as much as I can remember of it. It's T.S. Eliot _____ from the four quartets and this shall be the end of all our searching that we shall arrive at the place where we started and know it for the first time through the unknown yet half remembered gate. And if you want to go on with that, that's all I can remember. That's a Balint group for me because invariably in the few Balint groups I've been in we arrive at the place where we started and we know it, maybe not for the first time, but in a different way.

_____: That's a good poem. In French we say we don't go where we are going, but we're going. What was I going to say, I'm sorry. I'm a little bit lost in the in the unknown because I think we should also work with the known part of it and I very much appreciated what you said, John, but still I think, I want to think, that some human values are conscious and not only unconscious, and that we must not forget that we also work with the body and with very concrete things, too -- but I don't think that's what I wanted to say.

_____: The work of an observer is never done and I hear the word "despondency" but I see and feel something very alive and I just want to hold that mirror up too.

(Voices from the audience)

_____: I just want to say in terms of much more concretely that what I was understanding Jeff to be saying is something I was feeling last night when I was talking with Andrew about what's happening in the medical community there and here, and that's that we're talking about in an essence selling what we have to offer. During one of our groups or just before one of our groups we overheard some people walking by who said, "Gee, that must a group of psychoanalysts meeting over there," and I think that's the concern that somehow if we're perceived as doing psychoanalysis that we won't be funded, it won't be o.k. It's going to take 10 years before we see any results, all these kinds of things. That's my perception of what you're saying and that would be my only fear. Having been involved I have no question about the value of it and the humanity of it and being here has revitalized me to be doing that but I think that would be my underlying concern, how do I sell it if I have to sell it.

_____: I was interested in that we had our researchers present their talk and we haven't been talking research. We haven't gone near that. And I was starting to feel like when are we going to get to research and it struck me that what we're doing now is sort of the first step in, I guess it was Will's process, looking at our preconceptions. There's a lot of this kind of work that we have to do, look at what we're doing before we can get down to studying what we're doing. So I feel better about it.

Milberg: Feel free to take this on a turn to another area we have illuminated and talked straight about yet.

_____: I'm happy that the younger generation has started to speak. Can we have some more? The oldies have said far too much.

_____: Will the younger generation please stand up?

Milberg: Well, that put everyone in their seats.

_____ : It is a fact of life that the old people want to be young and the young people are afraid to be so.

Milberg: Think about future directions, or, don't let that stop you.

_____ : I speak from sort of half-way house of age, 50 very soon. My thoughts are a little bit unformed, but I have a feeling that we're struggling with whether or not we can embrace two different, not competitive I think, sets of creative relationships that we started with. Because we did start with a lot of quite sort of very, very positive and cozy feelings about the research findings. Then there were some ideas introduced about — maybe it was an unfortunate metaphor of mine about two marriages setting off an extremely sort of competitive discussion, and a tremendous amount of reverberation and ambivalence about our primary relationship, at least to my mind our primary relationship in the work with, dare I use the word, psychoanalysis and the unconscious and the unknown, etc. Completely obliterating the other relationship that the conference is mainly focused on which is about the relationship between Balint work and qualitative research. And now we're perhaps getting back. And it seems to me there's no reason why the two should be so competitively held or to sort of mutual exclusion, because after all the unconscious was on Will's list. If it wasn't on Will's list then I think there would be every reason for a very competitive struggle of the sort that we've been having, but it was on the list. And maybe we can, it's a sort of challenge, I think for Balint, to see whether we can keep both of these creative relationships in different areas of our work, one the work and one to do with the research and the articulating of it to other people.

_____ : I wanted to maybe move to a slightly different area in picking up on some pieces that have come up and then moving it slightly differently. Alan had spoken about different ways of knowing the unknown and we had been talking about the unconscious and I get the feeling that he related the unconscious with the unknown and Alec also kind of spoke about not knowing what the unconscious was and it's kind of unknowable. I think Clive reminded us that we're not talking about things that are unknown or unknowable, things that we see manifestations of in clinical work, and I was thinking back on that, on what do you do when you see things, how do you deal with them? Which got me back to what Frank said about us not being sweet anymore. Because one of the issues for me in this conference, and this is really taking a different tack, is what do we do as Balint leaders when we see things happening, notice resistances, notice conflicts, notice things that are going on in the group or in the presenter and his or her patient and so on. How do we deal with that kind of thing? What I'm getting back to, I guess now, is away from the theory and more to technique. Maybe people want to take it up and maybe not, but when we see things that are manifested before our eyes as leaders, how do we deal with them or how far do we go, how far do we push it, just like in this group now we are struggling with how far we push different issues.

