Book of Abstracts

International Gestalt Conference Shanghai 2027

完形之道
The Tao of Gestalt

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www.gestalt2027shanghai.com

Keynote 1

Lynne Jacobs

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I am co-founder (along with Gary Yontef) of the Pacific Gestalt Institute, as well as a Training and supervising analyst at the Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis. I have written on the therapeutic relationship and on social/cultural themes in therapy.

Dignity in the therapeutic relationship

I will speak about dignity and how certain aspects of the therapeutic relationship support patients; vitality, courage and creativity.

I want the listeners to go away inspired to listen to a patients longings, to understand the longings in the context of a search for dignity and to be able to respond to the reach by allowing themselves to be affected.

Keynote 2

Gianni Francesetti

Italy

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Gianni Francesetti, MD, Psychiatrist, Gestalt therapist, is an Adjunt Professor of Phenomenological and Existential Approach, Dep. of Psychology, University of Torino (Italy), international trainer and supervisor, he has published widely on psychotherapy and psychopathology, exploring original approaches to understanding clinical suffering from a phenomenological and Gestalt therapy viewpoint and proposing new models for framing particular clinical disorders. He is co-director of the IPsiG - International Institute for Gestalt Therapy and Psychopathology

Field oriented clinical practice: roots and growing edges

The concept of field has been central in Gestalt Therapy since its origins. However, it is often used without a clear definition and in different ways by different authors. In this lecture, we will attempt to define two perspectives rooted in Gestalt theory: the concept of the organism/environment field and that of the phenomenal field, from which we derive the phenomenological and psychopathological field.

We will try to highlight the consequences of this perspective for diagnosis, psychopathology, and psychotherapy. Furthermore, we will connect this exploration with contemporary developments in the physics of complex systems and examine how a common ground can be found between field-oriented clinical practice and the sciences of complexity.

1. field theory, emergent self, dynamics of complex systems, psychopathology and diagnosis

2. psychotherapist and trainees

3. I have widely published on these topics

Keynote 3

Ulrich Sollmann

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Ulrich Sollmann, Social Scientist, Gestaltpsychotherapist, Body Psychotherapist, Systemic Consulting, Executive Coach in management and politics, Publicist, Podcaster, Member of the enlarged Borad of the Sino-German Academy of Psychotherapy (DCAP), Visiting Professor and Supervisor of Clinical Psychology department at the First Hospital of Hebei Medical University, Guest Professor at Shanghai University of Political Science and Law (SHUPL)

Transcultural Mentalisation: presence in / as dialogue between East and West

Alienation refers to the loss of a natural relationship to oneself, to others, to nature and to the world. Globalization and digitalization are intensifying this phenomenon, whereby people are alienated both from themselves and from alienation as such - a process that can often be felt emotionally, physically and relationally. This can lead to radical exclusion and jeopardize intercultural understanding.

Western psychotherapy is a sought-after export, but its spread carries the risk of subtle psychological colonization. Transcultural mentalization offers an alternative approach here: it enables cultural and individual differences in emotions and perspectives to be experienced, recognized and processed together. A central aspect is the practice of negotiation in a transcultural context, which also includes (non-verbal) language change (translanguaging).

Based on more than 15 years of experience in China and other international projects, I will outline theoretical and practical dimensions of transcultural mentalization in my keynote - supplemented by practical examples and relevant research.

The keynote extends mentalisation theory toward an embodied, transcultural approach, integrating concepts from embodiment, ethnology and “third space” theory. It shifts the focus from interpretation to resonance and from cognitive models to lived, embodied experience.

The topic is grounded in my field experiences in China, where I encountered the limits of cognitive understanding and was confronted with intense bodily resonance and disorientation. As a body psychotherapist, I explore how perception, meaning and relationship are co-created through the body. These experiences led me to develop “transcultural mentalisation” as a bridge concept between clinical practice, cultural experience and embodied knowledge.

