Dr. Steven Cooper is Clinical Associate Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School and Training and Supervising Analyst at the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute. He is also a couples’ therapist working with adolescents and adults, and a Faculty and Supervising Analyst, Massachusetts Institute for Psychoanalysis. He has served as Joint Editor-in-Chief of Psychoanalytic Dialogues since 2007. He is the author of over eighty journal publications in psychology and psychoanalysis and three books: Objects of Hope (Analytic Press, 2000), A Disturbance in the Field: Essays in Transference-Countertransference Engagement (Routledge, 2010), and The Analyst's Experience of the Depressive Position: The Melancholic Errand of Psychoanalysis (Routledge, 2016).

In his book, A Disturbance in the Field, Steven Cooper argues that relational theory is not a theory of technique, but a set of principles that have accompanied an
integration of Freudian, interpersonal, self-psychological, and independent tradition schools of psychoanalysis—principles such as the dialogic nature of psychic meaning; the value of countertransference experience in understanding the patient’s internalized world; and an ethic of disciplined experimentation. Regardless of their theoretical and technical approach, or the training school to which they belong, all psychotherapists rely on their capacity to understand the relational dynamics of the treatment situation. According to Cooper, the guiding clinical precept at the heart of a relational sensibility lies in the analyst’s dedicated interest in his or her self-reflective participation in the therapeutic process.

In his presentation, Steven Cooper will offer some new ways of thinking about the clinician’s participation. He suggests that the direct relationship with the patient, though primary, is not the whole story. He will develop the idea that as clinicians we also have a complex object relationship with our field, our work, our own analysis, our supervision, and our institutions, that may be an additional encumbrance or aid in understanding our work with patients. As the context and style of talk therapy undergoes increasing diversification and modification in our times, the relationship of the clinician to the process often takes on additional burden and complexity. Cooper will show how the development of a relational sensibility enhances the psychotherapist’s capacity for appropriate therapeutic responses, allowing for “disciplined experimentation” in the face of difficult and unpredictable clinical challenges.

Course objectives:

Following this event, participants will be able to:

- Describe the need for an integrative psychotherapy paradigm to sustain best practice in a rapidly changing mental health environment
- Describe relational concepts as a meta-theoretical frame of reference useful for all practitioners of psychotherapy, regardless of their educational background and clinical orientation
• Describe methods of listening to unconscious communication as a useful tool for all psychotherapists, regardless of their clinical orientation
• Demonstrate an appreciation that belonging to a larger community of therapists will enhance the working effectiveness of professional practice

The program will include the following presentations:

• Steven Cooper, Failing Better: Exploring the Analyst’s Relationship to the Therapeutic Process
• Charles Levin, (Director, C.I.P. Q.E.), Should Psychotherapists Be Building Walls? Why I Am Voting for Cooper’s Relational Paradigm
• Panel Discussion (with Steven Cooper): The Very Idea of a Psychotherapeutic Community! Featuring representatives from different psychotherapy groups in Montreal, including Annette Richard (Director, Groupe d’étude sur l’intersubjectivité), Heather Macintosh, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, McGill University & International Committee, International Association of Psychoanalytic Self-Psychologists), and audience discussion.
• Mel Berish, (Argyle Institute, psychoanalyst in training at the Canadian Institute of Psychoanalysis), Case Presentation, with discussion from Steven Cooper, Annette Richard, Heather McIntosh, and the audience.

The program will be delivered in English with some contributions from the panel and audience in French. Spontaneous translation by bilingual persons will be available as needed.

To Register click HERE