Michael Courtenay: I think I can address that in the context of something else I wanted to say because time and American Airlines wait for no man and I haven't much longer. There are many things I shall treasure about this conference but probably the greatest is my involvement with the small group, both with my young co-leader and even younger participants. We started off with a very fragile vase and I think we worked through to pretty tough china and it was a wonderful experience. I never fail to be amazed that in three days you can get a group cohesion which I think would take months in the ordinary thing. I was particularly pleased to put my foot in it and become involved in the case. I said in my preliminary talk the great danger is for the GP leader to become involved; he knows the GP setting so well that he slips into that mode all too easily, which is why I treasure the unconscious heritage from psychoanalysis. I shall, and I'm sure I speak for

all the group leaders -- I shall treasure the experience for the rest of my life.

Milberg: Did someone say "can we go now?" How about if we took a break, then we could come back after about 15-20 minutes so as not to extend the whole thing.

Tape 2 side A

Erica: On the last two comments, you know, I once again would like to use my image of family and ask whether there are hierarchies within families; and of course we know there are, and I think for me to question there as here is not so much whether there are hierarchies but how safe and respected people feel within those systems. That for me is the crucial issue over here. The word "benevolent" was used earlier on. I think if it's experienced as a process of mutual respect and mutual learning the respect of levels at which people are at would be much more easily accepted.

_____: Just one word. Maybe we could add the word "transmission." "lineage, heritage, and transmission."

Milberg: That's a process that Kinnock. . . .

Frank: I just think that the unspoken piece of this was the announcement of credentialing.

_____: Credentialing has both those aspects, hierarchy and partnership.

_____: And transmission

Milberg: It seems to me that every time we go to close we begin again and we could begin again and begin again, but as you reminded us, Michelle, it's important that groups end and end with something that we can not only take with us but something that fuels us to come back together and continue to talk. It's interesting to me that we've gone through so many levels of intimacy and getting to talk to each other among the people in this whole conference and that's been an important beginning. I know there have also been questions about how we continue to communicate with each other through proceedings as well as sending word of the kinds of growing, budding, newborn research efforts that we make even if they don't seem so much like research to us or we can't define that. And I'm hoping that one of the things that happened in this conference is that we all became kind of empowered and no longer embarrassed about going forth in our own searches and coming together to search together and not worrying about whether that's got numbers to it but that that is truly research. I thank you all for that. Are there any ritual endings that anyone has to make before we close?

_____: I want to say thank you particularly to the organizers in the American Balint Society for providing us with such a rich banquet of thoughts and ideas and feelings and food and this accommodation and this wonderful city and your wonderful university and for the space that you've provided to bring together all these talented people from all corners of America and Europe and South Africa. We look forward to meeting again soon and carrying on this process which was begun in Europe some years ago and I brought so much to digest that it's going to take me a long time to work through all the ideas that people have given me this weekend. I know there's going to be a terrible sense of anticlimax next week when I won't have a Balint conference to go to but I'll have some very rich memories of all you folks and I'm very grateful to you all and I'm sure there are lots of other people in the British Balint Society also would echo those feelings. Thank you very much.

Tape 2, side B

Brock: _____ we need to put our money where our mouths are. This is the group that's important and this is the group that wants it and we need to cough up now for it. And the issue is, how much money do you think each of us needs to contribute to get these proceedings going?

_____: Unintelligible

Brock: No, I'm not a good business man, but the issue is that if we don't have the money now, with the best will in the world it's not going to happen. The money isn't going to materialize.

_____: Unintelligible

Brock: Does anybody have an idea about cost?

Brock: For the book. So would it seem fair to put \$20 down, each of us?

_____: ?

Brock: At least. \$25 each? O.k. So would you let Hollie have, I'd love to take it but I've got sticky fingers. So would everybody who's interested in the proceedings, our proceedings, let's pay for it now and put \$25 into Hollie's hand and she'll . . . I'll get Hollie in here

Milberg: While you're looking for your \$25, could we reconvene. It won't cost you anything to sit down.