Plenary 1

Janeen Cameron, Julie Goldstein, Nikolas Krause, Seishi Harada, Shubo Li, Tucker Feller, Yaqui Martinez-Robles

Australia, Singapore, USA, Japan, Norway, Canada, Mexico

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Janeen Cameron is a Clinical Counsellor, Art Psychotherapist, and Sensorimotor Psychotherapist with over 30 years of experience in Australia and internationally. Based in Perth, she runs a private practice grounded in a person-centred, attentive approach, valuing diverse perspectives and skilled in clinical yarning. She is an academic facilitator at several universities and serves on the leadership group for Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation Australia's Creative Therapies college. Beginning as a registered nurse in mental health, she moved into occupational health across mining and healthcare, now specializing in creative therapies, EMDR, mindfulness, and supervision with adults and diverse communities.

Julie Goldstein is a Gestalt therapist trained at the Gestalt Centre in the UK, having previously worked as an academic psychologist running an Integrated Degree at Goldsmiths University of London. A qualified mindfulness meditation teacher, she has practiced for twenty years across public and private settings, including bereavement services and a human rights organization. She currently runs a Gestalt practice, Meaningmakers, in Singapore, working with adolescents, adults, and couples from local and international communities, and believes Gestalt therapy is both a way of life and a fitting modality for Southeast Asia.

Nik Krause is a former intern and affiliate at The Gestalt Centre in Colorado, bringing a global perspective shaped by six years teaching at Nanjing University, work as an affiliated researcher with the UNESCO Chair on Peace Studies, and a year as a visiting scholar at the SAIS Hopkins-Nanjing Centre. Fluent in English, German, and Mandarin, he values cross-cultural dialogue as a foundation for therapeutic presence and understanding. His clinical interests focus on present-moment awareness, trauma awareness, and relational work, exploring how principled nonviolence can be embodied in psychotherapy as an active, relational process fostering authentic contact and ethical engagement.

Seishi Harada completed his Gestalt therapist training in 1991 under Ricky Livingston at the Tokyo

Gestalt Institute and has maintained a private practice in Tokyo for 35 years. He has presented to acclaim at AAGT conferences in Vancouver, Manchester, and Philadelphia, and led lectures and workshops in Mexico and the Philippines. He is the author of Image Therapy That Saves You and Escape from Addiction, and translated Fritz Perls's In and Out the Garbage Pail into Japanese. Since 2020 he has co-hosted a monthly international Gestalt Zoom conference with colleagues from Denmark, Mexico, and the Philippines.

Shubo Li is a Gestalt therapist based in Norway, working with both Chinese and international clients in cross-cultural contexts. She holds a PhD in Communication from the University of Westminster and has a background in media, cultural analysis, and translation. Her clinical work integrates Gestalt field theory, embodied awareness, and expressive media, with particular interest in relational dynamics and contact processes. She is also an established writer and translator with multiple publications in Chinese and international contexts, and her current work focuses on developing field-based interventions using creative materials in psychotherapy.

Tucker Feller is a presenter at this conference, contributing to the ongoing exchange of ideas and practice within the Gestalt therapy community.

Yaqui A. Martínez-Robles is a psychologist with a Master's and PhD in Psychotherapy, and founder and CEO of the Circle of Studies in Existential Therapy (CIREX) in Mexico and Colombia, with over 23 years training existential therapists in phenomenology. He is honorary president of the Latin American Association for Existential Psychotherapy. Trained in Gestalt, group, narrative, and music therapy, Holotropic Breathwork, and psychedelic-assisted therapies, he practices as a Relational Gestalt and Existential-Phenomenological therapist with individuals, couples, and groups. He has published eight books and teaches internationally.

Gestalt and the Tao

Gestalt therapy has roots in both Eastern and Western philosophy. Taoism is one of the sources it draws on. In many ways, Gestalt can be seen as an expression of Taoism, as a psychological practice. This topic will be explored from a variety of angles.

Plenary 2

Wang Zhen, Arthur Dombrovsky, Dimitri Nadirashvili, Stephanie Goldsmith, Tucker Feller, Ulrich Sollmann

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Wang Zhen is an Associate Professor and Master's Supervisor at Qilu Normal University, holding a PhD in Psychology, and serves as a Visiting Scholar at Moscow State University and a Researcher at the Gestalt Therapy Institute of Israel. He is founder of Shandong Zhengzheng Psychology and Chinese Chair of the Chinese Conference on Counseling and Psychotherapy, and holds leadership roles across national and provincial bodies, including the China National Eugenics Science Association and the Shandong Mental Health Association, where he chairs the Gestalt Therapy Committee. He also directs the Shandong Psychological Society and Social Psychology Society.

