Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapy: A Gentle, Yet Powerful Tool for Facilitating Loving Connections by Dr. John Amodeo, PhD, LMFT

Workshop Details

Date  : December 5 & 6, 2019 (Thursday & Friday)

Time  : 9:30 am – 5:30 pm

Venue : 2/F., 5 Sassoon Road, Pokfulam, Hong Kong.

2-day Workshop Fee:
HK$3,000
HK$2,200 (early bird price before 18/11)

For further information, please contact 2831 5163 or email bhealth@hku.hk
About the Trainer

John Amodeo, PhD, LMFT, has been a licensed marriage and family therapist for nearly forty years in the San Francisco Bay Area. He holds graduate degrees in both clinical psychology and transpersonal psychology and is a certified Focusing Trainer and a certified Focusing-Oriented Therapist. He is the author of the award winning book, Dancing with Fire: A Mindful Way to Loving Relationships. His other books include The Authentic Heart; Love & Betrayal; and Being Intimate, which have been translated into Chinese. He contributed a chapter to the book, Theory and Practice of Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapy, edited by Greg Madison on Integrating Focusing into Couple Therapy, and also co-authored a chapter with Dr. Sue Johnson on EFT and Buddhism in The Emotionally Focused Casebook. He was a writer and contributing editor for Yoga Journal for ten years and has conducted workshops and lectured at universities internationally. He has made numerous radio and television appearances, including CNN, Donahue, and New Dimensions Radio, and has also been an adjunct faculty member of Meridian University. He is a blogger for Psych Central and has a popular blog column with Psychology Today, with over 2 million total views of his articles. His website is: www.johnamodeo.com

Through research at the University of Chicago, Dr. Eugene Gendlin discovered key factors that lead to positive outcomes in psychotherapy. Based upon his research, which forms the basis for Focusing, he received the Distinguished Psychologist of the Year Award given by the clinical division of the American Psychological Association (APA). This workshop is for helping professionals and educators who want to integrate the evidence-based approach of Focusing into the work they are already doing.

About the Workshop

The 2-day workshop will describe the major elements of Focusing, including how it was developed, the Focusing attitude, contacting our “felt sense” of life issues, empathic listening, and how to integrate Focusing into individual and couples therapy sessions. It will include lecture and discussion, as well as simple experiential exercises that will make the workshop more alive and practical.
We will explore how Focusing is a helpful tool for untangling difficult relationship knots and deepening relationships that are doing well. By helping clients and couples bring a gentle mindfulness and acceptance toward their inner world, a climate is created for the unfolding of safer, more trusting relationships. Through this workshop, you will not only learn skills to help you in your professional work, but may also discover how Focusing can help build more satisfying connections in your own life.

Focusing works best when combined with other approaches. We will discuss how it weaves together with meditation and mindfulness, Attachment Theory, trauma work, Buddhist Psychology, Emotionally-Focused Therapy developed by Dr. Sue Johnson, and the relationship research of Dr. John Gottman.

We will also explore common obstacles to Focusing and effective psychotherapy. Shame is one major, hidden reason why clients remain stuck. Understanding the subtle, destructive effect of shame and the “inner critic” can offer new tools for untangling stuck places and helping your clients move forward in their lives.

**Course Objectives**

As a result of this program, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the history and principles of Focusing, including the "Focusing attitude” of gentleness toward our feelings—and be able apply it to their work.

2. Recognize how our body and our “felt sense” contains wisdom not accessible by our rational mind alone.

3. Use typical Focusing interventions and questions to help clients move from intellectualizing to accessing their deeper felt experience.

4. Apply the Focusing approach to relationships and couples therapy.
5. Recognize how Focusing can weave together with mindfulness-based practices, and how it can help those with a spiritual orientation to embody their spirituality in a more grounded, integrated, and interpersonally-connected way.

6. Identify how shame and the “inner critic” are obstacles to self-acceptance and self-regulation—and understand ways to heal shame. Distinguishing toxic shame from healthy shame.