(Long pause, talk not intelligible in audience)

Milberg: Did you all hear that? Hollie will be taking your money as you leave. Or she's already taken it and she has receipts. Thank you very much.

Brock: ___ seen the book around. If you put your name on it, she can make the receipts out so that you aren't delayed. O.k.?

_____: Let's begin again if we can with Meg. I put the research stuff up there to see if we could think about future directions, but feel free, Meg, to take it

Meg Parker: I don't know if it'll help us talk about research but one of the things that occurred to me during the break was that Balint training teaches a way of relating to patients instead of a way of communicating with them. I think some of the research findings have helped us see that. I've done a lot of work with doctor-patient communication and we had a presentation yesterday on that. But there's something qualitatively different about relating to patients that involves a way of being with patients which then involves your way of being a person and there are techniques for looking at ways of relating to people as opposed to ways of communicating to people. I don't know if that sort of helps trigger some thoughts about the research or getting back on that topic again.

_____: One of the things I wondered about following up on some of these research things was, is it helpful to have a group of people that you meet with regularly together to stimulate you towards doing research as is it much harder to think of yourself as an individual out there crafting and creating and producing this research endeavor. If that is the case what can be done about

forming that community. And maybe part of what we need to focus on is sort of the step of forming a research team and maybe that that's something that will be very helpful to people.

Chessman: Just to resonate with that, for me that's the intent of what I put into the image of the clearing. It is rather lonely to be alone in the clearing but as a group one can even imagine that one's creating a piece of china, when actually there's nothing out there at times. And it's not just china, it's a crucible, it's a cauldron, it's full of shit, I can go on on this a little bit more. It ain't just china.

_____: What I wanted to talk about was related but not exactly on the same subject so if you want to go on with research, I want to talk about search rather than research. I'm struck by a number of conversations I've had with people in this conference about potentially being stuck and having difficulty with research because of potentially slavishly following a method. And that relates to the fishbowl and the larger group. I really feel that we have used that medium for learning, for searching, in the conferences a little slavishly. It's clear to me that a fishbowl Balint group is a great way to introduce people to the Balint group. People who have not seen it before have a chance to discuss it fairly superficially, answer questions, sort of logistical type questions and that kind of thing. But that it's not a good medium. I was talking to our researchers about it during -- I was hot-tubbing with them actually after one of the sessions -- good place, brings an image, doesn't it, a Balint group in a hot tub? A cauldron, sort of returning to the heat, feeling it again, now you know what it feels like getting out again, coming back again, so on and so forth. Anyway, we can get lost very easily. So my thought is that one of the most difficult things to talk about in a conference like this is leadership. We try repeatedly to talk about leadership in a fishbowl and in the larger group after fishbowl. It just doesn't work very well. Penny suggested a good idea which I wanted to sort of mention here -- the idea of having a group of Balint group leaders in a group discussing leadership as the case, or perhaps presenting groups as the case, then moving out from that setting into the larger group. Maybe that would free us up to be able to discuss this in a different kind of way and get more to discussing the issues of leadership without feeling quite so worried about hurting people's feelings and challenging their resistances in a setting in which it's very uncomfortable. And maybe that's a different kind of medium for researching or searching in a larger conference like this.

_____: So you're talking about how to use that continued conference process as research?

_____: Well, in the national conference in Sweden also we have a similar conference like this, but we also have had times for Balint leader conference where we actually use -- when we have continued training. We had a seminar about one year and for training our new Balint group leaders, then we worked with people coming back and having supervision of their own groups sitting in the group talking about it. That has functioned quite well but still there were a lot of difficulties because you start talking about the patient's problem instead of the leader's problem. I think the good thing with the fishbowl for us coming from abroad to an international congress is to see different ways of leading a group. And I think we need to, when you go abroad like this, you need to see different ways of leading. You need to be a little bit of a voyeur. And transcripts are not the same -- just reading the notes -- for music you have to hear the music. So I will defend the fishbowls a bit and I think one good way is the third group that we have. It was one of the working groups here in the conference and that's another idea we have had on this national Swedish Balint meeting that we form about three groups. The first morning in the fishbowl is the first group, the second morning is the second group, but one of the sessions of the small groups are inside a fishbowl and that's clarified in the beginning when you go to this meeting. So I'm defending the fishbowl a little bit.

