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**Couples Therapy Curriculum: Psychodynamic and Systems Approach**

**Section II: Theoretical Overview**

**December, 2013-March, 2014**

Participants will be engaged in the process of developing an understanding of the integration of psychodynamic and systems theory in working with couples. Since many of the formative family systems therapists were trained as psychoanalysts, historically couples and family therapy has been linked to psychodynamic thinking and is consistent with its principles. We will look at how problems presented by couples have not only to do with current conflicts, but relate to unresolved issues from family of origin as well. Participants will learn to utilize the multigenerational genogram in couples therapy and will be able to see how this work reduces stress and blame in the couple. Further emphasis will be on engagement of the couple in a therapy that focuses on the co-creation of problems and, therefore, the ways in which each member needs to be active in change. Participants will be encouraged to utilize the strengths of the couple in helping them to progress. This approach reflects the evolution of couples therapy that coincides with changes in society. Exploration of the role of attachment in couples therapy will be a component of the course including Johnson’s Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy. Such issues as listening, countertransference reactions and the avoidance of blaming and/or taking sides will be addressed as well as therapy with couples with children and considering approaches to working with the difficult couple. Throughout the course, theory will be connected to practice and clinical presentations will be utilized.

**Week 1:**

**History of Couples Therapy: Review of the Models and Evolution to State of the Art Thinking**

Readings:

The Embedded Self, Mary –Joan Gerson, Routledge: NY; 2010. Chapter 3.

Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy:, Alan S. Gurman, ed.Guilford Press:NY 2008. Chapter 1.

Handout: Madeleine Seifter Abrams

**Week 2:**

**Bowen Family Systems Theory: Intergenerational Model and Triangles**

Readings:

Family Evaluation. Kerr, M. and Bowen,M.Nortn:NY. 1988.,chap ,3

The Essentials of Family Therapy. Nichols, M. with Schwartz, RC. Allyn and Bacon: Boston. Chapter 5.

**Week 3:**

**Bowen continued: Strategies for Treating Couples and the Emotions Genogram**

Readings:

Focused Genograms,Rita DeMaria, Gerald Weeks, Larry Hof. Brunner/Mazel, Philadelphia, Pa: 1999.Chapter 7.

Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy, Alan S. Gurman,Ed. Guilford Press;NY. 2008. Chapter 7.

**Week 4:**

**Countertransference in Couples Therapy, Experiential Therapy, and Ambiguous Loss**

Readings:

Ambiguous Loss, Pauline Boss. Harvard University Press, 1999. Chapter 9.

The Essentials of Family Therapy. Nichols, M. with Schwartz, RC. Allyn and Bacon: Boston. Chapter 8.

Countertransference in Couples Therapy, Marion F. Solomon and Judith P. Siegel, Eds.Norton and Company:NY. 1997. Chapters 1 and 2.

**Week 5:**

**John Gottman’s Model of Couples Therapy**

Readings:

The Relationship Cure, John M. Gottman, PhD.Three Rivers Press, NY: 2001. Chapter 8.

The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work, John M. Gottman, PhD.Three Rivers Press, NY; 1999.Chapters 1 and 2.

Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy, Alan S. Gurman,Ed. Guilford Press;NY. 2008. Chapter 5.

**Week 6:**

**Solution - Focused Couple Therapy**

Readings:

Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy, Alan S. Gurman,Ed. Guilford Press;NY. 2008. Chapter 9

Clinical Casebook of Couple Therapy. Chapter 3.

**Week 7:**

**Salvador Minuchin’s Structural Model**

Readings:

Minuchin,S. and Fishman,C. (1981) Family Therapy Techniques. Harvard University Press, Cambridge , Massachusetts.Chapters 1 and 3

Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy,Alan S. Gurman,Ed. Guilford Press;NY.2001. Chapter 11.

**Week 8:**

**Attachment Theory and Couples Therapy: The Impact of Early Attachment on Couples Relationships. Implications for therapy with couples.**

Readings:

Evaluating Couples: A Handbook for Practitioners. Karpel, MA. Norton, NY. 1994.Chapter 3.

Adult Attachment and Couples Psychotherapy. Ed. By Clulow, C.Brunner-Routledge: London. 2001.

Love and Attachment: Contemporary Issues and Treatment Considerations. Ed. By Tosone, C. and Aiello, T. Jason Aronson: NJ. 1999.

**Week 9:**

**Attachment Continued: Sue Johnson’s Model of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy**

Readings:

The Practice of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy, Susan M. Johnson. Chapter 1.

Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy, Alan S. Gurman,Ed. Guilford Press;NY. 2008. Chapter 4.

**Week 10:**

**Intimacy and Sexuality in Couples**

Readings:

Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy, Alan S. Gurman,Ed. Guilford Press;NY 2008.Chapter 21.

Constructing the Sexual Crucible: An Integration of Sexual and Marital Therapy, David M. Schnarch. Norton:NY. 1981. Chapter 1.

**Week 11:**

**Integration of Models**

Readings:

Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy, Alan S. Gurman,Ed. Guilford Press;NY 2008.Chapter 13

“Marriage as a System” from Narcissism and Intimacy: Love and Marriage in an Age of Confusion by Marion F. Solomon, PhD. Norton and Co., NY, 1989.