



delphi



OVERVIEW

Based on two upcoming books, *Treating complex trauma in adolescents* (in progress) and *Beyond suffering: Trauma, psychology, and mindfulness* (in progress), as well as his recent *Principles of trauma therapy*, Dr John Briere introduces a new workshop on the treatment of complex trauma for older adolescents and adults. Stressing new theory and techniques, this nonpathologizing, developmentally informed clinical approach presents four empirically-validated pathways to trauma resolution: reworking activated attachment schemas in the context of the therapeutic relationship, reducing negative emotional responses to memory (titrated exposure and emotional processing), increasing capacity to regulate and tolerate negative emotional states, and working to change the client's relationship to his or her internal experience (mindfulness).

John more formally integrates Buddhist tenets of impermanence, interdependence, non-egocentricity, and loving-kindness into trauma therapy, and reveals how this ancient psychotechnology can inform and improve classic Western approaches to treatment – especially with regard to the suffering associated with psychological trauma. John calls on both perspectives to highlight the importance of integrated awareness, and provides techniques helpful, in particular, for Western forms of avoidance and distraction, including substance abuse, dissociation, and involvement in tension reduction behaviours such as self-injury, disordered eating, and dysfunctional sexual behaviour.

In addition to mindfulness techniques, John will introduce hybrid interventions such as cognitive reconsideration, trigger identification and intervention, and mindfulness-based therapeutic exposure. Especially stressed in this seminar is the therapist's own developmental history, including attachment disruptions and childhood abuse and/or neglect that can be addressed in mindful ways that allow greater empathic attunement and reduce within-session reactivity. Also introduced is the notion that unconditional positive regard for the client rests less on his or her goodness or likeability than on the therapist's capacities to "see" the true nature of the client, before (or despite) they did what they did or became what they seemingly are.

Program Outline

1. Complex Trauma

- Early trauma and attachment disruption
- Explicit versus implicit trauma memories
- Chronic posttraumatic stress
- Self-disturbance: identity, relationality, and affect regulation
- Avoidance: Substance abuse, dissociation, and tension-reduction behaviours
- Borderline personality disorder reconsidered

2. Applying mindfulness concepts to trauma therapy

- Pain versus suffering
- The perception problem: “snakes versus ropes”
 - Activated implicit memories
 - From bare attention to conceptual thinking
 - The effects of labelling experience
- Mindfulness
 - Defined
 - As opposite of avoidance
- Existential awareness
 - Impermanence, interdependence (dependent arising), non-self
- Loving-kindness (metta)
- Pain, chaos, and other difficulties as opportunities for change
 - Posttraumatic growth, acceptance, and integration: Altering the paradigm
- “Bozos on the bus”

3. Four pathways to trauma resolution: An introduction

- Processing schema in the context of relationship
- Reducing negative emotional and cognitive responses to memory
- Increasing emotional regulation skills
- Changing one’s relationship to painful internal experience (mindfulness)

4. The therapeutic relationship

- The actual primary finding of treatment outcome studies
- Antidote to trauma-related isolation
- Shareability theory and introspection in the context of a hearing other
- Relational triggers for early implicit attachment schema
- Relational processing

5. Emotional processing

- Titrated exposure and the therapeutic window
 - Balance between activation and overwhelming internal experience
- The components of trauma processing
- Multiple targets and acceptance of self-titration
- Memory recruitment and context reinstatement
- Mindfulness as implicit exposure
 - Mindfulness-based exposure techniques

6. Cognitive interventions

- On not setting them straight: Cognitive reconsideration versus the hunt for thinking errors
- Self-generated normalizing and reframing
- Mindfulness
 - Non-judgemental self-observation and awareness
 - Nonattachment to thoughts, feelings, and memories
 - Versus information on true basis of reality
- Insight and the development of a coherent, nonpathologizing narrative

7. Distress reduction and affect regulation training

- Dealing with acute intrusions and dysregulation: Grounding and breath training
- Affect identification and emotional detective work
- Trauma-relevant meditation
- Mindfulness as affect regulation/tolerance training
- Working with tension reduction behaviours

8. Trigger identification and intervention

- Both cognitive and affect regulation technique
- Indirectly a mindfulness technique
- Emphasizes self-control
- The trigger grid
 - What are triggers?
 - What are yours?
 - How do you know you have been triggered?
 - What could you say/do?

9. Increasing identity and relational functioning

- Self-exploration, inner directedness, and identity training
- Cognitive processing of relational schema
- Capitalizing on client-therapist attachment dynamics

10. Special issues

- Teasing the dragon: Challenges associated with activating attachment schema in therapy
- Treating substance-abusing survivors: What comes first?
- Meditation and trauma survivors
 - Benefits
 - Contraindications
- Therapist issues in trauma treatment
 - Prior history, countertransference, and back to the bus
 - Working with the client you don't like
 - Who was he or she before
 - Mindful intervention in reactive thought
 - Loving-kindness
 - Making the work effective, meaningful, and growth-enhancing