

Grace
and
CHAOS



Group Facilitation Course

Allison Priestman

Stephen Tame

London

November 2017 to June 2018

Four weekend workshops

£1100

Allison and Stephen ran their first workshop together in 1994, found their different ways into becoming Embodied-Relational Therapists, and have been running psychotherapy workshops together since 2010. More recently they have been running the Embodied-Relational Therapy Training together - a longer residential course which pays particular attention to group dynamics and process.

Stephen Tame I trained as a relational body psychotherapist in the early 90's and have, through training and experience, developed my work ever since. I've a rich history of groups, as participant, facilitator and leader, in social activism and education, and particularly in psychotherapy training. I have always valued a non-expert therapeutic approach, learning from clients and trainees. I'm interested in groups tolerating uncertainty, and unexpected change, and in seeing the unhelpful restrictions in fixed ideas of completion and clarity.



www.stephentame.com

Allison Priestman I am an experienced Embodied-Relational psychotherapist, supervisor and trainer working in private practice in Stroud. I am a trainer for the postgraduate training in Embodied-Relational Therapy. My professional bodies are the European Association for body psychotherapy and Chiron Association for body psychotherapists. My aim is to create safe, stimulating and stretching training and supervisory learning environments.



www.allisonpriestman.co.uk

Grace and CHAOS

This is the fifth time this course has run. Originally developed by Nick Totton, this course is for anyone who wants to learn about groups, how they function and how to facilitate them. It will focus primarily on psychotherapy groups, but should also be useful for councillors, educators, activists, voluntary workers, alternative health practitioners etc.

Grace and chaos: opposite poles, yet both crucial for successful group process. Grace- the gracefulness of a well-functioning group or good group facilitation, effortlessly yielding to reality. And also 'Amazing Grace' - a transpersonal gift that sometimes emerges from deep quiet listening or from the storms of chaos. Joanna Macy describes what she calls group synergy: 'It is like grace, because it brings an increase of power beyond one's own capacity as a separate entity'.

Mythologically, Chaos is the primal state from which the world is created. Groups need to go down into Chaos in order to pass a certain point in their alchemical journey; so group leaders need the courage and grace to allow chaos to happen, and to model openness to chaos, openness to not knowing, for the rest of the group. Complexity theory shows us how beauty and structure emerge spontaneously from chaos. Grace and Chaos, Chaos and Grace: in a successful, living group process, the two dance together, mirror each other, marry each other, become each other.

We will learn about groups by *being* one: holding an open space for the group to do what it needs to do. Learning in an unstructured training group our material is brought quickly into focus. The group and individual processes will be evident and available to be worked upon. We will be introducing theory in a creative and accessible way to make sense of our experience. You will have opportunities to practice and develop facilitation skills by 'taking the wheel' of the group for a while.

On the course we will explore the following themes:

Group Field A group behaves in some ways like an organism, with its own needs, impulses, beliefs, dreams and moods. Each group has its own journey, which has to be travelled rather than analysed. The group field constellates people into the roles it needs in order to express itself; one individual's work on herself, or two people exploring a conflict, can often achieve something for the whole group.

Polarisation In any group, conflict is inevitably present, and will often emerge around big life themes and social issues. The group field develops through setting up polarities and resolving them. Conflict and chaos are creative forces; we will explore how to support and survive them.

Projection A central phenomenon in any group situation; whatever we find difficult to acknowledge and accept in ourselves, we discover and attack in others. Taking back projections is a key to group development - and so is expressing them.

The group as family, the group as mother Being in a group can remind us of being in our family of origin, the same roles and expectations can get replayed or re-enacted. We can experience the group as like our mother or primary caretaker, and be thrown back into infantile states, experiencing the group as exaggeratedly benign or exaggeratedly malevolent.

Our habitual therapeutic position Our habitual position is both conscious and unconscious, how we normally habitually act and think as practitioners and as group facilitators. Within groups, enactments and complex mutual enactments are an ever present possibility. The more we know about our individual histories, and our therapeutic position the better resourced we can be.

We will offer a model for working with groups which is drawn from Embodied-Relational Therapy and is a synthesis of the following **group facilitation models**:

The process model, support the unfolding of the group field through the actions and interactions of participants, trusting that every voice needs to be heard and that what needs to happen is already trying to happen.

The psychodynamic model, focuses on the unconscious fantasies of the group and its members, and how we project our own material onto group members, facilitators and leaders, and the group as a whole.

The body psychotherapy model, tracks how participants body states resonate so as to form a group organism, which oscillates between arousal and relaxation.

The eco-systemic model, sees the group as a nodal point in a network of networks – relational, social, biological, spiritual – which will organically move into balance if not prevented from doing so. Conflict, difference, difficulty and competition are integral part of this rebalancing.

We will explore the following concepts from ERT:

Wild Mind Wild mind listens to the intelligence of all our embodied experience. Wild mind gives weight and value to what we otherwise might think is irrational, crazy, unimportant; information found in such places as dreams, fantasies, aches and pains, emotions, body movements.

Process as Wild Group process or any process, is an unfolding, a movement towards healing and growth; and as such it is wild. Processes are complex, multichannelled, non-linear and chaotic.

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Course structure

The course consists of four non-residential weekend workshops at the Spiral centre in London.

Venue

The spiral centre www.spiralcentre.org is a holistic, therapy centre in Islington, London offering counselling psychotherapy and complimentary therapy. The workshop will be in large ground floor room. Teas, coffee and biscuits will be provided.

Dates and times

The workshop will take place on **November 4/5 2017, January 20/21 2018, April 14/15, June 16/17 2018**. We will start at 10 AM each day and end at 5 PM each Saturday and 4:30 PM each Sunday.

Cost

The course costs £1100. This is payable as a deposit of £300 to secure your place, then £200 on or before each weekend. Some concessionary places are available, please ask.

Participants

There will be between 7 and 12 group members. You do not have to be a therapist, but the group is only suitable for those with some therapeutic experience.

For further information

Please contact Allison or Stephen to book a conversation to talk more about the possibility of joining the course.

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