

Dissociative Process and the Therapeutic Use of Self

Friday 15th and Saturday 16th January 2010

Led by Dr Val Wosket

10.00 – 4.30

Registration from 9.30

Two day workshop on dissociative process and the therapeutic use of self

This two day workshop is the first of two linked workshops on working with trauma and dissociation. This training will provide qualified practitioners with an introduction to understanding and working with clients who experience trauma and dissociation. The workshop is not suitable for pre-qualification trainees. The central theme of the workshop will be the interface between the therapist's use of self and the client's development of self-understanding, self-care and self-empowerment. The workshop will combine cognitive inputs with experiential learning and the emphasis will be on practical strategies to help clients learn how to calm and soothe themselves. Participants will be introduced to an integrative, phase-oriented approach to working with trauma and dissociation. Further exploration of phase one of this model will enable participants to learn effective ways of helping clients experience stabilization and symptom reduction.

The phase-orientated approach is recommended by the ISSTD and ESTD-UK (International and European Societies for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation). The approach blends attachment based therapy with psychodynamic and cognitive behavioural elements, whilst giving priority to building and maintaining a sound working alliance that incorporates the core conditions of person-centred therapy. Some direction of the counselling process is seen as a necessary part of this model, particularly in respect to limiting self-harm and building safety, containment and co-consciousness between the dissociated parts of the self. This approach is more client responsive than interventionist, and honouring and working with the therapeutic relationship constitutes the core of the work. In this respect, the core conditions of the person-centred approach will feature highly in the case examples and inputs. Participants will be invited to explore the links to their own practice and also any tensions between this model and their own way of working. By prioritising the therapist's use of self, the workshop aims to enable participants to develop personalised forms of integrated practise to enhance movement towards fuller personal and professional authenticity.

An optional one hour group session for discussion of case work, facilitated by the trainer, will be offered after the end of the first day's workshop, from **4.30 to 5.30** p.m.

About the Trainer:

Formerly senior lecturer in counselling at York St John University, Dr Val Wosket works in private practice at the York Clinic for Complementary Medicine. Her publications include: *Egan's Skilled Helper Model: Developments and Applications in Counselling*; *The Therapeutic Use of Self: Counselling Practice, Research and Supervision* and *Supervising the Counsellor: A Cyclical Model* (with Steve Page). Val

is a BACP Senior Accredited counsellor/psychotherapist, supervisor and trainer. As a psychotherapist, she has particular interest and experience in working with complex trauma and dissociation and is a member of the teaching faculty of ISSTD and ESTD (the International and European Societies for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation).

Workshop objectives: Completion of the workshop will enable participants to:

- Understand the links between trauma and dissociation
- Be able to identify and respond to a range of dissociative presentations
- Understand the basic psychophysiology of trauma and dissociation
- Understand the stage oriented approach to working with trauma and dissociation and practise a range of stage one strategies for stabilisation and symptom reduction
- Develop awareness of issues impacting on the establishment of an effective working alliance with dissociative clients
- Explore the impact of the therapist's self on the client's process and develop ways of enhancing the intentional and effective use of self with dissociative clients
- Understand the limits of their own competence and the importance of attending to their needs for supervision, training and support in working with trauma and dissociation

Outline of workshop content:

- Understanding the spectrum of dissociation: from daydreaming to dissociative identity disorder
- Pacing and managing stage-oriented work with trauma and dissociation – less haste and more containment
- The place of psycho-education: normalising the client's experience and developing their understanding of dissociation as an expected reaction to trauma
- Reframing 'defences' as resources and understanding the survival value of dissociation
- The brain-body links in trauma and dissociation
- Managing creative tensions between directing the course of structured, phase-oriented work with enabling clients to retain maximum control of their own process and content
- Empowering clients to help themselves: strategies for building strengths and resources, self-soothing and re-associating
- Responding to the client's relational stance: the informative value of the therapist's emotional response to the client's dissociative process
- The importance of therapist modelling: helping clients develop healthy interdependent relationships.