Arthur Dombrovsky is a Doctor of Psychotherapeutic Sciences and director of the Riga Gestalt Institute, with thirty-five years of experience as a Gestalt therapist. A graduate of the Paris Gestalt School, he developed his own conceptual framework, 'Working with My Function,' and works as a teacher and supervisor of Gestalt therapy. He holds certification from the European Association for Psychotherapy and both practitioner and supervisor certificates from the European Association for Gestalt Therapy.

Prof. Dimitri Nadirashvili, PhD, D.Psych.Sc., is an EAGT-accredited and EAP-certified Gestalt therapist, full member of SPR, founder of the Georgian Gestalt Therapeutic School, and President of the Georgian Association of Gestalt Therapists. He is Head of the Psychology Department at St. Andrew Georgian University and Director of the EAGT-accredited Georgian National Gestalt Institute, and has authored original Georgian-language textbooks in Gestalt therapy. He practices Gestalt therapy with groups, individuals, couples, families, and athletes, and is the author of seven books and more than fifty articles published in peer-reviewed journals.

Stephanie Goldsmith, Ph.D., is CEO and Co-Director of Gestalt Associates Training, Los Angeles (GATLA), where she serves as faculty for the Los Angeles and international Summer Residential programs. She is the creator and host of the All Gestalt Podcast and provides Gestalt clinical consultation and supervision to therapists worldwide. A licensed clinical psychologist, she owns Goldsmith Psychological Services, specializing in trauma, dissociation, eating disorders, and LGBTQI issues. She is a

Certified Gestalt Therapist and Clinical Trauma Professional, trained in EMDR and EFT Tapping. Dr. Goldsmith is an Associate Clinical Professor at Loma Linda University.

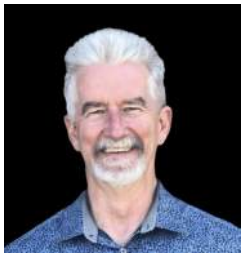
Tucker Feller is a presenter at this conference, contributing to the ongoing exchange of ideas and practice within the Gestalt therapy community.

Ulrich Sollmann is a social scientist, Gestalt and body psychotherapist, systemic consultant, and executive coach working in management and politics. A publicist and podcaster, he serves on the enlarged board of the Sino-German Academy of Psychotherapy (DCAP), as Visiting Professor and Supervisor in the Department of Clinical Psychology at the First Hospital of Hebei Medical University, and as Guest Professor at Shanghai University of Political Science and Law.

Old Gestalt, New Gestalt

Gestalt therapy originated in the 1940's, was developed in the 1950's, and was popularised in the 1960's. It's original form, as taught by Fritz Perls, was dynamic, confrontative, based on the use of Here and Now awareness, and emphasised self support and existential responsibility. Sixty years later, it has evolved, true to the roots of I-thou dialogue, and Field Theory, into a contemporary form which has softened and transformed Gestalt practice in many ways. The Gestalt therapy which has been taught and practiced in South East Asia has resembled the original Gestalt ethos and practice. Does this need to change?

Plenary 3



Helena Gonzalez Vallejo, Jorge Villalonga, Paul Gibney, Ronald Alexander, Valentina Fortunati Barlacchi, Xuefu Wang

Mexico, Colombia, Australia, USA, Italy, China

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Helena Gonzalez Vallejo is a clinical psychologist with a Master's in Gestalt and a PhD in Psychology, serving as Deputy Academic Director of the Humanist Institute of Gestalt Psychotherapy (IHPG) in Mexico City, where she has taught for fifteen years. She sits on the editorial board of Figura Fondo Magazine and has eighteen years of therapeutic practice. She has presented at major international conferences, including the IV International Congress of Research in Gestalt Psychotherapy in Santiago, the XIV EAGT Gestalt Conference in Madrid, and the 6th International Gestalt Research Conference in Birmingham.

