



SYMPOSIUM 2026

PsychE / PsychAI

HYBRID (LIVE & VIRTUAL) CONFERENCE
Mount Sinai Medical Center

IPTAR

Artificial Intelligence



April 18, 2026

Goldwurm Auditorium
Madison Ave. & 98th Street

PsychE / PsychAI

The psyche is said to be what makes us human. Often translated as “mind,” it refers to the totality of our mental and psychological processes—consciousness, perception, thinking, memory, and emotions. But in ancient Greek, the concept more closely translates to “soul,” the immaterial but animating essence of one’s identity and individuality. In the Bible, body and soul are so integrated that when the soul leaves the body, there is no animating force and death is simultaneous. From this latter perspective, Identity and individuality define a human being’s existence.

But do they still?

In the mid-19th century, Darwin made it harder to accept the notion of a soul, demonstrating that humanity was on a continuum with soulless creatures like apes. Not much later, Freud laid the groundwork for envisioning ourselves as controlled by forces over which we had scant control. Now AI is emerging as a form of intelligence that is outpacing, and will potentially usurp our special place as cognitive beings. Is it antithetical to our *modus operandi* as clinicians?

Clinicians tend to see their work as authentically human. We engage the entire person—acknowledging their individuality—and we do so cognitively and emotionally, at a very high level. We’re one-on-one with people all day long, because we think each person’s individuality matters (as does our own). Psychoanalysis, psychodynamic psychiatry, psychotherapy, whatever your orientation, depends on one person helping another by offering words and ideas, insight and understanding, empathy, cognitive and behavioral approaches, maybe even carefully calibrated medications. No doubt, our interventions impact brain mechanisms and chemistry, but we like to think our way of helping is unique and personal.

But now, certain aspects of our work are already better accomplished by AI. Diagnostically, AI is more accurate than a clinician’s experience. Input the DSM into AI, feed it a patient’s current symptoms, medical and psychiatric records, family and social history, and it will give you a correct diagnosis, psychodynamic formulation, and treatment plan. Still, how about the work of treatment like in psychotherapy? Isn’t that still the purview of clinicians, our special bailiwick? We read people, respond with care, even love. Surely, something artificial can’t do that as well.

It can. Did you know that when AI is wired with an optical system, it is able to assess human emotions better than highly-trained professionals (even CIA agents!)? It can say “You look sad” or “You seem angry” and then AI learns from the patient’s responses. It can run with the cues, and extrapolate. Not only behavioral and CBT approaches are manualized as treatments, but also psychodynamic and transference-focused therapies. Layering a RAG (Retrieval Augmented Generation) over AI produces a decent psychotherapist. It is currently being deployed effectively to help treat patients with depression and anxiety conditions as well as dementias and other cognitive issues.

Teletherapy is well established as therapeutic. But what if you can’t tell if the entity on the other side of the screen is a person or AI? We’re already at that “deep-fake” tipping point in podcasts and movies—except now the patient can be in control. Want Meryl Streep or Robin Williams to be your therapist? Just select as an option on the screen. It’s also true that we develop transferences to AI in the ways we do with each other. Developing and interpreting transference is often integral to deeper treatments.

So, where does that leave us as to using AI in our work or, more broadly, our daily lives? Do we or will we still have a profession? If so, what shape will it assume? How do we pursue our work ethically and responsibly? How do we experience our own clinical individuality? We need to collaborate with AI in ways we haven’t yet figured out, but that we need to need to explore. There really is no alternative.

MOUNT SINAI—MEDICAL CENTER

April 18, 2026

Organizers

Director: Ahron Friedberg, MD, LP

Co-Director: Vladan Novakovic, MD

Coordinator: Jennifer Harper, LP, MDiv, NCPsyA

SYMPOSIUM 2026

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“The greatness of humanity is not in being human, but in being humane.”
— Mahatma Gandhi

“What makes us human is not our mind but our heart, not our ability to think but our ability to love.”
— Henri J.M. Nouwen

“A computer would deserve to be called intelligent if it could deceive a human into believing that it was human.”
— Alan Turing

= SATURDAY APRIL 18, 2026 GOLDWURM AUDITORIUM, MOUNT SINAI =

8:45 to 9:00 am Introductory Remarks:

Ahron Friedberg, MD

9:00 to 9:30 am Freud Award Presentation

Dennis Charney, MD

After attending this presentation, participants will be able to:

- *Discuss clinically-related advances in psychiatry in mental health*
- *Describe issues related to treating clinically significant psychiatric disorders*
- *Explain how psychopharmacology, resilience, and AI have advanced treatment*

9:30 to 10:15 am Mental Health and AI

Alex Charney, MD, PhD

After attending this presentation, participants will be able to:

- *Identify clinically-relevant areas of AI*
- *Discuss how AI can be applied to contemporary issues in mental health*
- *Utilize AI as a tool for treating mental disorders*

= Coffee Break: 10:15 to 10:30 am =

10:30 to 11:00 am AI and psychotherapy

Shalaila Haas, PhD

After attending this presentation, participants will be able to:

- *Identify how AI can be used to read emotions*
- *Explain the relevance of AI in a clinical setting*
- *Apply AI algorithms in diagnosis and treatment of patients*

11:00 to 12:15 pm

Socratic Discussion on Consciousness, AI, and Psychotherapy

Moderator: Ahron Friedberg, MD

Heather Berlin, PhD, Amy Levy, PsyD and Danielle Knafo, PhD

= 12:15 to 1:30 pm LUNCH =

1:30 to 1:45 pm Introductory Remarks

Vladan Novakovic, MD

1:45 to 2:30 pm Keynote on AI and Psychoanalysis

Todd Essig, PhD

After attending this presentation, participants will be able to:

- *Identify the clinical relevance of AI in psychoanalysis*
- *Explain how AI relates to core ideas in psychoanalysis*
- *Utilize AI to the extent it is relevant in clinical work*

2:30 to 4:00 pm Panel: AI and Society

Moderator: Amy Levy, PsyD

Panelists: David Forrest, MD, Zohn Rosen, PhD, Neal Vorus, PhD

After attending this presentation, participants will be able to:

- *Explain how AI is becoming more integrated in society*
- *Discuss the positives and negatives of utilizing AI*
- *Apply AI in ways that are relevant to clinical work*

4:00 to 4:30 pm Concluding Remarks & Wrap-up:

Ahron Friedberg, MD

PUBLICATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS (C3PO):

The American Academy of Psychodynamic Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis; American Institute for Psychoanalysis; The American Society of Psychoanalytic Physicians; The Association for Child Psychoanalysis; Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies; Confederation of Independent Psychoanalytic Societies; The Contemporary Freudian Society; Society for Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychology (Division 39), American Psychological Association; Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis, Washington, DC; Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research; Karen Horney Clinic; Los Angeles Institute and Society for Psychoanalytic Studies; The Menninger Clinic; The Metropolitan Institute for Training in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy; National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis; National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis; The New York School For Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis; New York Psychoanalytic Society and Institute; The Postgraduate Psychoanalytic Society and Institute; Psychoanalytic Center of California; The Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia; The Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Study Center; Westchester Center for the Study of Psycho-analysis and Psychotherapy; William Alanson White Institute

C3PO also includes the following Publications:

The American Journal of Psychoanalysis, Contemporary Psychoanalysis, International Journal of Controversial Discussions, Psychodynamic Psychiatry, Psychoanalytic Dialogues, Psychoanalytic Psychology, The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, The Psychoanalytic Review, and The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child.



=Co-Sponsors =



Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health System, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research (IPTAR); National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (NAAP), and The Consortium for Psychoanalytic and Psychotherapeutic Publications and Organizations (C3PO).

CE CONTACT HOURS: 6.0

IPTAR is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Psychology as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed psychologists #PSY-0026.

National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (NAAP) is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Mental Health Practitioners as an Approved Provider of continuing education for licensed psychoanalysts. #P-0019.

National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (NAAP) is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers #SW-0168.