Brock: I'd like to again make a conciliatory comment. I think the fishbowl is important but I think that the metagroup discussion has nothing to do with the fishbowl. I think that the two processes are uncoupled. I think the people outside see what they want to and they see what their own issues are and these become projected on to the fishbowl. I think our discussion yesterday while very interesting had nothing to do with the fishbowl as much as we think it had. The group resisted the fact that this was an issue of rape and we didn't want to see it and we wouldn't tolerate the resistance. We saw it as their defensiveness. But maybe we were the ones that were defensive and what was happening is that we were talking about group intimacy and we felt it was being forced on us. And that may have been our issue and not the issues for the inner group. So I would say that I think it very valuable to have a fishbowl. I think it's valuable for one to see it, but a meta-analysis by the outside group is what I would resist.

If we do have a meta-analysis, the outer group must realize that it is uncoupled with the work of the group and that it's got everything to do with us.

_____: I just feel we need to remember very well what a very dangerous animal in what ever way we use it a large group is. It is a totally different creature to a small group. It is so -- I hate large groups, I always dread them when -- I don't mean just if one's in a fishbowl, I dread what's going to happen to somebody else. They make me very anxious and unless they are extremely well chaired they nearly always do damage. I don't know when they do any good. Now that's not to say I don't think fishbowls are jolly useful and I'm all in favor of people watching groups but I do agree with Clive absolutely that we need to decouple this process and we always need to remember how dangerous and how potentially destructive the large group is.

_____: Well basically what I was saying, we were sort of talking about our experience in the large group and what I was sort of saying when people were worrying about this and that, the large group it was something you survived. You didn't worry about what anyone said. The main thing to do was survive it and the group seemed to find that analysis helpful.

_____: Just a thought that in a Balint group it's research cum training and there's a holding place, but when we go into the bigger group it's almost as if we think we're doing training or we think we're producing data for research but there are no rules and there is no holding and there is no continuity and that I think relates to some of the problem with the larger group. If we defined it as something completely different and didn't confuse ourselves by continuing to Balint then we might be actually producing words and meanings that someone could look at for us, but we'd have to be real clear, I think, about what we were doing and not just try to have a great big Balint group.

_____: Could I just say that I really share the dilemma, that I found the fishbowl incredibly useful, mainly because it showed me that a Balint group this side of the Atlantic is the same as a Balint group in England. So if I hadn't had that experience I would have been terribly worried that we were talking about different things. On the other hand I share everyone's concern about the large group and it's just this moment occurred to me that I hadn't really thought of the pros and cons, but would it be possible to have a fishbowl each day, perhaps as the Swedes suggest. A different group each day, but then the discussion to take place in everybody's small group so that that way you wouldn't have this enormous group with everyone confirming their own prejudices.

_____: I didn't have the sense of danger in the large group. I mean, I share the theoretical belief that those things can happen but I didn't think it happened, and it actually gave me the space to think about things. I'm not sure how and why it worked like that. I think that the goldfish bowl worked because it was separated by the video from the large group and so it cooled it off a little bit. I still don't know why the large group was quite so -- I don't know if one would call it successful -- but

it gave a space for everybody to be thinking about the same sort of things.

Steuer: I've always disliked the large group. I think it's something dangerous but I think just when I hear people talking about it maybe it has something to do with the end of a group. Maybe it's not physiological when a group is finished to start again and when you are coming to the large group after a fishbowl -- you have to stir the soup again, maybe just pouring some more water in, maybe pouring some spices in it, but you never know. And maybe one should know -- it's always the problem with a group the way you end it. Sometimes we end it and then somebody starts talking again and it didn't end. Sometimes we go into the corridors and it goes on and on and life maybe is just a group going on. But still I think the difficulty is when to stop and when to go on. I think it's a cliché, what I'm saying, but still. . . .

_____: I just wanted to say something about the big group. Of course, I hear we're speaking about a fishbowl and what is happening after the big group. But Michael Balint started many, many years ago using big groups in Switzerland _____. We still have that in France. I told you I had my first Balint meeting in France. It still goes. For 20 years it has been going about every year at the end of May and each morning there is a big group, but it is a specialty group, you see, 80-100 people attending in many circles and it is a case group. But it has a beginning and an end. Every day it is the same two leaders, a he leader and a she leader every day. It really helps to make quite a good work but I think we should set limits a big group like that and a real big group, case group.

