



Colloquium lecture by Prof. Patrick Luyten

A mentalizing approach to the understanding and treatment of borderline personality disorder and allied conditions

In this talk I will provide a brief overview of three decades of research on the role of mentalizing, an umbrella concept referring to the capacity to understand others and oneself in terms of internal mental states, in our understanding and treatment of individuals with borderline personality disorder (BPD) and allied conditions. In particular, I will focus on three areas of research that have led to substantial changes in our understanding and treatment of individuals with BPD:

- (a) research suggesting that mentalizing is multi-dimensional in that it is being underpinned by four dimensions: automatic-controlled, internally-externally focused, self-other, and cognitive-affective, and how this view has led to a reconceptualization of BPD and other mental disorders in terms of different imbalances in these dimensions,
- (b) problems with self-other distinction in BPD, which seem to underpin mentalizing problems in individuals with BPD, touch upon the core of the subjective experience of BPD, and also point to its developmental roots as also demonstrated by
- (c) research on the intergenerational transmission of BPD and research on the relationship between adversity, stress and attachment experiences in developing a sense of self-in-relation-to-others specifically. Throughout my talk I will focus on contributions from affective neuroscience and experimental psychopathology research to illustrate some of the core findings in each of these areas. Finally, I will summarize the core principles of mentalization-based treatments and preventive interventions that have been developed based on this body of research, and the evidence for their effectiveness.

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**This lecture takes place at Liebiggasse 5, 1010 Vienna,
Lecture Hall G 2nd floor and will be streamed.**
Thursday, November 23, 2023; 3pm

Patrick Luyten, PhD is Professor of Clinical Psychology at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Leuven (Belgium) and Professor of Psychodynamic Psychology at the Research Department of Clinical, Educational, and Health Psychology, University College London (UK). His main research interests are disorders from the affective spectrum (i.e., depression and stress- and pain-related disorders), and personality disorders. In both areas he is involved in basic research and in interventional research. His basic research focuses on the roles of personality, attachment and social cognition or mentalizing, i.e., the capacity to understand oneself and others in terms of mental states, in these disorders from a developmental psychopathology perspective. He serves on the editorial board of several scientific journals, including *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*, and *Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment*. He also heads a treatment service for patients with depression and functional somatic disorders in PraxisP, the treatment center of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences from the KU Leuven, Belgium. His most recent book, co-edited with Anthony Bateman, Peter Fonagy, Chloe Campbell and Martin Debbane, *The Cambridge Guide to Mentalization-Based Treatment*, was published by Cambridge University Press.