

Making Sense of Your Therapy Practice: Skill-Building through Consultation

Instructor: Marjorie Roberts

This course is designed for clinicians seeking a supportive environment in which to explore, develop and expand their therapy skills and their thinking about therapy. My experience is that traditional training and CEU programs often introduce a variety of ways to make sense of therapy; however, the underlying worldview for these different ways of working are either obscured or in conflict with one another. In addition, it seems that trainees' particular views of therapy are marginalized in the development of therapeutic practice, which is why, we think, so many practitioners wish they understood how to do their work in ways that are more personally satisfying and effective. This course is designed to provide a coherent and congruent therapy worldview that supports and develops your personal hopes for yourself as a therapist.

At The Salem Center, we base all our teaching and practice within a philosophical orientation that we believe provides us with the most exciting and meaningful ways of working. This orientation is generally referred to as postmodern therapy, and we are passionate about this worldview because it supports how we prefer to think about people and problems. We believe postmodern thinking is grounded in a respectful ethical orientation toward clients that we strongly support as professionals. And, our clients tell us they find the ways we work helps them!

The structure of this course is three-dimensional. At the first level, Marjorie introduces, discusses, explores and reflects on ideas and practices from the postmodern therapy approach of collaborative language systems or dialogic therapy. She will work to make the ideas behind this approach available through readings and videotapes. She will provide one reading between classes. Our first hour of class time will involve an open conversation about the readings. This will offer an opportunity to talk about the ideas that shape our therapy practice and to imagine how they might support your interests and work context. Marjorie is especially interested in the use of writing in a therapeutic context to develop voice.

At the second level, we practice, practice and practice some more. We believe that critical learning takes place when we have opportunities to experiment with our skill development in a supportive and safe environment. We like to think that as professionals we are forever in the position of learning and skill development — no matter how long we may have been working. Thus, the second part of each class will include experiential exercises and therapeutic conversations where you will have a chance to practice what you are learning. We will focus is on learning skills and trying new things and developing a team environment. We have developed supportive and safe practices so that this is a positive experience for you in which you feel valued for your contributions and efforts. Trainees consistently tell us this is the best part of the class!

At the third level, the course will work to help you make sense of what you are learning in ways that fit personally for you. We want to help you develop a rich story of what practicing therapy means to you. We will use some of our experiential practice to develop this, as well as outside class assignments for those students interested in added work. We want you to find that this course has real effects in helping you become more clear and connected to ways of working that leave you excited about being in the field!

Course Objectives:

Develop a supportive, safe, and respectful environment for engaging in learning and therapeutic skill development.

Introduce students to a postmodern worldview for therapy and introduce a leading-edge approach that stems from that philosophical orientation: collaborative language systems or dialogic therapy.

Help students develop an ethic of practice that fits with a postmodern worldview of therapy.

Help students develop a personal story about how to practice therapy in ways that are meaningful, sustaining and satisfying.

The course intention is to help students bring their personal hopes to their professional skills. The goal is to help therapists experience themselves as increasingly competent, intentional and effective practitioners. In this course, what is important to *you* will always be kept at the center of the skill development conversation. You can expect to be respected while also stretched. From this course, we expect you will begin to experience a greater sense that you can fit your practice with your hopes, values, and intentions.

Course Information

A maximum of 8 students will meet on alternative Tuesdays from 9 am to 11 AM. The course is offered in the Fall and Spring each year.

Contact Dr. Marjorie Roberts with questions or to schedule an interview at mcfroberts@me.com or 978-745-6656.

Cost: \$375/Semester (Payment plans possible)

CEUs Available: 16 per course for LICSW, LMHC, and LMFT

Fall 2009 Course Dates:

starting in September for 8 alternating Tuesdays

Spring 2010 Course Dates:

starting in January for 8 alternating Tuesdays

Faculty Bios: Please visit www.thesalemcenter.org