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**What's Snow White Got To Do With It?:
Working with complex trauma and dissociation**

1 DAY WORKSHOP



Once-upon-a-time, if Snow White presented to a psychiatrist with her tale of attempted murder, talking animals, whispering trees and seven dwarves, she would likely receive a diagnosis of hysteria, psychosis, schizophrenia or conversion disorder.

In the late 19th Century, Pierre Janet identified the correlation between dissociative phenomena as a psychological defence against traumatic experiences. Outlined in his theory on hysteria were symptoms and behaviours that we now recognize as criteria for a diagnosis of a range of disorders such as dissociative disorders, somatic symptom disorders, mood disorders, borderline personality disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Today, through a trauma-informed lens grounded in neuroscience, we would ask not, "What is wrong with Snow White?" Rather, we would wonder, "What happened to Snow White?" In asking carefully, sensitively and respectfully, we would learn of her history of complex trauma; the loss of her mother at birth, attachment disruption, emotional neglect, betrayal and family violence.

The therapeutic alliance is the crucible in which the alchemy of healing can safely develop. Paradoxically, forming a therapeutic alliance with a highly traumatised client is complicated by his or her past experiences of betrayal, challenging behaviours, dissociative responses and seemingly insurmountable internal and external conflicts. This sets the stage for activation of Karpman's Triangle and therapeutic impasse.

Harnessing the fairytale of Snow White as a metaphor, Naomi provides practical strategies for the treatment of complex trauma. The characters in the story will provide a conceptual framework applicable to core trauma symptoms, behaviours and diagnosis.

Tracking four survival responses, fight, flight, freeze and submit, particular attention will focus on working within the window of tolerance to enhance skills to create safety and stabilization. Participants will learn strategies to assist clients to process and integrate traumatic material and painful emotions such as shame, rage and grief.

Participants will be able to:

1. Identify the role and function of trauma-related symptoms and behaviour
2. Identify six possible trauma-related diagnosis for Snow White
3. Apply four strategies to assist with stabilization and affect regulation skills
4. Work within the window of tolerance with difficult emotions such as shame, rage and grief
5. Identify three core trauma dynamics and how these are re-enacted within the client's internal and external world and in therapy