

## **ISTFP: Innsbruck 2022 – Individual Presentation Proposal**

**Presentation Title:** *Advancements in Object Relations Assessment: Proposal for a TFP-Centered Clinical Tool*

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### **Abstract**

In the TFP conceptualization, object relations (OR) dyads play a crucial role in understanding and treating patients with borderline personality organization (BPO) at different levels. To our knowledge, there has been no attempt yet to classify OR dyads. Our research goal is to obtain an exhaustive collection of the most clinically relevant OR dyads, as to validate a clinical assessment tool for the benefit of TFP practitioners.

As a first step, we conducted a systematic review of the existing tools for OR assessment. Among the many valid instruments we retrieved, none was focused on object relations dyads as conceptualized by the TFP approach. Subsequently, we collected the OR dyads mentioned in the pertaining literature, through careful reading of the published TFP manuals.

Such a list of dyads will soon be submitted to TFP therapists through an online survey. Respondents will be asked to evaluate the relevance of each dyad for their clinical work with BPO patients, and to indicate to which degree each dyad refers to five affective themes: Aggression/Hostility, Control/Power, Worth, Care, and Sexuality.

After having analyzed such data, we will obtain a reduced list of dyads that are recognized as clinically useful in TFP practice; on such basis, we will validate both a patient-centered and a clinician-rating instrument that will allow TFP therapists to evaluate the dyadic functioning of their patients at any stage of treatment. Such understanding of patients' OR dyads may help clinicians better identify maladaptive self and other representations and manage complex transference-countertransference patterns.