

Reconciling Differences

Working with Couples in Conflict

Combining Modern & Post Modern Paradigms

Strengthening, Encouraging and Inspiring couples to build strong relationships for increased physical and emotional well-being

DESCRIPTION OF WORKSHOP

Even the most experienced therapists can at times be challenged in their efforts to help couples shift beyond destructive patterns of intense conflicting interactions that frequently characterize couple conflict. Many couples who enter couples therapy have extra layers or dimensions of difficulty that affect their ability to maintain a healthy relationship. Co-morbidities in couples therapy can include PTSD in one or both partners from past trauma; recent discovery of an infidelity or other betrayal; physical or emotional abuse and violence; or the impact of additional psychological conditions on the relationship.

While many therapeutic approaches to Couple Therapy have been developed by different experts they all provide their unique models to distinguish them from the others and make them look more exclusive. Dr. Azzopardi draws from various models and paradigms the effective tools and techniques and provides a coherent, though complex, understanding for moving couples beyond this spiral of alienation and into a cycle of connection.

The purpose of this workshop is to present the various principles of Couple Therapy and equip participants to begin using tools such as pattern identification, tangenting, common denominator, alter-egoing, homework prescription and more. This multi-modal approach to couple therapy is proving to be useful in dealing with couples in conflict, couples with depression and anxiety, families with children with behavior problems including ADHD, affairs, couples with sexual problems, and so on.

Dr. Azzopardi often sees couples problems from a communication perspective in that couples problem development is the result of closed communication recursive patterns. Such patterns, coupled with personal constructs of the individuals, often lead to isolation, alienation and eventually

disconnectedness from each other leading to loneliness and lack of intimacy, and if persisting, to hopelessness and separation.

In his approach, Dr. Azzopardi gives voice to both partners to express their experiences while challenging the personal constructs and challenge each partner to empathise with the other in an attempt to create a deeper understanding of the meaning and transform the conflict into a moment of intimacy. This is an opportunity for couples to create a conversation by introducing a dialogue.

THE TRAINING WORKSHOP

The workshop is presented by Dr. Charlie Azzopardi and includes lecture, discussion, live demonstrations, and experiential practice sessions, embedded within a Multi-method Model combining modern and Post Modern paradigms.

As a result of this training you will learn how to:

1. Construct a case formulation from multiple therapeutic positions
2. Identify, understand and formulate treatment plans for the most common problems couples present with for therapy.
3. Integrate an understanding of the various problems using Post-Modern, Cybernetic, and Systemic paradigms.
4. Make a shift from content-based and process-based models of problem solving to a Meaning-Based model of intervention.
5. Map Cybernetic patterns of Problem Making and Problem Solving and their clinical use.
6. Bring out what each partner is struggling with in a way that gets everyone empathizing
7. Find ways to empathize with the less likeable partner
8. Uncover the wish or fear concealed in the partner's complaint
9. Turn partners into joint troubleshooters in dealing with relationship challenges

WHO IS THIS TRAINING FOR?

This is an advanced workshop intended as a CPD activity geared towards licensed and registered professionals who work with couples and who would like to expand their knowledge, skills, and clinical judgment.

Participants working in the fields like Counselling, Counselling Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Family Therapy, Psychotherapists, Psychiatrists, etc. will benefit from this training:

Areas of interest include addictions, domestic violence, mental health problems including personality disorder and depression, children's behavioral problems, ADHD, etc.

SOME MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE WORKSHOP

POSITIONS. In order to do couple therapy you need a position: a way to make sense of the flood of material coming at you and a plan for how to intervene. Dr. Azzopardi will help you identify, clarify or formulate a list of common positions as an introduction to describing his own.

THEORY OF RELATIONSHIPS. Different theories of relationships will be discussed.

LIVE DEMONSTRATION. Using volunteers from the audience to role-play or real couples to demonstrate various therapeutic options and possibilities as well as the different techniques. Participants may also want to invite one of the couples they are working with and with whom they feel stuck for demonstration.

THE THERAPIST'S INNER DIALOGUE/CONVERSATION. Using volunteers from the small number of participants Dr. Azzopardi describes the conversation he has with himself while doing couple therapy. We see here the hidden tempestuous life of the therapist.

THE TASK OF THERAPY is to turn the couple's avoidant or angry interaction into an intimate conversation by discovering the missing heartfelt feelings and creating a joint platform (re-assembling the relationship towards the next higher level of intimacy).

THE PARTNERS' INNER DIALOGUES. A clue to the partners' missing heartfelt feelings is in their inner dialogues – what they say to themselves while talking to each other. A task of therapy can be to bring out these inner dialogues.

Cost of Workshop: €360/person

Continuing Education: 30 hours.

Dates: November 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th, December 5th, 12th, 19th, January 9th, 16th, 23rd.

Time: 9am to 12pm

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