

CLINICAL PRACTICUM

The Clinical Practicum is designed for clinicians who have either been in our Advanced Group and have "outgrown" it, or have reached a similar level of expertise through other training experience. Preference will be given to those persons who have had extensive training in Gestalt Therapy and whose interest is in focusing heavily on improving clinical skills. Participants will be carefully screened for preparedness for this level of training.

The Clinical Practicum will focus intensely on improving participants' clinical skills and will emphasize the integration of clinical work and Gestalt theory.

- Each participant will have an individual client from the Basic, Advanced or Advanced Intensive Groups. Either a Faculty member, Training Assistant, or a Trainer's Group member will be sitting in as a supervisor during each and every session with the Clinical Practicum member and the client. Supervision will take place between Clinical Practicum member and supervisor in the 20 minutes following the daily 40 minute therapy session. The client will not be present during the supervision time.
- Clinical Practicum members will be responsible for supervising members of the Basic, Advanced and/or Advanced Intensive groups when these groups break into small groups (either trios or quartets).
- Each participant will have a total of 3 hours daily of supervision and experiential practicum. During the experiential practicum time participants will work as therapist with other group members and will be responsible for the discussion of the work in theoretical terms following each piece of work.
- Participants in the Clinical Practicum are expected to be able to discuss Gestalt theory at an advanced level. You will be expected to present some aspect of Gestalt theory and be responsible for the discussion following the presentation. The topic will be known to you in advance of your arrival at the Residential.

Our learning objectives are:

- Provide a model of continuity in Gestalt Therapy practice and supervision that emphasizes the existential therapeutic relationship.
- Provide advanced clinical supervision.
- Improve the clinical skills of the participants.
- Sharpen skills of identifying and discussing crucial dynamic and process issues in patients.
- Increase therapist awareness of and working through issues of transference and counter-transference as well as the discrimination between transference / countertransference and uncontaminated present reactions.
- Provide some opportunity to work on personal issues with other Clinical Practicum members working as therapist.

In order to make this model of training effective and accomplish our learning objectives, participants must come prepared with accurate expectations and sufficient self-support.

Each participant must be ready and able to take full clinical responsibility as therapist for an individual patient for the full course of the workshop. This means making yourself fully and creatively present in a setting in which your understanding of the client, your therapeutic methodology and rationale, and your own emotions and frailties are all under supervision.

The supervision will consist of a faculty member or a Supervision Practicum member sitting in on every individual therapy session. The emphasis is on supervision and professional training rather than therapy for the therapist. This means that you must be able to support yourself when criticized in a setting that may spend less time on therapeutic support for you than in a regular or advanced training group. It means being able to mobilize yourself to digest the criticism and be emotionally available to the patient on the very next day.

You must also be prepared to give supervision to members of the Basic or Advanced groups when they meet in trios and/or quartets. This means being able to take an overview of the patient, the therapist's supports and weaknesses, the therapeutic indications, etc., in a manner that indicates good will and constructive information, and finding effective, non-threatening means of communicating with the therapist.

While you do not have to be a theoretician or a polished speaker, you must be able and willing to show yourself in a didactic setting and be prepared for the give-and-take of intellectual discussion and debate. You must be capable of discussing Gestalt Therapy theory at an advanced level.

Our expectation is that the Clinical Practicum participants will already have demonstrated all of this in the Advanced Group. This means that you have already worked successfully as therapist, worked as patient, shown yourself able to handle the interaction in the group with minimal defensiveness, and been able to discuss theory (for example, during mini-raps after work).