

IBF congress Aarhus, Denmark Oct 1-4, 2026.

'Connected, committed and contained'

Small Discussion Group/Workshop plan

Title: 'Containing the way of Balint in our professional lives' workshop

Presenters:

Adam Becze MD (becze.adam@) - General Practitioner since 2015; Educational expert since 2021 at Dpt. of Family Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Semmelweis University, Budapest, current chair of the Bálint Mihály Psychosomatic Society of Hungary (BSH);

Katalin Dobó MD (dobo.katalin@) - General Practitioner for 40 years in Budapest, family-psychotherapist, Balint leadership trainer and supervisor; former chair&member of the Board in the BSH;

Anna Szőke MD (kissszoke@gmail'dot'com); - Psychiatrist, Psychotherapist, Head of Outpatient Mental Care Unit of University of Szeged, Faculty of Medicine, member of the Board in the BSH;

AIM and CONCEPT: Following a presentation reviewing Michael Balint's professional and personal life trajectory, we will use the conference motto as a guiding thread to evaluate and think about our own experiences that led us to the Balint method, and to jointly articulate its significance in our professional (sometimes even personal) functioning.

BACKGROUND and CONTEXT:

Michael Balint was born 130 years ago in Budapest, Hungary, as the son of a Jewish GP, whom he accompanied sometimes attending patients. Balint himself had become a doctor as well. As a young man, he was introduced to Freud's works, and inspired by Alice Székely-Kovács (his first wife) they had joined the Hungarian psychoanalytic society. He worked in the Polyclinic led by Sándor Ferenczi, and soon had become an insightful contributor to it. Ferenczi was his psychoanalyst and master, both interested in medical psychotherapy, they kept the doctor-patient relationship in the focus of therapy.

When he had changed his name from Bersgmann to Balint and his religion as well from Jewish to Unitary, his father cut off their communication. Shortly after immigrating to England with Alice and their son, he lost her to a sudden disease. His parents committed suicide together to avoid Nazi deportation in Budapest.

After he moved to London, he organized 'Training cum Research' work with GPs at the Tavistock Clinic with Enid Flora Albu (who soon become his third wife). Exploring the cooperation and relationship with patients made it possible using the psychoanalytic–psychosomatic approach in a broader spectrum: they rendered it more understandable and accessible, offering it as a tool for professionals working at the primary care level.

Their method had started to spread abroad in Balint's life, and he had been proud of his life-carrier becoming the President of the British Psychoanalytic Society (1968) from a son of a little Jewish GP in the suburb of Budapest.

Reflecting on Balint's life journey we offer a framework to think about how and maybe why the participants have connected to the Balint method, formed an attachment, how a commitment has emerged, and how these experiences and perspective have been integrated into our professional development.

Sources:

Judith Dupont: *Of Michael Balint* in: *Au fil du temps... Un itinéraire analytique*, Paris, Campagne Première, 2015. (*As time goes by: An Analytic Journey*, Ipbooks, 2019.; *Az idő fonalán...Analitikus útinapló*, Budapest, Oriold és Tsai, 2017.)

METHODS and STRUCTURE:

1. Introduction - 5 min
2. Presentation: Michael Balint's biography milestones - 15 min
3. Presenters' sharings of their personal and professional background, experiences and impressions that lead to commitment with Balint work - 3x8 min
4. A short dialogue will be encouraged in pairs guided by structured questions - 20 min
 - let's recite some personal/professional impressions that may have led you to the Balint method
 - how was your first encounter with Balint work?
 - was there a turning point, a significant experience when a commitment was born towards it?
 - examples of being contained by somebody; and containing our patients' difficult situations and deep feelings through real connection
5. Small groups of 4-6 people will discuss the similarities and differences and reflections on the topic - 20 min
6. Group sharing and creating together of a word cloud/concept map of how we contain Balint's way of seeing the caregiver-patient relationship - 20 min
7. Closure of the session: summary/feedback - 15 min

TOTAL: 120 minutes

Participants: minimum 5, maximum 20 participants