Salinsky: The Ludenstein charitable fund is obviously prospering over there. Give generously, folks. I just wanted to comment on some contrast between what goes in the large group and what goes in a workshop that's looking at a transcript. What bothers me about small group discussions is that everybody generalizes. They say the group did this or the group did that and they always start by saying what a wonderful group, how supportive they were to each other, and they really worked well. And then when they're tired of that people say, well, actually the group totally ignored the main point of what this case is all about. They had no idea at all where they were going. They weren't brave enough to attack the real issues, etc., etc. Whereas if you're looking at a transcript you've got a chance to go to the detail and say, at this point the leader having been quiet for a long time suddenly said something, now, why did he or she say that, what effect did it have on what happened in the group next. And then I think you can really do a bit of research on that. There's no reason why we shouldn't do that in a large group as well without a transcript although it's harder if you haven't got the actual words to refer to. For some reason we let ourselves go with these generalizations and perhaps as Erica says that's something to do with the nature of a large group of people all having to try and get their say in at the same time.

Milberg: If I may tag on that. I'm particularly fond of using videotape to recall, to replay and recall events, and I wonder about using that where you could get the detail, where you do a group, play a recording of the group and have the ability to stop that recording at a nodal point defined by whomever. And then start to talk about what did we see happening at that point, thereby giving the words again, the data, the meaning of what we think is going on, what we observe is going on, and what kinds of choices we make as leaders. I think that may be a way for me. It's the way I'd like to us.

_____: I really like the fishbowls and the large groups and I can see real value in continuing them. Obviously it gives us an opportunity to see what happens in other countries and in the international setting it is very helpful. So I'm learning a lot as we are going along here. One of the nice things that John said or brought out was that if one uses a transcript you don't generalize, but also you can make a transcript anonymous. And the difficulty with a videotape is there's still the

identifiability which causes you sometimes to be more careful about what you feel you want to say. I'd love to see us do that sometime, use a transcript in a large group. I think that's a wonderful idea.

_____: Yes, but I was making another point about the videos. So we could try both of those. We certainly in large groups use videos and use it just like you mentioned, and that is replaying, stopping when anybody wants to make a comment, and so on. But the disadvantage is that still some people know who's on the screen.

Milberg: I think it works better when the only people commenting are the ones who were in the group, but

_____: I want to use a word which is for me pertinent not only to our discussion about the large group but to our experience this week, and that word is "family." Maybe because I live so far away and most of my life removed from all of you colleagues in the Balint group, but I get a feeling of family when I come here. Now, my needs or feelings about family is no doubt fed in a lot towards my conduct and behavior and relatedness at this congress, but certainly it's a feeling I get working in the small groups and in the larger group. I think perhaps, of course like any families, there are mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters and uncles and aunts and grandparents and black sheep and white sheep and all sort of roles. I suppose that it's a little bit unrealistic to expect a really secure family of such a large size at such a big time. I think it's our wishfulness, certainly mine, certainly working in the large group there was this kind of wish that we all were one big happy family and we will be able to work together. I think to some extent we did in spite of all the fights that happen within families. But I suppose that what we do have to realize is that it's a lot more difficult with a larger group, with a larger family which haven't got to know each other well enough yet.

Parker: I'm going to bring up that "R" word again, and that's research because I think one of the things that's dawning on me that the research team told us was that what we're struggling to do is to research Balint the way Balinters research, the way Balint originally started training cum research groups. Well, what we're struggling now to do is form some sort of community that is in fact a large research group and what strikes me is one of the other elements that's not quite enough to sustain you because of what you lose in that huge group. There are lots of things you gain but there's lots of things you lose, too, and what I'm wondering about and what I've heard other people talk to me about is how to sustain that with smaller groups between years when we meet or whatever as a larger group. And one of the things that hits me is that we've got a well-formed example of that in this country and I would presume that that's what's happening a little bit in Great Britain, too, or that part of what Will was alluding to in their meetings with the British group, and that the meta-group here in Charleston. I think if we could begin to reproduce that process. I think the question arises, is there something dangerous about looking at how we do Balint group work by using the techniques of Balint group work. I think that's maybe what I hear the question and I think that's a really legitimate question that we're struggling with, of just that question -- we're struggling to look at the work we do in terms of the work we do using those same techniques and here we've had researchers tell us that's extremely legitimate and in fact it may be vital; but what we also have to look at is, is that possible and is it safe?

