**Elizabeth Silvestrini**

**Apology, Courage, and Stamina: Embodied Conversation and the Ethical Dimension of Self-Care**

The way we encounter the other in the therapeutic setting requires courage and stamina. Together, these words describe the embodied experience of apology, or ethical conversation, whereby the therapist asserts her presence while, at the same time, gives priority to the client’s meanings. The former is an act of strength, eliciting stamina; the latter is an experience of the heart, requiring courage. This presentation examines the etymology of both “courage” and “stamina” to illustrate the felt-sense experience of ethical conversation, which Levinas describes as an apology. In short, to give oneself in apology to the other is to anticipate and endure painful experience (courage) without being repelled or swept away by it, requiring tenacious embodied presence (stamina). This bowing toward without losing one’s sense of self requires, above all else, attention to the inner dwelling from which it is possible to engage with the other in the first place. Apology thus requires both preparation and practice – a clearing of space and routine return to oneself accomplished by the habitual practice of self-care. Without attention to and care for our embodied self, we risk unethical totalization of the other out of sheer exhaustion. The conceptual importance of self-care is nearly axiomatic, yet easy to forget in practice. By describing the felt-sense of apology using the words “courage” and “stamina,” my hope is to link the embodied experience of ethical conversation to a conceptual understanding of self-care as an ethical imperative.