Many therapists are often effective with certain clients but have a difficult time with others and often become frustrated and believe that their therapeutic approach does not work with those clients. The problem is not the approach but the difference in the client’s personality adaptation(s). This workshop will teach participants how to work effectively with each adaptation.

The concept of personality adaptations offers an exciting, new approach to working with personality dynamics. It was originated by Paul Ware, M.D. and Taibi Kahler, Ph.D., and further developed by Vann Joines, Ph.D., as a result of twenty years of clinical observation and research. The workshop will cover the diagnosis and treatment of six core personality adaptations: schizoid, paranoid, antisocial, passive-aggressive, obsessive-compulsive, and histrionic. These adaptations form the basic building blocks of personality and can be observed across the different DSM-IV-R disorders. Each adaptation has its own unique way of approaching the world, working most effectively in making changes, and defending against vulnerability.

We will look at how the adaptations develop, how they interact in the world, the major treatment issues for each, and how to work most effectively with each type. A new book (Personality Adaptations, Lifespace, 2002) and a questionnaire developed by Dr. Joines for understanding and assessing the adaptations will also be offered. By knowing these adaptations, therapists, regardless of their theoretical orientation, can quickly establish rapport, target interventions with maximum effectiveness, and avoid getting stuck in the client’s defenses.