Chessman: Actually I'm going to be content specific, which is sidestepping the issue that you brought up. I'd be interested in working with anyone on patterns that occur in Balint group presentations. One pattern that we've I think seen is of three cases of a woman who has trouble getting pregnant, thought she was pregnant, didn't get pregnant, and now she has some growing in her brain, and she's convinced she has a tumor or something growing in her brain, and that

dichotomy, that split between reproduction and brain and something growing that's dangerous and risky . Just as a way of getting content specific stuff of research, not the class of presentation that initially comes to me such as an accident victim or some class like that about which I have preconceived notions, but a pattern that occurs within a Balint group presentation.

Milberg: Any takers?

_____ : I feel I can't go without saying what has worried me ever since one of the researchers said it and that was something about hierarchy, about aiming to be non-hierarchical. But we aren't. It's worried me. I was talking to one of our researchers who pointed out that we have another inconsistency in our theoretical non-hierarchical approach and that we are far from non-hierarchical. I would prefer that that -- It's been worrying me. I can't put it down. That's why I'm saying.

Brock: I think we mustn't bluff ourselves. There is an hierarchy and there should be one. Maybe it's the way we frame the hierarchy that makes a difference and the difference is differences. Levels of training do make a difference. So the level of training establishes an hierarchy rather than an artificial sense of dominance that I'm the doctor, you're the patient. But it's what you do with that difference that will determine the effect. In other words if I want to dominate you because I'm at a different stage of my development and I want to impose that stage on you, then I think the hierarchical differences become less helpful.

Milberg: Now you're talking about the hierarchy within the group, the way we work, right? Not only that.

_____ : Just to add to what Clive said, I think if the emphasis in leadership can be on responsibility rather than superiority we'll be getting some of the way there.

_____ : _____

Milberg: I don't think we're talking necessarily about the same thing. Do you want to say anything else about that?

_____ : _____ hierarchy. I'm struck by us referring to the researchers as if they are separate from us as well as -- I mean, they are separate but they are also part of us, and I think that that's possibly somehow what we are talking about?

_____ : It seems to be similar in that Stan tried to clarify that it was an issue of role in the group rather than necessarily hierarchy.

Milberg: We'd have to have a group about this for awhile, I guess.

_____ : I'm talking about the group, but I think a hierarchy in those groups is absolutely inevitable. People will respect differing levels of experience, and the trainee group I lead consists of trainees in 2nd and 3rd year residency, so they have enormously varying experience and it's quite impressive to see them move up through the hierarchy. It's not restricting and they all talk to each other quite freely and it's not something that we actively encourage, but I think it's inevitable and I don't think it matters, just as any of us as doctors we'll know more about medical processes than our patients and the time comes sometimes when we have to say so, and I don't think we should be ashamed of that.

_____ : It was just to echo what Heather said, that it seems like the concept of hierarchy but with

proper respect, hierarchy through mutual respect which was also in the list of things that are essential Balint group, that kind of hierarchy is necessary and is fine, is good. Is there something fixed in people's minds about the concept of hierarchy? I thought the way that it was introduced was as attention with partnership. So it is not something that is always -- well, I suppose it is -- but it shifts and changes. That's as I understood the meaning, rather than something fixed and constant and oppressive.

Brock: What occurs to me is that there is a hierarchy of skills and that the process is continuous. It is never-ending. When you get there, there's not there anymore and you've got to go beyond that, and that I see is the hierarchy. I think you're right, it's how you use the difference that counts. It's the role you play.

_____: My difficulty right now is that I'm not quite sure what Erica was referring to. Were you referring to what was put up on the slide earlier, or was it some other conversation that. . .

Milberg: So the best we do until then is we're chewing on this notion of hierarchy and partnership, maybe.

Peter Graham: I'd like to carry that ball a little bit further, having watched lots of hierarchies over many years and say that perhaps some people would look at that as a sort of boss 'em up approach, looking up at Mount Everest and there would be other people at the top looking down, saying that there's a cascade process where the good will of the leaders at the top could be generously offered as a series of skills that they can demonstrate possibly in fishbowls and other areas, in writing and so on, to enable the junior leaders and the more junior members of groups to learn those skills. In the same way perhaps that when a doctor presents a case in a group that we depend on him to give the most honest and frank account of his feelings and his thoughts about his patients and in the same way we depend on our leaders to give the most honest interpretation of the reality that they see before them. Whether this is a physical reality in the body or in an unconscious reality in the mind or some connection between those processes. So it's a two-way street, as you Americans call it, either bottom or top down.

