

Bowen Family Systems Theory Clinical Certificate & Workshop Series

**The 2019-2020 Program will offer different two eight-person cohorts.
Select the day that works best for you:
the Friday cohort *or* Saturday cohort**

Faculty

Charles M. White, LCSW, LCADC & Ellen Rogan, DPN
Center for Family, Organizational, and Natural Systems Education

Workshop Day Overview		
9:30 AM - 10:45 AM	Welcome, Overview, Resource Distribution & Discussion / Bowen Family Systems Theory Education Presentation & Discussion (Charles M. White, LCSW, LCADC & Ellen Rogan, DPN)	
10:45 AM - 11:00 AM	Break ↓	
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Bowen Family Systems Theory and/or Applications Video on Presentation Topic(s)	
12:00 Noon -1:00 PM	Lunch (Optional supplemental video on presentation topic shown during lunch)	
1:00 PM - 1:45 PM	Facilitated Discussion on Presentation & Video (Charles M. White, LCSW, LCADC or Ellen Rogan, DPN) ↓	Single-Day & Series Participant Two 22.5-Minute Family-Of-Origin and/or Case Study Interviews (Charles M. White, LCSW, LCADC or Ellen Rogan, DPN)
1:45 PM - 2:00 PM	Introduction to Webcast Presenter Bowen Theory & Applications Webcast	
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM	Bowen Theory & Applications Presentation & Discussion Webcast Streaming Live with International Bowen Theory Experts	
3:30 PM - 4:00 PM	Post-Webcast Discussion & Wrap Up ↓	
4:00 PM - 4:15 PM	Break & Aggregate Supervision Set-Up ↓	
4:15 PM - 6:00 PM	Trainee Aggregate #1 Three 35-Minute Family-Of-Origin and/or Case Study Interviews (Charles M. White, LCSW, LCADC & 4 Aggregate #1 Trainees)	Trainee Aggregate #2 Three 35-Minute Family-Of-Origin and/or Case Study Interviews (Ellen Rogan, DPN & 4 Aggregate #2 Trainees)

2019-2020 Workshop Topics and Webcast Schedule

Workshop Number	Workshop Day & Date	Bowen Family Systems Theory Education Presentation & Discussion Topic (Charles M. White, LCSW, LCADC & Ellen Rogan, DPN)
1	Fri. 9/13 or Sat. 9/14	“The Family as an Emotional Unit or System”
2	Fri. 10/4 or Sat. 10/5	“Differentiation of Self”
3	Fri. 11/1 or Sat. 11/2	“Chronic Anxiety & Individuality/Togetherness in Relationships”
4	Fri. 12/6 or Sat. 12/7	“Nuclear Family Emotional Process”
5	Fri. 1/24 or Sat. 1/25	“Sibling Position”
6	Fri. 2/28 or Sat. 2/29	“Triangles”
7	Fri. 3/13 or Sat. 3/14	“Family Projection Process”
8	Fri. 4/3 or Sat. 4/4	“Emotional Cutoff”
9	Fri. 5/1 or Sat. 5/2	“Multigenerational Transmission Process”
10	Fri. 6/5 or Sat. 6/6	“Emotional Process in Society”

Workshop Descriptions

Workshop 1

#5463

Run for the Hills, It’s Alive!

The Personal and Practice Implications of the Family as a Living Emotional System

Bowen family systems theory postulates that the family is a living emotional system where the behavior of each family member both simultaneously contributes to and reflects what is occurring in the family as a whole. Functioning in reciprocal relationships, changes in one family member’s functioning is automatically compensated for by changes in other family members’ functioning – resulting in one family member’s behavior only being adequately understood in the context of understanding the primary emotional system in which he or she functions – usually his or her nuclear or extended family. This workshop considers a few of the profound personal and practice implications resulting from this perspective, specifically that: (1) people have less autonomy in their functioning than is commonly thought, (2) every family members’ functioning contributes to medical, psychiatric, or social symptoms in another family member, and (3) treatment need not be directed at the symptomatic family member.

Workshop 2

#5464

The Road to Emotional Maturity has No Fast Lane: *Towards Becoming a More Inner-Directed Self*

Most people want their decision-making and day-to-day behavior guided by a conscious set of well thought-out stances or principles. Perplexed by their own limitations in executing such thoughtful and principled behavior, they find it harder still when anxious or when their thinking calls on them to give up the “group think” of their primary emotional system(s) in order to achieve more individuality. *Differentiation of Self*, a cornerstone concept in Bowen family systems theory, attempts to explain these difficulties and variations in terms of the degrees to which people are able to achieve emotional separation from their families-of-origin. This workshop considers the cognitive, emotional, and relationship variables that contribute to a person’s basic levels of Differentiation of Self, as well as, explores some of the essential elements needed in any concerted effort to increase one’s basic level of self later in life.

Workshop 3

#5465

Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My! *Balancing Individuality & Togetherness in Key Relationships*

Bowen family systems theory postulates that among the biologically-rooted drives within an organism, there are competing forces for individuality and togetherness. It is these forces that govern emotional transactions in all relationships. These counterbalancing life forces shift the locus of control for behavior from the individual to the emotional system. What transpires in the emotional system impacts the interplay of feeling and thinking in the individual which has a direct effect on his or her relationships. Increased chronic anxiety can result in an individuals’ feelings overwhelming their intellectual system which leads to a drive for togetherness overwhelming their individuality in that emotional system. This workshop demonstrates how understanding the effects of chronic anxiety on individuality-togetherness balances can enhance one’s functioning in various emotional systems.

