

## Bowen Family Systems Theory Clinical Certificate & Webinar Series

**Ten Monthly Live & Interactive Webinars**

**Guest Lectures from Bowen Experts  
from Around the World**

**Ten Supervision Sessions**  
(Seven group and three individual supervision sessions)

**71 Continuing Education Hours**

### Program Facilitators

Charles M. White, LCSW, LCADC  
Dr. Ellen Rogan, MSN, DNP

### Webinar Day Overview

9:00 AM - 10:15 AM	Welcome & Overview (Charles M. White, LCSW & Ellen Rogan, MSN, DNP) Bowen Family Systems Theory Education Presentation & Discussion (Ellen Rogan, MSN, DNP)	
10:15 AM - 11:30 AM	Bowen Family Systems Theory and/or Applications Video on Webinar Topic(s) & Discussion	
11:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Bowen Family Systems Theory Education Presentation & Discussion (Charles M. White, LCSW)	
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Lunch [During Lunch, an Optional Supplemental Video on Webinar Topic(s) Is Shown]	
1:00 PM - 1:20 PM	Facilitated Discussion on Presentations & Videos (Charles M. White, LCSW & Ellen Rogan, MSN, DNP)	
1:20 PM - 1:30 PM	Webcast Presenter	
1:30 PM - 3:00 PM	Bowen Theory & Applications Presentation with Discussion Webcast Streaming Live with International Bowen Theory Expert	
3:00 PM - 3:30 PM	Post-Webcast Discussion & Wrap Up (Charles M. White, LCSW & Ellen Rogan, MSN, DNP)	
2.0 HOURS TUESDAY TBD	Trainee Supervision Aggregates #1 & #2 Family-of-Origin and/or Case Study Interviews (Charles M. White, LCSW & 3 Aggregate Trainees)	Trainee Supervision Aggregates #3 & #4 Family-of-Origin and/or Case Study Interviews (Ellen Rogan, MSN DNP & 3 Aggregate Trainees)

### 3 4 Webinar)

Webinar #	Webinar #	Webinar Title
1	Mon 09/25	"The Family as an Emotional Unit or System"
2	Mon 10/23	"Differentiation of Self"
3	Mon 11/13	"Chronic Anxiety & Individuality/Togetherness in Relationships"
4	Mon 12/11	"Nuclear Family Emotional Process"
5	Mon 01/22	"Sibling Position"
6	Mon 02/12	"Triangles"
7	Mon 03/11	"Family Projection Process"
8	Mon 04/08	"Emotional Cutoff"
9	Mon 05/20	"Multigenerational Transmission Process"
10	Mon 06/10	"Emotional Process in Society"

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#### ***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 webinar 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.

#### Webinar) u 7 y o k

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Pages 35-40

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Pages vi-xi – Foreword by Dr. Michael Kerr

Pages 6-10 – Chapter 1: "Dr. Bowen's Extraordinary Way of Thinking"

Pages 184-185 – "System"

Pages 182-183 – "Emotional System"

**Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory**  
**Michael E. Kerr, M.D. & Murray Bowen, M.D. (Norton, 1988)**  
Pages vii-xii – Introduction  
Pages 3-26 – Chapter 1: “Toward a Natural Systems Theory”  
Pages 27-58 – Chapter 2: “The Emotional System”

## Webinar 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 webinar 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.

#### **Webinar #2: “Differentiation of Self” Readings**

##### **“Chronic Anxiety and Defining a Self”**

Pages 41-44 – “Differentiation”  
Pages 44-47 – “Defining a Self”

##### **Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking About Human Interactions**

Pages 18-25 – Chapter 3: “Differentiation of Self”  
Pages 186-198 – Appendix II: “Differentiation of Self Scale”  
Pages 180-181 – “Basic Self”  
Pages 181-182 – “Differentiation of Self”  
Page 182 – “Emotional Maturity”  
Page 183 – “Emotions”, “Feelings”, “Functional Self”, “Inner Guidance System”  
Page 184 – “Pseudo Self”, “Scale of Differentiation”, “Self”

##### **Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory**

Pages 89-111 – Chapter 4: “Differentiation of Self”  
Pages 339-386 – Epilogue: “An Odyssey Toward Science”

## Webinar 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 webinar demonstrates how understanding the effects of chronic anxiety on individuality-togetherness balances can enhance one’s functioning in various emotional systems.

