

Preparing for a Seminar-Style Learning Space

ISSTD Center for Advanced Studies in Trauma and Dissociation

Please read this document before our first session.

This course is designed as a seminar, rather than a traditional lecture class or book study. That distinction matters for how we use our time together, and for what participants are asked to bring into the room. This document describes the format, the preparation it asks of you, the disclaimer and disclosure that govern every ISSTD training, the conduct and attendance expectations, and the kind of discussion we are working to create.

What We Mean by "Seminar"

A seminar is a shared learning space grounded in dialogue, reflection, and integration. Instead of spending class time summarizing readings or delivering content line by line, we use our sessions to think together about the material, connect theory to clinical experience, and explore questions that arise at the intersection of research, practice, and lived reality.

In a seminar: learning emerges through conversation and shared inquiry; participants are active participants rather than passive recipients; the facilitator holds the structure and guides discussion instead of repeating the text; and depth, nuance, and synthesis are prioritized over coverage, though we must follow the timed outline due to the CE approvals. This format allows us to engage complex material with the care, thoughtfulness, and ethical sensitivity it requires.

Why Preparation Matters

Because this is a seminar, preparation ahead of time is essential. Assigned readings and materials are meant to be completed before each session. This shared preparation allows us to spend live time clarifying meaning rather than summarizing content; explore clinical implications and ethical tensions; ask better questions and deepen understanding; and learn from one another's reflections and perspectives. When participants arrive having read the material, the group can move beyond what the text says into how it works, where it strains, and how it lives in real clinical contexts.

This Is Not a Book Study

A book study focuses on walking through material together for the first time. That approach can be useful in some settings, and it limits how deeply we can engage with complex trauma and dissociation.

In this course, readings are our starting point, and the agenda moves past them. Class time is not used to read aloud or restate chapters or articles. Questions and discussion assume familiarity with the material.

Disclaimer

This course is offered through the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation (ISSTD) and its Center for Advanced Studies in Trauma and Dissociation. The following disclaimer appears at the opening of every ISSTD training and applies to this course:

ISSTD is committed to supporting the availability of high-quality clinical education and training, accurate scientific understandings, and increased awareness and destigmatization of complex trauma and dissociation for all. ISSTD will honor this commitment through clinical education, research, and awareness-raising practices that proactively incorporate diverse marginalized voices, resulting in us sharing what we know while continuing to learn what is unknown to us and what is yet to be discovered.

ISSTD is a USA-based 501(c)(3) educational organization. As such, ISSTD may not engage in any direct or indirect partisan activity, endorsement or advocacy. Presenters/faculty and course material/references are selected on their own merit in relation to the mission of ISSTD and program content.

The full IDEA statement, from which the first paragraph is drawn, is available at <https://www.isstd.org/about-us/idea-statement/> (International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation, n.d.).

The Training and Event Code of Conduct

Everyone registered for this course is bound by the ISSTD Training and Event Code of Conduct, approved by the ISSTD Board of Directors on December 14, 2024 (International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation, 2024). Participants also carry an obligation to be familiar with the ISSTD Member Code of Conduct. The Event Code states plainly that lack of awareness or misunderstanding of either code is not an acceptable defense to an allegation of improper conduct, so please read it before we begin.

Several provisions bear directly on how we talk with each other in a seminar. In brief:

- Sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2: no offensive or intrusive verbal behavior, and no discrimination based on individual characteristics, ideologies or beliefs, or group affiliation, whether actual or perceived. The Code names age, ancestry, skin color, disability, education, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, mental and physical health status or diagnosis, nationality, national origin, neurotype, pregnancy, psychology, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and veteran status.
- Section 3.1.7: no statements or behavior that defame a person's character, professional standing, or reputation.
- Section 3.4.3: no argumentative, hostile, or accusatory behavior. This explicitly includes submitting questions or posting chat commentary of an incendiary nature that appears intended to bait the presenter or other attendees.
- Sections 3.4.4 through 3.4.8: screenshots of slides are for personal use only unless the presenter states otherwise; copying Q&A or chat activity is prohibited; handouts may not be distributed to

non-participants without the presenter's explicit permission; access IDs and passwords may not be shared; and recording of any course material, by audio, video, or text, requires express written permission.

- Section 3.5: participants may not attend while under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or other controlled substances.
- Section 3.6: adherence to program policies, including the attendance and participation requirements below, which are also tied to CE eligibility.

Consequences for substantiated violations range from a warning, through removal from the training, to suspension for a minimum of ninety days, to permanent ban from Society-sponsored trainings and events (Event Code, Section 4.3).

REFERENCE: International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation. (2024). *Training and event code of conduct*. <https://www.isst-d.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/TRAINING-AND-EVENT-CODE-OF-CONDUCT-FINAL-12-14-2024.pdf>

Housekeeping and Attendance

CE approval requires that we account for time, so these requirements are firm:

- Please be on time. Sessions begin promptly.
- Cameras on, and engaged, at all times.
- Accommodations must be requested in advance.

If you need additional support at any point, reach out to training staff through the chat or by email...

A Shared Responsibility

Creating a seminar-level learning environment is a collective effort. Preparation is not about performance or proving competence; it is about respecting the shared space and allowing the group to work at the level of depth this material deserves. The same is true of conduct. The Code exists so that everyone in the room, including the most junior clinician and the person with the least power in their own workplace, can think out loud without cost.

If you are able to come prepared, curious, and willing to engage, this seminar offers an opportunity for learning that is richer than any lecture alone.

Thank you for helping co-create that space.

ISSTD PTP Faculty