Jorge Villalonga is an experienced social psychologist, consultant, teacher, coach, and international trainer specializing in team building and leadership through Gestalt, Enneagram, NLP, and dramatic arts, with international experience in both private and public sectors. He currently directs the Gestalt school in Bogotá and the Centre of Therapeutic Theatre, a consulting firm specializing in Gestalt, coaching, and therapeutic theatre. Teaching since 1996, he has reached hundreds of individuals and organizations across Latin America, North America, Europe, and Africa, and teaches therapeutic theatre at universities worldwide.

Dr. Paul Gibney is a psychotherapist in private practice in Brisbane, Australia, since 1988. He trained in Gestalt therapy from 1978 to 1981, followed by training in Family Therapy and Psychoanalytic therapy. His publications focus mainly on Family Therapy and Relational Psychotherapy, with keen interest in the practical use of Jungian concepts. He has taught widely across Australia and New Zealand and held a Senior Lectureship at the University of Queensland. He is the author of The Pragmatics of Therapeutic Practice, a set text in five Australian Masters of Counselling programs, known for his integrative capacity across therapeutic traditions.

Ronald A. Alexander, PhD, is clinical director of the Open Mind Training Institute in Santa Monica, California, specializing in Gestalt Relational therapy combined with Somatic Experiencing and

mindfulness-based approaches. Trained at the Gestalt Therapy Institute of Los Angeles, he studied for decades with Erving and Miriam Polster and Robert Resnick. He authored Wise Mind Open Mind and Core Creativity, and contributed to the Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Mindfulness and Psychotherapy. He has led clinical training programs across the U.S., Europe, the UK, Japan, Russia, and Australia, and chaired graduate psychology programs at Ryokan College for 20 years.

Valentina Fortunati Barlacchi is Director of the Istituto Gestalt Firenze in Italy, a Gestalt therapist, trainer, and facilitator interested in embodied relational processes, voice work, and creative approaches to connection and healing. Her work integrates Gestalt therapy with experiential and expressive practices, exploring voice, presence, listening, and non-verbal communication in relational and group settings, with experience training and delivering psychosocial interventions in intercultural contexts. She is especially interested in creating relational spaces that foster awareness, dialogue, resilience, and collective meaning-making, emphasizing the embodied and aesthetic dimensions of Gestalt practice and transformation through creativity and authentic contact.

Dr. Xuefu Wang is the founder and psychotherapist at Zhi Mian Institute for Psychotherapy in Nanjing. He has authored thirteen books and numerous articles, and through extensive collaboration with existential psychologists worldwide, particularly in the US and UK, has become a leading practitioner and promoter of existential psychology in China. He received the APA's Charlotte and Karl Bühler Award in 2013.

Authenticity as a contemporary Gestalt practice

Authenticity is at the core of existential ideas which have influenced Gestalt therapy. The therapeutic perspective on it has evolved from the original encounter groups and ‘confessional honesty’, to incorporating an ‘ethic of care’. How can we understand the place of authenticity in the practice of Gestalt which incorporates an understanding of the importance of relationship.

Plenary 4

Ann Claw, Margarete Koenning, Melissa Kelly-McCabe, Mikhail Isupov, Peter Schulthess, Tea Gogotishvili

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Ann Claw is a psychotherapist specializing in conscious awareness, shifting consciousness from ego to awakening through experiential techniques such as Gestalt and psychodrama. She draws on over 35 years of experience as a private practitioner, author, educator, and international workshop facilitator. She was founder and executive director of Children First, Inc., a nonprofit healing center for children and families on the Tohono O'odham Nation, combining Western and Native American healing practices, and has spent many years working on the Navajo Nation. Ann also leads sweat lodge ceremonies for those seeking deep healing and transformation.

Margarete Koenning is a Gestalt therapist, constellation facilitator, trainer, and supervisor with over 40 years supporting healing and transformation. Born in Colombia, raised in Germany, and now based in Queensland, Australia, her work reflects an international, relational perspective. Trained as a social worker in Germany, she completed five-year Gestalt training at the GENI Institute in Frankfurt, studying with Laura Perls; her background spans addiction services, family counselling, crisis counsellor supervision, and work with Indigenous communities in Australia. For decades she has integrated Gestalt therapy with Family Constellation work and experiential groups, grounded in meeting people with curiosity, respect, and love.