### **Webinar #3: “Chronic Anxiety & Individuality/Togetherness in Relationships” Readings**

#### **“Chronic Anxiety and Defining a Self”**

Pages 47-48 – “Chronic Anxiety”

#### **Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking About Human Interactions**

Pages 11-17 – Chapter 2: “A Theory About Relationships: The Individuality and Togetherness Forces”

Page 180 – “Anxiety”

Page 183 – “Fusion”

Page 184 – “Symbiosis”

#### **Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory**

Pages 59-88 – Chapter 3: “Individuality and Togetherness”

Pages 112-133 – Chapter 5: “Chronic Anxiety”

## **Webinar 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 webinar 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.

### **Webinar #4: “Nuclear Family Emotional Process” Readings**

#### **“Chronic Anxiety and Defining a Self”**

Pages 48-52 – “The Binding of Anxiety”

#### **Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking About Human Interactions**

Pages 35-37 – Chapter 5: “Relationship Patterns and Postures”

Pages 38-42 – Chapter 6: “Emotions in Relationships”

Pages 43-50 – Chapter 7: “Conflict”

Pages 51-59 – Chapter 8: “Distance”

Pages 65-72 – Chapter 10: “Overfunctioning / Underfunctioning Reciprocity”

Page 184 – “Nuclear Family Emotional System”, “Reactivity”

#### **Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory**

Pages 163-193 – Chapter 7: “Nuclear Family Emotional System: Dysfunction in a Spouse & Marital Conflict”

Pages 317-324 – Chapter 10: “Family Evaluation: Interpretation of the Data (Nuclear Family Emotional Process, Stressors, Emotional Reactivity, Nuclear Family Adaptiveness, and Extended Family Stability & Intactness)”

## **Webinar 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.

## Webinar #5: “Sibling Position” Readings

### **Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking About Human Interactions**

Pages 85-88 – Chapter 13: “Family Constellation and Sibling Positions”

Pages 199-212 – Appendix III: “Toman’s Sibling Positions: Position Portraits and Resulting Relationships”

### **Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory**

Pages 313-317 – Chapter 10: “Family Evaluation: Interpretation of the Data (Sibling Position)”

## Webinar 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 webinar. However, if those years still conjure up a bewilderingly painful struggle of relationship suffering, then this webinar 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.

## Webinar #6: “Triangles” Readings

### **“Chronic Anxiety and Defining a Self”**

Pages 52-54 – “Triangles”

### **Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking About Human Interactions**

Pages 26-34 – Chapter 4: “Thinking Systems, Watching Process”

Pages 73-81 – Chapter 11: “Triangles”

Page 185 – “Triangle”

### **Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory**

Pages 134-162 – Chapter 6: “Triangles”

## Webinar 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.

## Webinar #7: “Family Projection Process” Readings

### **“Chronic Anxiety and Defining a Self”**

Pages 54-55 – “Interlocking Triangles”

### **Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory**

Pages 193-220 – Chapter 7: “Nuclear Family Emotional System: Impairment of Children”

## Webinar 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 Webinar 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.

#### **Webinar #8: “Emotional Cutoff” Readings**

##### **“Chronic Anxiety and Defining a Self”**

Pages 55-56 – “Triangles and Symptom Development”

##### **Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking About Human Interactions**

Pages 60-64 – Chapter 9: “Cutoff”

##### **Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory**

Pages 256-281 – Chapter 9: “Symptom Development”

Pages 324-326 – Chapter 10: “Family Evaluation: Interpretation of the Data (Emotional Cutoff)”

## Webinar 9

#5467

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

#### ***Multigenerational Patterns***

This webinar 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.

#### **Webinar #9: “Multigenerational Transmission Process” Readings**

##### **Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking About Human Interactions**

Pages 117-125 – Chapter 16: “Growing a Self”

##### **Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory**

Pages 221-255 – Chapter 8: “Multigenerational Emotional Process”

## Webinar 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 webinar 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.

### **Webinar #10: “Societal Emotional Process” Readings**

#### **Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking About Human Interactions**

Pages 165-168 – Chapter 20: “Living Out the Theory: Societal Process and International Relationships”

#### **Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory**

Pages 333-338 – Chapter 10: “Family Evaluation: Conclusion”