

Toronto, Canada

The Freud Café



In May 2014, Toronto's first Freud Café was launched by [Between Hours/Interdisciplinary programme](#) of the Toronto Psychoanalytic Society with Prof. Charles Hanly as the inaugural speaker who spoke to a packed public audience at Tik Talk café about Freud and Plato: Plato's anticipations of Freud's psychology of dreams in *The Republic*. We weren't at all sure who would attend and were taken aback by the large turnout of people from various walks of life, including students and professors. We were thankful for the microphone we had hired as people lined up outside with ears pressed to the doors in an effort to hear about psychoanalysis' philosophical roots. This was a great start, we thought, and we left with the encouraging thought that perhaps psychoanalysis IS alive and well!

The idea of starting up a Freud café of our own was prompted by the initiative of a few psychoanalysts in Europe who had been successful in inspiring a renewed interest in psychoanalysis through their own outreach endeavours. We were very much inspired by being presented with visuals of a Freud bar by Prof. Hanly at the IPA conference in Prague in 2013 and took on the task of taking time out of the consulting room to find our own way to stimulate similar invigorating discussions with young people in our own community.

This is a grass roots endeavour that for us involved knocking on doors and striking up conversation with local businesses and academic groups. We partnered with Caversham Booksellers in Toronto who have supported us in providing bibliographies etc., and promoting these talks, and in turn with the local businesses who agreed to house them. We advertised at the universities and more widely, and have had success in finding coffee shops and restaurants close to the University of Toronto who agreed to host, especially given that our target audience for this project is students. At times it has been difficult to secure a location and we have hosted in a number of sites by now. We have just recently partnered with a student group in Comparative Literature at the university of Toronto who have expressed a keen interest in psychoanalysis and want to be involved. This lends us an opportunity to host these events on campus in a setting that is also open to the general public. The Freud café runs every other month through the academic year.

The themes to date have ranged from the philosophical roots of psychoanalysis (Charles Hanly), to current ideas on guilt (Don Carveth), the unconscious (Joseph Fernando), prejudice (Cyril Levitt), and applied psychoanalytic ideas such as sibling rivalry in Austen (Margaret Ann Fitzpatrick Hanly) and jokes (Sara Freke), as found in literature. The talks take place in the evenings and run for 90 minutes with the talk portion taking up the first half, followed by an open discussion. We try to keep the talks as jargon free as possible. The Freud café has been well attended throughout and the feedback positive; it has inspired a renewed interest in other

courses on offer, training, and psychoanalysis in general. We are very hopeful that in partnering now with the student body we will get their input on what topics would be of particular interest to that demographic. This term, we look forward to talks on sport (the psychoanalysis of hockey -Ron Ruskin), relational pitfalls in coupling (Klaus Wiederman), and why we need to remember our dreams (Joshua Levy). We rely on analysts in our community volunteering their time to speak publicly so that we can continue to host these talks free of charge. It's an exciting time to be a part of the psychoanalytic community in Toronto just now in having the opportunity to collaborate, share our ideas, and *re-open* the dialogue between psychoanalysis and other disciplines.

The success of the Freud café has prompted another project, this time geared towards parents of young children, focusing on the inner world of the child and the experience of becoming and being a parent, this being a really important group to reach out to. For this, we have partnered with a Toronto children's bookstore, Parentbooks, who will house the series of monthly Saturday morning talks--ParentTalks@Parentbooks, starting in February 2016.

We are very grateful to our IPA colleagues who have generously shared their outreach ideas and inspired us to create something similar in our own community. If any of you plans to be in Toronto we would love to hear from you and perhaps you could come speak at the Freud café. We would also be happy to share what we have learned along the way with any other groups starting out on such a venture.

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For further information: www.torontopsychanalysis.com