Melissa Kelly-McCabe has worked with boards and executives worldwide for over thirty years, coaching leaders to create and implement real strategy. She often coaches women CEOs accelerating their business goals, using physical process, art, and nature to deepen self-understanding through a Gestalt lens. She leads Clear Intent Strategy, Inc., is Senior Faculty at the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland, and Faculty to the Faculty for the Fulfilment Institute in Goa, India. Early in her career, she worked with Dr. W. Edwards Deming for five years. A Certified Mentor Coach and Gestalt Professional Coach, she mentors coaches toward authenticity and presence.

Mikhail Isupov is the founder of the Ural Institute of Gestalt and Contemporary Psychology, where he

has helped shape the development and application of Gestalt therapy in the region.

Peter Schulthess has practiced Gestalt therapy since 1976 and is an experienced international trainer, including in China. He is a past president of the European Association for Gestalt Therapy (EAGT) and has authored several publications on Gestalt therapy and research. He currently divides his time between Switzerland, Greece, and the Philippines.

Prof. Téa Gogotishvili, PhD, is an EAGT-accredited and EAP-certified Gestalt therapist and full member of SPR, chairing the Training Standards and Professional Competencies Committee at the Georgian Association of Gestalt Therapists and representing the Georgian Psychological Society to IUPsyS. Co-director of the EAGT-accredited Georgian National Gestalt Institute and co-author of a Georgian-language Gestalt therapy textbook, she is also Professor at St. Andrew Georgian University. She has published four books and more than thirty articles in peer-reviewed journals, and actively practices Gestalt therapy with groups, individuals, families, couples, and adolescents, alongside involvement in charity and social activities.

Gestalt as a way of life

Gestalt has many applications —as a psychotherapy, a form of coaching, a useful tool in organisational consulting, a guide to a particular style of management, and it has also been applied in the educational sphere. Fritz Perls had a vision of Gestalt as a way of living, and at the end of his life, formed a community with this in mind. Erving Polster proposed Gestalt to be applied in community-life groups. How can we conceive of Gestalt as a way of living, more than just a therapy?

Pre-conference Workshop #201

Christa McCrorie

USA

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Christa McCrorie, LICSW-S, PIP, is an innovative therapist, certified birth doula, educator, and Fulbright Specialist dedicated to advancing holistic, client-centred care. She is the founder of Creative Therapeutic Solutions, where she provides tailored therapeutic services with a focus on trauma processing and the unique needs of queer and trans individuals. Christa employs creative, evidence-informed techniques to foster healing, growth, and empowerment, guiding clients toward sustainable paths to wellness.

In addition to her clinical work, Christa is a full-time Instructor and Continuing Education Coordinator at the University of Alabama School of Social Work. She teaches BSW and MSW courses and facilitates statewide professional development for social workers. Her commitment to mentorship, ethical practice, and interdisciplinary collaboration has made her a trusted educator and leader.

A frequent conference speaker and accomplished writer, Christa presents nationally and internationally on trauma-informed care, Gestalt-informed practice, LGBTQ+ affirmative therapy, and inclusive perinatal support. She is also an internationally recognized performer and advocate for equitable, embodied, and culturally responsive health care. As a Fulbright Specialist, Christa brings global perspectives to teaching and consultation, fostering dialogue across cultures.

The Tao of Erotic Labor: Gestalt Practices for Supporting Sex Work Embodiment and Ethics

This experiential workshop explores how Gestalt dialogical and embodied methods can support LGBTQ + clients who experience guilt, ambivalence, or internal conflict when considering or pursuing gender-affirming medical care. Rather than approaching guilt as resistance or pathology, the workshop understands guilt as a relational and field-based phenomenon that emerges at the contact boundary between self, body, culture, and internalised relationships.

The workshop is grounded in Gestalt theory, particularly dialogical, phenomenological, and field-based approaches to awareness, contact, and embodiment. It is further informed by Taoist philosophy, especially the principle of wu wei (non-forcing), attunement to natural process, and trust in emergent change. Through this integrated framework, change is understood not as something to be imposed or resolved, but as something that unfolds through supported awareness and contact.

