

ESALEN INSTITUTE CONTINUING EDUCATION
MFT/LCSW/LPCC/LEP

Leader Name: Dorothy Charles

Workshop Title: Relational Gestalt Process: The Transformative Power of Emotion

Workshop Description:

Each of us finds our true selves through our emotions. In order to become whole, we must discover how our experience is organized in limiting, unconscious patterns and through that process, learn how to organize our experience in new ways.

When we begin to expand and integrate a broader range of emotions, we move toward wholeness because the ability to experience and to express emotions is integral to the experience of aliveness. Learning to fully experience feelings and to be able to articulate them in healthy, meaningful ways enables us to have more pleasurable and fulfilling relationships.

This experiential and didactic workshop will blend individual and group Relational Gestalt work. The intention of Relational Gestalt Process is to expand emotional range by feeling, expressing, and building emotional tolerance in order to strengthen our relationships. We will experiment with tracking our emotions, learning to recognize them as signals that call for awareness and attention, rather than as something to be avoided.

Recommended reading: Yontef, *Awareness Process and Dialogue*; Korb, et al., *Gestalt Therapy: Practice and Theory*; Gestalt Legacy Project, *Manual of Gestalt Practice in the Tradition of Dick Price*.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through participation in this workshop participants will be able to:

- 1) Summarize basic theory of gestalt language and the values of gestalt.
- 2) Utilize mindful breathing techniques to develop present moment awareness when working with clients.
- 3) Describe how practicing basic awareness develops self-reflection, the ability to identify emotion, and awareness of others' experiences and needs.
- 4) Identify at least four benefits of the effect of basic awareness practice on health care/mental health professionals.
- 5) Identify existing somatic/emotional patterns.
- 6) Give examples of the cognitive, emotional and somatic themes in which they live their lives.
- 7) Identify an alternative repertoire of cognitive, emotional and somatic behaviors and/or apply new awareness into a broader repertoire of experiences.
- 8) Practice shuttling between self and other when in contact.
- 9) Identify places of reactivity and develop skills for increasing capacity to tolerate emotional experience (e.g., using breath and basic awareness practice).
- 10) Describe how basic awareness of feelings can result in reduced emotional reactivity and difficult emotions such as anxiety and depression.
- 11) Utilize the powerful principles of compassion, acceptance, and awareness for meeting the full range of human experience with balance and openness;
- 12) Integrate the practices of compassion, acceptance, and awareness for meeting stress, pain, and burnout with kindness and wisdom.

Course Calendar

Total: 10 class sessions/26 CEU class hours

Each class session will begin with gestalt basic practice and continuum of awareness as well as some check-in time.

Day 1 (2 class hours)

Establishing group norms/Building group field

Evening session (8:30pm-10:30pm): Personal and staff introductions; teaching basic practice and continuum of awareness; establish group norms; gestalt language and dyad using "I statements versus "you" statements

Day 2 (6 class hours)

Family systems and roots of emotional and relationship patterns

Morning session (10:00am-1:00pm): Boundaries (physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual); dyad practicing skillful boundary setting; values in gestalt, dyad to discern growing edges embodying and utilizing the gestalt values

Afternoon session (3:30pm-6:30pm): Gestalt family systems; familial roles; dyad exploring individuals' roles in families during early childhood; introduction to open seat; introduction to family sculpture; individual sessions with group feedback

Day 3 (6 class hours)

Working phase (focusing on open seat sessions and family sculptures)

Morning session (10:00am-1:00pm): Signal value of emotion and small group practice exploring the root of our emotional patterns in the family system; individual open seat session (or family sculpture) with group feedback and teaching off the topics that arise from the open seat

Afternoon session (3:30pm-6:30pm): Conflict resolution; unfinished business; dyad for purpose of practicing resolving conflict ("speaking to" as opposed to "speaking about"); individual open seat session (or family sculpture) with group feedback and teaching off the topics that arise from the open seat

Day 4 (6 class hours)

Working phase/Principles of contact

Morning session (10:00am-1:00pm): Individual open seat sessions (or family sculpture) with group feedback and teaching off the topics that arise from the open seat

Afternoon session (3:30pm-6:30pm): Four corners of contact; principles of contact; dyad practicing making contact and shuttling between individual's experience and that of another; conflict resolution; individual open seat session (or family sculpture)

Day 5 (6 class hours)

Unfinished business/Principles of contact (cont'd)

Morning session (10:00am-1:00pm): Unfinished business; dyad for purpose of practicing resolving conflict ("speaking to" as opposed to "speaking about"); individual open seat session (or family sculpture)

Afternoon session (3:30pm-6:30pm): Barriers to contact (introjection, projection, confluence, deflection, retroreflection); small group role play displaying common techniques for distancing from contact; individual open seat session (or family sculpture); Message-program-filter and dyadic practice exploring personal messages, programs (organizing principles) and resulting filters

Day 6 (2 class hours)

Integration/Closure

Morning session (9:30am-11:30am): Dyad reviewing the week (including concepts explored and how to apply the learning in the future); whole group sharing (each participant has the opportunity to bring what was explored in final dyad to the whole group for purposes of closure and integration)

This course meets the qualifications for 26 hours of continuing education credit for LMFTs, LCSWs, LPCCs, and/or LEPs as required by the California Board of Behavioral Sciences. Esalen is an approved provider of continuing education by the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists. Esalen Institute maintains responsibility for this program and its content. You may contact us at CE@esalen.org. We encourage you to be in touch with our office with any grievances in a timely manner.