= Participant Bios =

Heather Berlin, PhD, MPH, is an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Neuroscience at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in NY. She explores the neural basis of impulsive and compulsive psychiatric and neurological disorders with the goal of developing novel treatments. She's also interested in the brain basis of consciousness, dynamic unconscious processes, and creativity. Berlin is a committee member of the National Academy of Sciences, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and is a passionate science communicator. She hosts the PBS Nova series *Your Brain*, and the *Science of Perception Box* podcast (#1 Science podcast on Apple). She also hosted PBS' *Science Goes to the Movies*, and Discovery Channel's *Superhuman Showdown*. Dr. Berlin makes regular appearances on *StarTalk* with Neil DeGrasse Tyson, BBC, History Channel, Netflix, National Geographic, and TED. Berlin received her doctorate from the University of Oxford, and Master of Public Health from Harvard University, and trained in clinical neuropsychology at Weill Cornell Medicine's Department of Neurological Surgery. She is a visiting scholar at the New York Psychoanalytic Society and Institute, and was a Visiting Professor at Vassar College, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology/University of Zurich, and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Alexander Charney, MD, PhD is a physician-scientist and leader at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, where he serves as Director of the Charles Bronfman Institute for Personalized Medicine, Vice Chair of the Windreich Department of Artificial Intelligence and Human Health,, Deputy Director of the Hasso Plattner Institute for Digital Health, and Executive Director of the Blau Center for Mental Health. His work spans psychiatry, neuroscience, genomics, and AI, with a focus on building large-scale research programs that transform how complex diseases are understood and treated. He co-leads major initiatives including the Mount Sinai Million Health Discoveries Program and the Living Brain Project, and has directed multiple NIH-funded studies on schizophrenia genetics, long COVID, and AI-driven medical science. Dr. Charney has trained and mentored numerous emerging physician-scientists and helped redesign Mount Sinai's research-track psychiatry residency program. His leadership has advanced precision medicine and digital health across the institution—driving new partnerships, securing major funding, and translating scientific discovery into clinical impact.

Dennis S. Charney, MD is an American biological psychiatrist and researcher, with expertise in the neurobiology and treatment of mood and anxiety disorders. He is the author of *Neurobiology of Mental Illness*, *The Physician's Guide to Depression and Bipolar Disorders* and *Molecular Biology for the Clinician*, as well as the author of over 600 original papers and chapters. In 2022, he was listed #49 on Research.com's "Top Medicine Scientists in the United States," with an h-index of 218 with 173,960 citations across 887 publications. Charney is known for demonstrating that ketamine is effective for treating depression. Ketamine's use as a rapidly-acting anti-depressant is recognized as a breakthrough treatment in mental illness. Until July 2025 he was a professor of psychiatry, professor

of neuroscience and professor of pharmacology and systems therapeutics at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. In 2007, he became the Dean of the School and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs of what was then known as the Mount Sinai Medical Center. In 2013, he was named President of Academic Affairs for the Mount Sinai Health System. He retired as Dean in 2025.

Todd Essig, PhD is Faculty and a Training & Supervising Psychoanalyst at the William Alanson White Institute, Adjunct Clinical Professor at the NYU Postdoctoral Program in Psychoanalysis, Founder and Chair of the American Psychoanalytic Association's Commission on Artificial Intelligence (CAI), member of the AI subcommittee of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA) Technology Committee, and an Advisory Board member of the Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN). He publishes and lectures widely at the intersections of psychoanalysis and artificial intelligence, and is a frequent media commentator, appearing most recently in *The New York Times*, *Toronto Life*, and the documentary *Suspicious Minds*. He previously co-authored the IPA's Task Force Report on telesessions in psychoanalytic education, and chaired APsA's Covid-19 Advisory Team. From 1993 to 2009, he was the founder and director of The Psychoanalytic Connection, which launched the first interactive online psychoanalytic continuing education courses. For a decade, until the pandemic, he wrote the *Forbes* column "Managing Mental Wealth," exploring the intersections of technology, psychology, and culture. In his clinical practice he treats individuals and couples.

David V. Forrest, MD is a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Consultant to Neurology (Movement Disorders) and on the Faculty of the Psychoanalytic Center at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons. He is a summa cum laude graduate of Princeton, where he obtained the collaboration of e.e. cummings in a thesis about the poet, and later at Columbia P & S co-founded the e.e. cummings Society. At the Psychiatric Institute, he founded the Neural Networks Society after auditing graduate computer courses, wrote "Artificial Mind," and consulted to Star Trek. In December 2024 he was invited by the Director of the Polonsky Shakespeare Theater to discuss onstage afterward a new play, *We Are Your Robots*, by Ian Lipton. His most recent book was *The Laughing Brain: A Hierarchy of Humor by Mental and Neural Levels*.

Ahron L. Friedberg, MD is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Editor, The Academy Forum of the American Academy of Psychodynamic Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis. Book Editor, *Psychodynamic Psychiatry*. CoChair, International Council of Editors of Psychoanalytic Journals. Research interests focusing on translational neuroscience in the treatment of anxiety, depression, PTSD and other clinical disorders. Director, Symposium Series. Recent books include *Two Minds in a Mirror: Psychotherapy and Personal Change* (Routledge 2020), *Through a Screen Darkly: Psychoanalytic Reflections During the Pandemic* (Routledge 2021),

Towards Happiness: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Finding Your Way (Routledge 2022), and *Faces of Love: Life Studies in Psychoanalysis* (Routledge 2023). Regular contributor to *Psychology Today* and various academic journals.

