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Hidden forces within the family: Bringing Contextual Therapy Approach to diverse mental and physical health professionals

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Dr. Ofra Schaham
mentored directly by the founder of CT

Over 20 years experience of practicing, teaching,
and supervising CT in Israel and the US.
Faculty -Tel Aviv University
A private practice in Tel Aviv



Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy

"I truly believe that CT method has the power to change and enhance people's lives and close relationships across the world. Thus, have successfully invited hundreds of families, students, and professionals to experience the power of applied CT".



Discovering the power of CT beyond techniques and structural analysis was first-hand via the supervision of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy :

"My understanding opened up to the hidden forces within all families, and the universal applicability of the wisdom of CT. Thus, I started, in 1994, to introduce and teach CT to Israeli health professionals, and have been doing that ever since in many varied academic and clinical settings."

CT in different fields

Challenges and rewards of introducing the possibilities of CT to multi-cultural, multi-professional groups of graduate students in Israel

- Participants of this workshops/courses receive concrete understanding of the universal offerings of CT to culturally, ethnically and professionally diverse groups **to promote more efficient intervention** with diverse individual patient and their families
- By the use of the specifically tailored process of the course, the participants understand theoretically and through personal experience, **the power of the hidden forces in every family system**



- A teaching model communicating the **supremacy** of CT to practitioners and students of health professions
- They deal with the individual **I**dentified **P**atient only
- Usually experiencing the patient's family as a **mere disturbance** or a **problem** to the envisioned patient rehabilitation process

- The didactic and experiential ways of communicating the existential tenets of CT immediately connect the **multiethnic and multicultural** participants in each course with each other, with their own family of origins, and their patients'
- Participants discover the **communality of family experiences** and principles of behavior, and begin to inquire about differences with curiosity and **without judgment, prejudice or stereotype** – a small miracle in a diverse and often hostile society



- The course demonstrates the **mixture** of persistent **theoretical focus** with **actual application** of each CT concept to their patients' families as well as their own
- The orchestration of this complex **parallel process** profoundly changes participants' view of all families, their patients' and their own
- From **blame & impatience** to **multi-directed partiality** and a deep understanding, appreciation and respect of the universal forces that influence every family



Course Structure

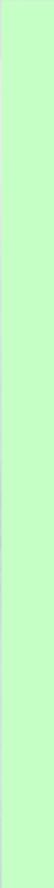
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- Group size limited to 20-25 participants to allow a safe basis for sharing and discussion
 - Three sections to each session
 - Participants are invited to think and prepare family situations with dilemmas

Session Outline



1. Sharing & reflecting on previous experiences
2. Discussions of the new concepts using examples, Q&A
3. Teaching/learning CT concepts + exercises

Concepts, exercises, clinical issues through CT lens

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- Creation of a three-generation-genogram
 - Birth order and roles exercise
 - Relational ethics underlying any case/situation
 - Issues of fairness, entitlement & destructive entitlement
- Balance of give & take, loyalties: invisible and/or split
 - Parentification & infantilization
 - Intergenerational transmission: secrets, roles, myths, values
 - Course paper – family interviews



From participants :

Fascinating class- CT approach provides me with new framework to understand families.

Practical class, very relevant to my work, encouraging focused & expanded thinking.

Accepting attitude of the lecturer, helped to drop the judging & criticism, and invited us, the participants, to first study our own family relationships.

The CT respectful consideration of families helped to change the way I look at myself and my clients families.

Interesting and instructive course!

CT enriched my work in general and me as a better caretaker of my family.



What participants said

- Sharing felt so safe and was met with much openness. The contextual approach “inaccessible” concepts became simple to understand and implement with Ofra’s mediation
- Ofra presented deep understanding and she integrated the theory very successfully into the cases presented, she vested close attention to each participant free of judgment or criticism, bringing her creative thinking to help analyze cases.
- I was able to implement what was discussed to both daily and unique situations and was impressed by the atmosphere of freedom to express thoughts and feelings.
- There was a great thirst and willingness to share experiences with good availability of the facilitator.
- Fascinating experience: Ofra succeeds to convey theoretical ideas in a clear and concrete way together with group dynamic, and to track the dynamics using it in an illustrative way.



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Dr. Ofra Schaham

www.OfraSchaham.com

Thank you

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