Participants will engage in structured body-dialogue practices that invite respectful, experiential contact with specific body parts, sensations, and internalised voices. These dialogues allow polarities—such as loyalty and transformation, stability and change, fear and desire—to be brought into relationship

without urgency to resolve them. By "letting the body speak," therapists cultivate presence and curiosity, supporting clients in listening to bodily wisdom while honouring ethical complexity, cultural context, and personal timing.

This workshop is designed for clinicians, educators, and Gestalt practitioners working in therapeutic, supervisory, or training settings. No advanced Gestalt training is required, though familiarity with experiential methods is helpful. The format combines brief theoretical framing with experiential exercises, reflective dialogue, and integration.

The presenter draws on extensive clinical, teaching, and supervisory experience supporting queer and trans clients navigating embodied decision-making, internalised guilt, and medical transition within complex relational and cultural fields. Participants will leave with practical tools for working with embodied ambivalence and a deepened understanding of how Gestalt and Taoist perspectives together support compassionate, non-coercive pathways toward wholeness and becoming.

Pre-conference Workshop #202

Peter Schulthess

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Practising Gestalt therapy since 1976. Experienced international trainer, iincluding China. Past president of EAGT. Now living in three countries: Switzerland, Greece, Philippines. Several publications about Gestalt and Research.

The art of contacting

Presence is the most important factor for contacting. A therapy process needs full presence of the therapist and readiness to reconnect whenever the contact gets interrupted. I call this an art. The workshop will start with a short theoretical presentation and then gives room for personal therapeutic experience with me in front of the group as demonstration, how therapy is practiced in establishing and holding a good contact. The sessions will include sharing, feedback and there will be room for theoretical and methodolical explanations.

Target group consists of therapists or trainees from various approaches that want to get in touch with a a modern dialogical approach in Gestalt therapy.

Pre-conference Workshop #203

Clarice Fangzhou Hassan

USA

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I am a Chinese-born psychotherapist, originally trained at Fudan University in Shanghai, where I earned my bachelpr's degree in Accounting from the School of Management in 2015. I later completed my Master of Social Work at New York University in 2017. In 2018, I joined Gestalt Associates for Psychotherapy in New York and completed the Clinical Gestalt Fellowship, becoming a Certified Gestalt Psychotherapist in 2025.

Practising Gestalt therapy bilingually in Chinese and English has profoundly shaped my understanding of how culture, language, and field interact in both clinical and group settings. My work focuses on how Gestalt principles are lived and embodied across cultural contexts, particularly where silence, non-verbal expression, and collective presence are central modes of contact.

I am the founder of Phronetic Psychotherapy LCSW P.C., a New York–based group psychotherapy practice. I am deeply committed to building Gestalt-informed, AAPI-oriented clinical spaces in the United States that are relationally grounded, culturally responsive, and attentive to field dynamics.

The Visible Field: Fishbowl, Silence, and Collective Artmaking as Gestalt ExperimentPre-conference Workshop #203

This experiential workshop explores language not as a neutral medium of communication but as a phenomenon shaped by cost, power, and relational dynamics within the field. Through a minimalistic fishbowl experiment, participants are invited to experience how speech becomes regulated, negotiated, and internalised when it is no longer "free."

Rather than teaching communication skills or encouraging emotional expression, the workshop functions as a performative Gestalt experiment in which language is treated as an embodied event. Participants encounter moments in which speaking, remaining silent, or withdrawing become responses to an implicit economy of words. The workshop makes visible how language, silence, and bodily movement emerge as relational gestures within a collective field.

Pre-conference Workshop #204

Debbie Howes

South Africa

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Debbie is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Johannesburg South Africa. She qualified from Potchefstroom University in 1986, doing her thesis on a movement therapy. She subsequently completed the phase 3 modules in Medical Hypnoanalysis, Eriksonian and Ego State therapy. She also qualified in level 2 of EMDR, and the advanced level of EMI.

She incorporates the principles of hypnotherapy and Gestalt with a unique therapeutic model, which includes a projective drawing and storytelling technique.

Debbie has presented papers both nationally and internationally and has appeared on TV and as a host on radio stations in South Africa and Vancouver

Debbie is the author of two books which describe the model and therapeutic process and runs training workshops for professionals in the technique.

Debbie also hosts movement, sound and energy healing workshops and teaches Tai chi.