Shalaila S. Haas, PhD, MSc is Assistant Professor. Department of Psychiatry, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Director of the MIND Lab. She is a cognitive neuroscientist who specializes in implementing advanced machine learning techniques to identify links between behavioral patterns and neural signatures. Her work is particularly focused on the identification, prognosis, and prediction of treatment response, primarily in psychosis spectrum disorders. She is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City and the director of the Multimodal Insights into Neuropsychiatric Disorders (MIND) Lab. More specifically, her research aims to unravel the underlying mechanisms that drive the heterogeneity in clinical presentation and progression of psychosis spectrum disorders. She also seeks to better understand mechanisms that contribute to accelerated aging and schizophrenia. This research holds immense potential to advance our comprehension of these complex disorders, offering opportunities for advancing diagnostic and therapeutic strategies to alleviate suffering by either preventing the onset of psychosis or by improving the illness course. After a clinically-oriented B.A. in Psychology from U.C. Berkeley and a methodologically-focused M.Sc. in Neuro-Cognitive Psychology, from the Ludwig-Maximilians University (LMU) in Munich, Germany, she went on to receive a Ph.D. in Translational Psychiatry from the International Max Planck Research School.

Danielle Knafo, PhD is a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst, past professor at Long Island University, and current faculty and supervisor at NYU Postdoctoral Program and Adelphi's Postgraduate Program. Danielle is a prolific writer and international lecturer. She has written ten books and dozens of articles in addition to art catalogue essays and art criticism. Her areas of expertise are: art and creativity, trauma and psychosis, sex and gender, and, recently, technology and A.I. Her latest book is *From Breakdown to Breakthrough: Psychoanalytic Treatment of Psychosis*. Danielle maintains a private practice in Manhattan and Great Neck, New York.

Amy Levy, PsyD, is a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst. She chairs the American Psychoanalytic Association's (APSA) Commission on Artificial Intelligence (CAI), serves on the subcommittee "Artificial Intelligence" for the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA) committee, Psychoanalysis and Technology, serves on the editorial board of *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, and she is Editor of a Substack series, "AI in My Mind," for *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*. Dr. Levy teaches and lectures internationally on psychoanalysis and the intersection of psychoanalysis and artificial intelligence. She is author of the book, *The New Other: Alien Intelligence and the Innovation Drive*.

Vladan Novakovic, MD is a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst affiliated with William Alanson White Institute for Psychiatry Psychoanalysis, NY, and Icahn school of Medicine, Mount Sinai WTC Health Program in NY City. His professional track is Psychiatry at the Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, followed by fellowships at Columbia University Medical Center and Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and completing the training in psychoanalysis at William Alanson White Institute in NY. He has an unwavering dedication and interest in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy and continuing commitment to the advancement of the field. He is supervisor of the intensive psychoanalytic psychotherapy program at the William Alanson White Institute and taught courses on "Treatment of a Difficult Patient," Mentalization Based Psychotherapy, and many others. He serves as a Director of the NY Chapter of American Society of Psychoanalytic Physicians (ASPP), and is an active member of many professional organizations: American and International Psychoanalytic Association, American Academy of Psychodynamic Psychiatry, and Psychoanalysis, and the American Psychiatric Association. In addition, he is an active member of the International College of Person Centered Medicine. He is an author and coauthor of many publications in peer reviewed journals and authored few books. He presented his clinical and research work nationally and internationally. He lives in NY and has a private practice in the city.

Zohn Rosen, PhD is a Lecturer in Health Policy and Management at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. Dr. Rosen is an experimental psychologist, and is currently an investigator on a study funded by the National Institutes of Health. He has a long history of managing large-scale research projects, and extensive experience in regulatory matters related to conducting studies in the US.

Neal Vorus, PhD is the Editor-in-Chief of *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*. He is a Faculty Member and Training and Supervising Analyst at IPTAR, Adjunct Assistant Clinical Professor and Clinical Consultant at the NYU Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis, and a Visiting Lecturer at the Anni Bergman Parent-Infant Program. Dr. Vorus has published papers and book chapters on the history of theoretical controversy in psychoanalysis and on comparative models of therapeutic action and technique. His forthcoming book, *Phantasy in Psychoanalysis: A Concept in Conflict* will be published by Karnac Books in 2027.

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REGISTRATION FORM

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