7. Be familiar with research regarding what makes marriages thrive or fail—and how Focusing can help deepen intimacy, improve communication, and create healthy, mature partnerships and friendships.

**Course Outline**

**DAY 1**

A. Introductory comments and group exercise for grounding and getting some sense of Focusing.

B. Defining a context to recognize the value of Focusing.

   1. Attachment Theory and attachment styles: How Focusing creates a secure internal base that can facilitate secure, healthy connections.

   2. The marital research of Dr. John Gottman on what predicts marital success and failure; discussion of the four negative communication patterns that lead to divorce—and how Focusing offers antidotes to these obstacles.

   3. Buddhist Psychology: Factors that create suffering in our lives and relationships; finding a middle path between the extremes of clinging/merging with another person and avoidance/dissociation (healthy attachment versus insecure or avoidant attachment).
4. The value of mindfulness and its similarities and differences with Focusing. Letting feelings go versus letting them unfold—making a friendly space for feelings and hearing the wisdom they may contain.

C. Experiential Exercise: A role play with two volunteers to clearly demonstrate the difference between unhealthy, dysfunctional communicate between a couple (including Gottman’s four negative patterns) and how Focusing facilitates a mature, healthy, connected dialogue. We will pause the dialogue as the presenter highlights points that are experientially grounded. We will view the dialogue through the lens of Attachment Theory, Gottman’s work, and Buddhist Psychology.

D. The history of Focusing. The research and principles underlying Focusing, including the “Focusing attitude,” the “felt sense,” and typical Focusing interventions, including ways to bring Focusing into a psychotherapy session.

E. Demonstration of a Focusing session.

F. Experiential exercise to learn what a “felt sense” is.

**DAY 2**

A. Keys to fulfilling relationships.

B. Demonstration of a Focusing oriented couples therapy session through a scripted role play; the presenter will demonstrate the foundational principles of Focusing and typical Focusing interventions and the reasons for them.

C. Principles for Focusing with couples.

D. Demonstration of a couple therapy session using Focusing with one part of the couple. Using “parts” language and “finding the right distance” from feelings (not too close or too far away).
E. Exploring shame and the “inner critic” as major obstacles to Focusing.

1. How we often don’t recognize our shame, but experience its harmful effects. Bringing mindfulness to shame so we can work with it.

2. Personal and social roots of shame.

3. How shame relates to addictions and trauma and how Focusing can help.

4. Differentiating toxic shame from the healthy shame that can help us become more sensitively attuned to others.

5. Healing shame through working in a Focusing-oriented way with the various aspects of shame: the cognitive piece, emotional piece, somatic piece, and interpersonal piece.

6. Group exercise to identify and heal shame.

F. Practice session: During a role play of a couple session, participants will have an opportunity to express how they would intervene during the session.

G. Questions and comments (throughout the workshop as well).
Registration Form

Please return the completed form with cheque payable to "The University of Hong Kong" by mail, or in person to the following address:

Centre on Behavioral Health, The University of Hong Kong
2/F., 5 Sassoon Road, Hong Kong. Tel: 2831 5163 Fax: 2816 6710

2-day Workshop: December 5 & 6, 2019/Thursday & Friday/9:30 am – 5:30 pm
☑ HK$3,000
☑ HK$2,200 (early bird price before 18/11)

Title: * ☑ Professor ☑ Dr. ☑ Mr. ☑ Mrs. ☑ Ms.

First Name: ___________________________________________________________________
Last Name: ___________________________________________________________________
Correspondence Address: _______________________________________________________
____________________________________ _________________________________________
Tel: ______________________________ Fax: _________________________________________
Email: ______________________________________________________________________
Organization: _____________________________________________________________
Position: ___________________________________________________________________
I know this programme from: _________________________________________________
I would like to learn the following from this course:
1. _______________________________________________________________________
2. _______________________________________________________________________
3. _______________________________________________________________________

Would you like to be on a mailing list to receive any information on training programs organized by Centre on Behavioral Health in the future? Yes______ No______

Date: __________________________ Signature: ____________________________________

*Please tick as appropriate

^Fee paid is not refundable