Identify, reprocess and desensitize the underlying unconscious dynamics and patterns : An experiential workshop

According to the principles of Medical Hypnoanalysis, the unconscious mind has the logic of a child and determines around 90 percent of our functioning and results. The workshop will serve to experientially illustrate, identify and reprocess these dynamics towards constructive change with corresponding insights that enhance an individual's quality of life, sense of self as well as inner empowerment. The inner balance and embodying of the mother/ father/child states of being is explored with each participant relative to the dysfunctional generational imprints that repeat into adulthood. An individual adopts these belief systems and patterns according to how they learn to survive or be loved in early childhood. Exercises and tools are demonstrated and integrated via a projective storytelling and drawing technique which serves to illustrate these dynamics. Each individual tells a different version which illuminates the program or script underlying how they are getting their needs met, solving problems and achieving solutions. The phenomenological present moment state of being of an individual, represents a fractal hologram of the patterns and resulting behaviours in life. These core patterns and narratives are reprocessed and desensitised incorporating the Gestalt principles of role play, empty chair and two- way chair technique as well as experientially incorporating the sensory and somatic experiential states of the being of the individual in the now moment. Enhanced inner support structures and insights are facilitated via introjecting new information and states of being which integrates naturally into their life.

Debbie has incorporated the technique into her own therapeutic journey as well as her practice since the

1990's. A 6-phase process serves to allow the individual to evolve into total accountability and awareness of their present inner states of being and patterns. Unique experiential solutions to dilemmas are introduced to allow for preventative possibilities where the future change is enhanced.

Pre-conference Workshop #205

Melissa Kelly-McCabe

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Melissa has worked in industry, with boards and executives around the world for thirty-plus years. She coaches leaders to create and implement real strategy. Melissa often coaches women CEOs/executives as they accelerate attaining their business goals, imprint their own style on their company, and bring fun and purpose into their lives. Using physical process, art/creativity and nature, clients deepen their self-understanding and create action forward using a Gestalt lens.

In addition to leading Clear Intent Strategy, Inc., Melissa is Senior Faculty at The Gestalt Institute of Cleveland (Ohio, USA) and Faculty to the Faculty for The Fulfilment Institute (Goa, India). Early in her career, she worked with Dr. W. Edwards Deming for five years, researching and teaching Deming management principles.

A Certified Mentor Coach, ICF MCC, and Gestalt Professional Coach, Melissa mentors seasoned coaches to go deeper with their clients and bring their own authenticity and presence to their coaching. Melissa's presentation/facilitation style is lively, hands-on, and filled with examples of real-life stories. Working with large groups and small, Melissa receives accolades and "top scores" for content, clarity and presence.

Going Deeper Faster: Coaching with Character Structure

Do your coaching clients bring their relationships with others as topics into their session? Perhaps dilemmas that involve their boss, other team members, family dynamics, or even various parts of themselves to explore...?

Are you looking to expand your repertoire to work in an innovative, creative and easy way to coach your clients to see themself in their relationship in the "here and now"?

Family and systemic constellations is a modality that is particularly useful when clients bring situations involving relationships with others (leadership, team, family, etc.) and parts of self as fundamental to their presenting dilemma/s.

The presenter adapts Bert Hellinger's seminal Family Constellations work and Mark Wolynn's It Didn't Start with You perspective in individual and group coaching processes in her private practice. The combination offers profound client insight and deep awareness right in the coaching conversation that, then, can be applied in the client's real life.

In this active workshop, participants will learn about the power of systemic constellations and

experience for themself what is possible when one looks at the whole system and steps into "the other's shoes". The promise is the potential to re-imagine relational possibilities and co-create a new experiences with those others in real life. We will complete the workshop by applying key learnings and techniques to the participant's coaching style and ICF core competencies for immediate application in their coaching practice.

Content is accessible to all, and allows the intervener a balance of subjective and objective exploration in difficult-to-express topics. We will examine stories we tell ourselves in an open and "owning" way, with paths forward that invite our others to co-create a new experience for themself. All are welcome and are included to this exploration in a clear, transparent and kind manner.