Workshop 4

#5440

Helicopter Parenting while in Perpetual Conflict with an Underfunctioning Co-pilot . . . A Love Story

The Bowen family systems theory concept *Nuclear Family Emotional Process* describes the basic patterns of emotional functioning among and between members of two successive generations of a family – most often between partners and between the partners and their offspring. These basic patterns result in chronic anxiety. Family tensions come to rest in certain parts of the family such that the more anxiety one nuclear family or relationship absorbs, the less other family members or relationships must absorb. This workshop will explore how at sufficient levels of anxiety intensity, each pattern contributes to the development of one of three categories of clinical dysfunction in a nuclear family: (1) illness in a spouse; (2) marital conflict; and (3) impairment of one or more children.

Workshop 5

#5468

The Birth Order Blues: *Understanding Sibling Position Strengths, Blind Spots, and Liabilities*

The Bowen family systems theory concept of *Sibling Position* asserts that people who grow up in the same sibling position in families tend to have important common characteristics. For example, oldest children often gravitate towards leadership positions while youngest children often prefer to be followers. Applied to spousal, partner, and parenting relationships, sibling position often has considerable explanatory power for understanding the challenges and successes that couples and parents experience in their relationship and task negotiations.

Workshop 6

#5441

How to Avoid Getting Voted off the Island: *Understanding and Managing Relationship Triangles*

Remember your junior high cafeteria? If you generally artfully navigated through the dozens of relationship challenges, then skip this workshop. However, if those years still conjure up a bewilderingly painful struggle of relationship suffering, then this workshop is for you! *Triangles*, a Bowen family systems theory concept and Rosetta Stone for understanding those years as well as more recent distressing relationships, are the smallest stable relationship units or building blocks of larger emotional systems. If calm, a two-person unit may be stable, however since it tolerates little tension and calm, it is very difficult to maintain. It is automatic that when dyadic anxiety rises, one or both participants recruit a third into the situation – resulting in a *triangle* that can contain much more tension than the dyad because the tension can now shift between three relationships.

Workshop 7

#5442

Are “Squeaky Wheel” Children a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy?

The Challenge of Developing Reality-Based Relationships with Our Children

A child’s degree of relationship dependence is a product of forces that promote and undermine that child’s emotional separation from the family. According to Bowen family systems theory, when parent and child functioning promotes emotional separation, the emotional maturity level is maintained between generations. When their functioning undermines separation, parental generation immaturity is transmitted to the next generation. *Family Projection Process*, a Bowen theory concept, describes how parents instill part of their immaturity into children. Typically the parent becomes less anxious by focusing on one or more of their children. Their partner, sensitive to the caregivers’ anxiety, supports their involvement with these children. Projection process steps are explored where a parent: (1) focuses on a child fearing something is wrong with that child; (2) interprets the child’s behavior as confirming that fear; and (3) treats the child *as if* something is really wrong with that child.

Workshop 8

#5466

Wherever I Go, There I Am (Eventually): *Repercussions of Escaping an “Impossible” Family*

Emotional Cutoff, a Bowen family systems theory concept, describes how unresolved emotional issues with parents, siblings, and other family members are managed by reducing or totally cutting off emotional contact with them – moving away and rarely going home or by staying in physical contact but avoiding sensitive issues. “Escaping” their families-of-origin and determined to be different, they invest strongly in their “new” families or develop substitute families with friends or organizations – investing much more emotionally in them than their families-of-origin. While a cutoff may relieve immediate pressure and lower anxiety, the vulnerability to intense relationships remains – making it likely a more intense version of the past (or its mirror image) is replicated in the present. Covering cutoff origins and consequences, this workshop also explores how bridging cutoffs provides a path out of recreating the past in the present nuclear family while reducing anxiety and improving personal and relationship functioning.

Workshop 9

#5467

Getting Beyond Blaming Self or Others: *Becoming Factual about 500 Pound Gorilla Multigenerational Patterns*

This workshop explores the *Multigenerational Transmission Process*, a Bowen family systems theory concept and how understanding the facts of a family across generations is a means of identifying persistent behavior patterns. We will see that these patterns have histories and influence that transcend that of any one family member - thereby promoting a more objective understanding of these behavioral patterns, family members, and the parts of the that self-play a role in creating and perpetuating them.

Workshop 10

#5469

Emotional Process in Society: *How it Promotes Regressive & Progressive Periods and its Influence on Families*

Societal Emotional Process, a Bowen concept, describes how both progressive and regressive periods in societies are strongly influenced by an emotional system operating on a societal level. During regressive periods societies and their leaders tend to take easy ways out for addressing challenging issues and it is not until the pain associated with these short-term strategies begins to exceed the pain associated with acting on long-term views that societies emerge into progressive periods. This workshop will explore the challenges for families as parents attempt to raise children in periods of societal regression compared to raising children in more progressive periods.

All workshops are held at the
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