

Healing relationships: A participatory therapeutic approach from South Africa



Elize Morkel is a psychologist working both in private practice and in community work in South Africa. She is involved in teaching and supervision of colleagues in narrative therapy.

During the political changes in South Africa in the 1990's, Elize experienced an intense and dramatic awakening to the pain and suffering of black South Africans who lived on the margins of her world. She was abruptly confronted by the extent to which she participated in and benefitted from the injustices of Apartheid.

Elize then volunteered her services to people from disadvantaged communities. However, she found their problems completely overwhelming. She was paralyzed by the limiting effect of her training and experience as a therapist as well as by the isolated, privileged life she lived. Narrative therapy offered a useful framework from which to consider the effects of racism and other social injustices on the lives of the people living in post-apartheid South Africa. It enabled Elize to expand her practice to communities outside her own cultural, religious and social group.

Elize is presently involved in the social transformation of her own people through her ever critical voice within the leadership of the Dutch Reformed Church where women and lay people have traditionally had a very limited voice.

Elize's collaboration with Kirkens Familievern culminated in Trondheim Familievernkontor visiting Cape Town in 2005. The application of therapeutic practices within a South African context tainted by the struggles with our racist past, poverty, HIV/AIDS and violence were illustrated. The group responded by becoming involved in Butterfly House, a day care facility for children affected by HIV/AIDS. Visits to Trondheim and further visits to South Africa followed and in 2008 the staff of the Stavanger Familievernkontor joined this collaboration by visiting Cape Town for a similar workshop.

Workshop Content

Colonization and apartheid has successfully divided South Africans for centuries and the institutionalized violence of racism left behind a broken society. Family and community life has been ruptured and today we live in a society infested by violence, crime, unemployment, illness, corruption and poverty. The healing of our post-apartheid society involves the healing of broken relationships on many levels of our lives. The participatory approach to therapy that I propose requires theory and practices that reflect and act on an awareness of socio-political history and context, power relations, dominant discourses and personal narratives. It views therapy and healing from a broader perspective than the boundaries of the counseling room.

How well does Norwegian society manage differences between culture, religion, social class, gender, ability and sexual orientation? Are there individuals, families and groups that find themselves on the margins of Norwegian society? Does a practitioner from the "third world" have anything relevant to share in the context of "first world" family therapy practice? How does Norwegian society manage the destructive effects of difference, stereotyping and power difference?

In this workshop participants will be invited to reflect on their personal understanding and position regarding prejudices, stereotyping and "othering" and how that influences their availability to participate with clients from different "groups" in society. Central to the practice of participation is inclusivity and diversity. Workshop participants will be challenged to consider ways in which their organizations support participation with *all* of society. It is often our training and expert positions as therapists that act to inhibit our participation *with*, rather than knowledge *about*, clients and families. We will consider the question: How do we participate in the therapeutic relationship in ways that makes it a healing relationship? When families and individuals seek counseling the pain and injuries which they describe frequently stem from attitudes and actions of people in the wider society in which they live. Together we will look at ways in which therapists can become involved in transformative therapeutic participation in the healing of relationships in the wider community. I will illustrate with examples from my work in South Africa how my colleagues and I implement community participation as therapeutic practice. Throughout the workshop I will make use of exercises, discussions as well as examples from my own practice to explore the theme of healing relationships through participatory therapeutic practice.

Hvor?

I Stavanger

Når?

21. & 22. oktober
2010

Pris

Kr 3000

Følg med på

<http://www.familievern-stvg.no/>

For mer

informasjon

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Norsk/Engelsk

tolk vil være

tilgjengelig ved

denne workshop.