_____: Stanley promises not to grab the microphone from me. You know, when I think of hierarchy I think of other words like authority, I think of partnership. It reminds me of the doctor-patient relationship. And something that often happens in the doctor-patient relationship is that the doctor is more important to the patient sometimes than the patient is to the doctor. And so like Peter was saying it really looks different from different points on the mountain sometimes. The other thing I thought of is that there are different aspects of this whole problem. It manifests itself in the small group, it manifests itself in the larger group, it manifests itself in the organization and structure of the Balint Society. It's just something worth looking at and paying attention to, and that's what we saw as researchers at all different levels of that, and I think that's what Erica was trying to raise, that it was something that she had been chewing on, and it wasn't anything more than that, really. But it is important and there's some energy around it, I think.

Milberg: I'd like to try to remember we're talking about describing things here, not ordering them or putting a seal of approval. It's hard to talk about hierarchy that way but I think it's still trying to describe something. O.k., who had their hand up?

Geoff Margo: It's feeling a little dangerous in here now and I'm trying to figure out where that's coming from, and part of it, I think, is that we're having trouble maybe at this point in the conference dealing with a dangerous topic that might split us apart. But I think we do need to look at possible malevolent hierarchies or something within us. I think we have to be honest enough to

look at that because I think there are some issues of that I'm not sure is helpful to go into right now at this point in this conference but I think we need to be honest about that in our further dealings if this society is going to expand, because if there is that kind of dangerous part then people aren't going to want to come in.

Frank Dornfest: I agree with you. I did feel some increased level of anxiety although it feels bearable to me, very bearable. I think we're into the next one of our values which is comparing and contrasting and causing confusing as a result of that. We're doing a different kind of meta, it's a meta-analysis or a meta-something. We're not looking at a group working, we're looking at our own values, which is taking us to a new level of anxiety and a new level of confusion and a new level of creativity, I think.

Parker: I just lost my thought. I truly lost my thought. Oh, I got it back.

Meg: Just really quickly. I think what struck me about the hierarchy comment in this whole discussion is that I think one of the skills people acquire with experience is the ability to self-reflect before opening their mouths. At least that was one of my expectations, and I think one of the things that I've realized is that while that is a process that does happen, at the same time, no matter how experienced you are, you still have your blind spots, and you still have moments of insight that just come out before you have a chance to reflect on them. And when you have time to reflect on them and the energy to reflect on them you realize that you made a mistake. I don't know if that's part of what Erica is getting at but I get a sense that that's some of the inconsistency that we're coming up against, that while we have this notion that the better a Balint leader you are the more experienced you are, the better you get at uncovering your blind spots and therefore they go away, and the better you get at reflecting your insights. While that happens overall at the same time there are moments when it doesn't happen and you're right back where you started again.

_____: I find it interesting that Megeen's comment seems to reflect on what I'm viewing as the hierarchy here. Erica represents someone who's had more experience in Balint than I have and yet at the same time she's saying there's a process by which one should screen their comments and I'm getting the feeling that perhaps Erica is very good at throwing comments out and it seems like a criticism that is uncomfortable within a hierarchy in which I normally find comfort. I'm happy that I found a hierarchy in this group. I trust in it mostly and I've just spent a few days watching how it works or it doesn't work and it does seem very natural to me. I hope that there's some sort of continuance of this hierarchy because I need the mentors and all the aspects of it.

_____: I think you very eloquently stated something that is important and I wanted to clarify that we distinguish between core values and creative tension. The core value was respect and you are evidencing, you're providing more evidence for what we saw. The creative tension is hierarchy and partnership. Respect in many ways as a core value is sort of moderating in there and _____ there wasn't a value on hierarchy but there was a creative tension balancing the energy that comes as hierarchy and notions of partnership meet but are moderated by this value of respect and your demonstrated -- I heard you articulating it. That's good. You need some hierarchy but you like the partnership and it's the respect that makes that happen somehow. And Erica beautifully reflected there is a tension there and then you are articulating it very nicely.