

# Feminist Therapy, Advocacy & Counseling Institute

Developmental Theory  
Trauma & Recovery  
Spirituality

# Schedule:

- 8:30 – Welcome & Introductions
- 9:00 – Feminist Herstory Introduction to Relational-Cultural Theory
- 10:15 – Connection-Disconnection Exercise
- 10:30 – Break
- 10:45 – Violence/Women, Girls, Boys
- 12:00 – 1:00 - Lunch

# Schedule (continued)

- 1:00 – Trauma & Recovery
- 2:00 – Break
- 2:15 – Spirituality/Breaking the Cycle of Chronic pain
- 3:30 - Evaluations

- Introductions
- Feminism As Therapy: Origins of change
- Principles:
  - Personal is Political
    - Honor our client's experience, believe them; ask who, what, where, when, not why
  - Empathy as the path to connection
- Individual, group, then ACTION

# Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women*

- dominates/subordinates: a challenge to power-over (separation) vs. self in relation (connection)

- Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice*
  - care vs. justice

Diana Russell – Politics of Rape, Father-  
Daughter Incest

Phyllis Chesler – Women & Madness

Del Martin – Battered Wives

Feminism As Therapy – Mander & Rush

Jill Johnston – Lesbian Nation

- Wellesley Stone Research Center

*Women's Growth In Connection*

*The New Psychology of Men – Pollack,  
Levant, Real*

# Personal is Political

- Forces subjugate women, people of color, sexual minorities, disabled
- Issue of power and control in a society power over as the norm/what is valued.
- Discrimination in mental health



# A New Language of connection

- Opposite of power & control
- Mutuality, authenticity
- Empathy, relational failures
- Strategies of disconnection (not defenses)
- No shame and blaming
- Thwart isolation

# Violence against women & children / strategies of disconnection

# Ways to thwart connection

- Defensive with clients
- Blaming, being inauthentic
- Judge, critic comes forward
- Avoid or have difficulty being present in anger and conflict
- Impose control rather than empathic responses
- Difficulty holding tension
- Use language: thinking transference, resistance

# Personal strategies of disconnection in our work – exercise and discussion

- Interpreting Freud/moral development dilemmas
- Diagnosis as a tool. Social Work Alternatives
- Borderline Personality Disorder as a social construct
- Strategies for disconnection as a defense
  
- Exercise: personal strategy for disconnection

# Violence

- Majority of studies: between 14 – 30% of all adult women have experienced rape. (Koss, M.P., *American Psychologist*, 48, 1062-1069.)

In U.S. between 2 & 6 million women are beaten by the men they live with; about 4,000 women die each year as direct consequence of spousal or partner abuse.

(U.S. Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Stats., 1994; Stahly, 1996.)

40% of women treated in emergency rooms are victims of wife abuse. (Dearwater, 1998)

- Women who experience partner abuse –
  - Headaches, back & limb problems, gynecological , heart and blood pressure, lung and breathing problems.
  - Undetected hairline fractures in head, arthritis, later on.



- Child sexual abuse:
  - 80% girls; 20% boys
  - Average age: 6-12 girls; 7-10 boys

(Knudsen, *Sexual Coercion: A Sourcebook on its nature, causes, & prevention* (pp. 17-28).

# Violence Against Women

- Danger Assessment

# Judith Herman, *Trauma & Recovery*

## Stages of Recovery:

- 1) establish safety and self-care; biological, cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic and social interventions.
- 2) task of remembering and mourning; reconstructing a narrative of traumatic events; integrating the trauma narrative; grieving.
- 3) restoring present connections: development of peer & intimate relationships, disclosures, confrontations with bystanders & perpetrators. Survivor mission.

- Complex PTSD: Distinction from Vietnam vets. Relational. Symptoms: hyperarousal, “intrusion,” and constriction.
- Denise Gelinis, *Persisting Negative effects of Incest – relational aspects*

Bessel A. van der Kolk, Christopher Perry & Judith Herman studies

74 Subjects over 4 yrs. Diagnosed with personality disorder – reports of childhood trauma.

## Dusty Miller, *Women Who Hurt Themselves*

- Trauma Reinactment Syndrome – self injury
- Fragmentation – good self, bad self
- Badness of the parent taken in; allows parent to be “all good”
- 3 parts of self internalized: the triactic self: Victim, Perpetrator(abuser), Non-protective presence.

# Trauma & Addiction

Lisa M. Najavits, *Seeking Safety*

Format: Check in

unsafe incidents

Good coping

Quotation

Topics

Coping Sheet/generate

Check out/name one thing from today

Safety contract

- Stephanie Covington, *The Relational Model of Women's Development: Implications for Substance Abuse*



## Dusty Miller, *Your Surviving Sprit*

- Coping with Trauma
- Spiritual Practice Awareness exercise

# Spirituality

- Most psychology, today, is the linear, rational mind trying to fix a problem.
  - Problem of professions trying to prove themselves scientifically
  - The directions science is really going

# Spirituality

- Taking psychotherapy back to its root, psyche
- establish safety
- introduce notion of psyche
- see if there is interest in exploring
- clients are authorities on their own lives

# Spirituality

- Feminist model involves looking beneath the linear mind.
  - Dreams, bodily symptoms, longings, daily happenings as language of the psyche.
  - Word Roots, Myths, Poetry and Art, Active Imagination.
  - The Iuno, and Compassion: from Alchemy

- Closing & feedback, evaluations

# Relational-Cultural Theory

- Disconnection as one of the primary sources of human suffering
- Markers of a good connection in relationship: engagement, empathy, mutual empathy, relational authenticity, mutuality, difference/diversity, empowerment and mutual empowerment