



*Stephen M Johnson, PhD.*

## **Character Styles: The Issues of Attachment**

**The National Council for Voluntary Organisations,**

8 All Saints Street, London, N1 9RL

We are delighted that Dr Stephen Johnson has agreed to return to London & UKAPI to continue sharing his understanding of Character Styles. Like his books, Dr Johnson's workshops are informal, accessible and practical, interweaving theory with experiential learning. Dr Johnson's seminal books on the personality are well known in Britain and include *Character Styles*, *The Symbiotic Character*, *Characterological Transformation* and *Humanizing the Narcissistic Style*.

In *Character and Complexity*, Dr Johnson will offer an overview of his thinking on character styles building on the theory he has presented in his writings. What is presented in this segment is, in Dr Johnson's view, the most critical element of the seminars because it provides the basis for all that follows: the specifics of the development and treatment of all facets of the Schizoid and Oral-Dependent character styles.

**Character and Complexity,**

9th October 2009, 2pm to 5pm

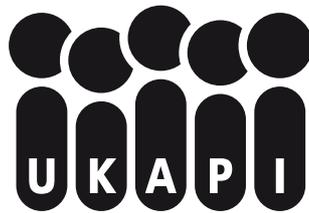
**Schizoid Character Style,**

10th October 2009, 10am to 5pm

**Oral Dependent Character Style,**

11th October 2009, 10am to 5pm

The venue can be accessed easily from King's Cross, St Pancras and Euston stations. Further detail about the days together with an application form can be found on [www.ukapi.com](http://www.ukapi.com). Alternatively contact the Seminar Administrator: Amanda Shribman, PO Box No. 56914, London N10 3YL, telephone: 020 8444 1110, email: [shribman@easynet.co.uk](mailto:shribman@easynet.co.uk).



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## **Character and Complexity**

9th October 2009, 2pm to 5pm

This is the first offering in a three part series on personality and psychopathology with emphasis on understanding (diagnosis) and treatment. Each session is designed to stand alone but exists within a consistent framework.

This initial session of three hours is focussed on exploring the model itself for the general understandings it can give, largely from a developmental perspective, on personality and psychopathology. The model also contributes insights about the treatment of human problems from the most pathological to the most mundane. This workshop gives the building blocks for the workshops that follow, providing a larger context for the more specific styles outlined in parts two and three of the series.

The model is both simple and complex. It involves the interaction of a finite number of variables in multiple combinations. This kind of modeling has been used successfully in a number of other scientific fields. It is particularly useful for conducting psychotherapy because the therapist needs to have a cognitive structure simple enough to hold in working memory.

This cognitive map can be represented in a simple table consisting of only two variables. This table is given in all books in the Character Style series. The variables are Character Issue (presented in categories) and Structural (Ego) Development (presented on a continuum).

This introduction to the model includes a brief analysis of all the seven character issues and the continuum of structure. Because most people can be best understood employing two or more character issues, this comprehensive view is vital. Further, it's necessary to know that ego strength is not a fixed feature in any individual. It varies depending on the issue and the circumstances. The emphasis here is on viewing these character designations not as labels for classifying people but as flexible "listening perspectives" (a la Lawrence Hedges) for understanding and treating human problems.



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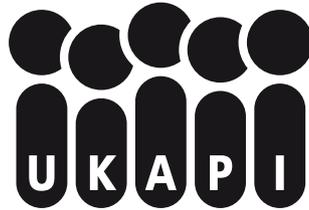
## **Schizoid Character Style**

10th October 2009, 10am to 5pm

The workshops devoted to each Character Style are taught within an integrated schema. The attachment disorders represented in Schizoid and Avoidant personality disorders will be considered employing the signifiers of character and the signifiers of structure. While most practicing therapists already know about the signifiers of the Personality Disorder, they often do need instruction on how this personality issue displays itself at higher levels of structural functioning. All therapists can benefit from additional education on the treatment of these issues.

In this workshop, the basic etiology of the Schizoid/Avoidant issue is explored first, followed by the considerations for treatment along the continuum. Since relational elements are viewed as key, we will explore the transference issues that typically occur: the client's avoidance of contact with the therapist, the distrust, the sensitivity to any harshness in the environment, the projection of neglect, hostility, and lack of caring, the perception of the insignificance of the therapy and the therapist, etc. Similarly, we will explore the therapist's counter-transference issues: The therapist's reactions to all of the above, often related to the therapist's own character structure. In particular, the therapist often has to deal with her own reactions to the client's inability to receive, be intimate or be aware of feelings. There is often difficulty in coping with the deadness and emptiness present in the room, the experience of being irrelevant to the client, and the therapist's own attachment issues. We will also explore the usefulness of various techniques with this type of client--e.g. active vs. receptive techniques, empathy, interpretation, confrontation, therapist differentiation, mutual enactment, etc.

A good deal of time will be devoted to dialogue with participants who will be asked to consider beforehand their questions, comments, and cases in this spectrum of attachment difficulties. To insure high quality in these "conversations" the presenter will be prepared with case examples from the his own practice and supervision as well as from the literature. In small groups or dyads, participants will explore their own cases for sharpening their diagnostic and treatment focus. In addition the format will include film clips, poetry, and music which speak to the understanding and treatment of these Schizoid/Attachment issues.



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## **Oral Dependent Character Style**

11th October 2009, 10am to 5pm

The workshops devoted to each Character Style are taught within an integrated schema. The dependent personality will be considered employing the signifiers of character and the signifiers of structure. Experienced therapists often know the signifiers of the Personality Disorder. But even this group usually needs instruction on how this personality issue displays itself at higher levels of structural functioning. All therapists can benefit from additional education on the treatment of these issues.

In this workshop, the basic etiology of the dependent character is explored first, followed by the considerations for treatment along the continuum. Since relational elements are viewed as key, we will explore the transference issues that typically occur: the client's proclivity for dependent affect and behavior e.g. clinging, suffocating the other; the fear and projection of abandonment, betrayal, or rejection; The conscious, ubiquitous desire to please; expressing love to get love; in short, behaviors, attitudes, and values that will attract and prevent abandonment; Similarly, we will explore the therapist's counter- transference issues: The therapist's reactions to all of the above are often related to the therapist's own character structure. In particular, the therapist has to deal with her own reactions to the client's dependency, particularly when it is aimed at her. the therapist must also handle her response to passivity and the client's reluctance to take responsibility for his life; the typically slow response to therapy, though it is usually positive. and the client's resistance to discovering the extremity of his dependency etc. We will also explore the usefulness of various techniques with this type of client--e.g. active vs. receptive techniques, empathy, interpretation, confrontation, therapist differentiation, mutual enactment, etc.

A good deal of time will be devoted to dialogue with participants who will be asked to consider beforehand their questions, comments, and cases in this spectrum of the dependent character syndrome. To insure high quality in these "conversations" the presenter will be prepared with case examples from the his own practice and supervision as well as from the literature. In small groups or dyads, participants will explore their own cases for sharpening their diagnostic and treatment focus. In addition the format will include film clips, poetry and music which demonstrate this problem and suggest strategies for treatment.