

## **Balint Groups: Definitions and User's Guide**

### **History and Purpose:**

- **format invented last century by Michael and Enid Balint**
- **gives physicians the chance to think out loud with colleagues about thorny or complex treatment relationships**

### **Necessary Elements:**

- **professional role, leading to development of a professional self;**
- **ongoing relationships with power/responsibility imbalances;**
- **confidentiality: what's said in Balint stays in Balint;**
- **mutual respect among members – if I hear something I would “never” do, I try to imagine how/when I possibly could do it;**
- **taking turns – tolerating silences to allow divergent thinking to develop**
- **steadiness in membership and meetings (results are dose dependent).**

### **Format:**

- **a leader asks “Who's got a case?”**
- **a typical or problematic interaction with a specific patient is presented; this should not be pre-planned.**
- **the members ask clarifying questions just to fill in blanks where possible;**
- **the presenter ‘steps back’**
- **the group ‘takes’ the case and begins tackles relational questions;**
- **What is it like to be this provider?**
- **What is it like to be this patient?**
- **What is going on in this provider/patient relationship?**

### **Results:**

- **lower sense of isolation**
- **higher job satisfaction;**
- **lower burnout risk**
- **improved provider-patient relationships.**