Pre-conference Workshop #206

Mónica Rodríguez Cortés

Mexico

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Mónica Rodríguez Cortés, founder of Danzaterapia Creativa Gestalt®, is a Mexican Gestalt psychotherapist, art therapist, educator, and movement facilitator from Puebla, Mexico. She holds a Master's Degree in Integrative Gestalt Psychotherapy, postgraduate studies in Gestalt Theatre, and training in Authentic Movement and Somatic Experiencing®. A member of the International Dance Council UNESCO, she has dedicated more than 15 years to meditation, yoga, martial arts, and expressive arts. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she developed Danzaterapia Creativa Gestalt® as a psychoeducational methodology integrating body awarenesss, dance, Gestalt, and art. Her work has trained over 400 people across 19 generations and reached more than 20,000 participants worldwide.

Danzaterapia Creativa Gestalt

This experiential workshop presents Danzaterapia Creativa Gestalt®, a body-oriented psychoeducational methodology applied with more than 400 participants across therapeutic, educational, and community settings. Rooted in Gestalt therapy, expressive arts, Authentic Movement, and somatic approaches, the methodology explores the body as a pathway for awareness, emotional integration, and the exploration of unfinished Gestalts.

The conceptual foundation integrates Gestalt principles such as awareness, contact, embodiment, and polarity work, understanding the body as a space where emotional experiences and interrupted processes are stored and expressed. Through movement, creative exploration, and reflective integration, participants are invited to recognise unresolved emotional patterns and develop greater embodied presence.

The workshop is structured in five experiential stages. It begins with a pre-expressive phase focused on grounding, breathing, and somatic awareness to create safety and presence within the group. The second phase introduces movement and colour exploration, integrating spontaneous movement with creative expression to support awareness of emotional polarities and internal conflicts from a Gestalt perspective. Participants engage in guided movement experiences designed to facilitate contact with unfinished emotional experiences held within the body. The process concludes with an art therapy-based integration phase involving creative reflection, symbolic expression, and group dialogue.

The proposed format consists of 8 hours of experiential work, offered either as two 4-hour sessions across two days or as four 2-hour sessions across four days. The workshop is designed for psychotherapists, educators, facilitators, artists, students, and individuals interested in embodied and

experiential approaches. No previous dance or movement experience is required.

My connection to this topic emerges from my professional background in Integrative Gestalt Psychotherapy, expressive arts, and movement practices. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I developed this methodology in response to the emotional effects of isolation observed in educational spaces, discovering movement and body awareness as powerful tools for emotional regulation, creativity, and human connection.

Pre-conference Workshop #207

Josh

China

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International senior Gestalt trainer and pioneer of Gestalt Breathwork, with 28 years on the Gestalt path and over 2,500 hours of specialist training. Uses Gestalt combined with breathwork to help clients explore their inner world, eliminate mental drain, heal family-of-origin trauma, and restore the inner child. Specialises in using Gestalt therapy to repair intimate and parent-child relationships and rebuild the self.

Complete Breathing Mini Workshop

Have you ever felt this way? Life filled with busyness, stress following you everywhere, emotions with nowhere to go… your body and mind wrapped in an invisible 'armour,' heavy and inescapable. This time, we have prepared a deep healing journey for you — half a day to shed your burdens, release stress, awaken inner energy, and rediscover ease and balance. A journey back to yourself — you are invited to begin. Imagine, in a safe and tranquil space, you will have the opportunity to temporarily set aside all social roles and daily trivialities, and embark on an exploration purely about 'the self.' This is not just a course — it is a deep bathing of the soul and a gentle dialogue with life.

Pre-conference Workshop #210

Ronald Alexander

USA

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Ronald A. Alexander, Ph.D. is the clinical director of the Open Mind Training Institute in Santa Monica, CA. He specializes in the practice of Gestalt Relational therapy with Somatic Experiencing and Mindfulness based psychotherapies. He trained and was certified at the Gestalt Therapy Institute of Los Angeles and studied extensively with Erving and Miriam Polster at the Gestalt Institute in La Jolla for over 50 years as well as with Robert Resnick Ph.D.,Jim SImpkin Ph.D. and was personally mentored with Robert Martin D.S.W. He is the author of Wise Mind Open Mind, New Harbinger Publications, 2009 and Core Creativity, 2023, Rowman and Littlefield, NYC,and chapter 33, co-author in the Wiley Blackwell Handbook on Mindfulness and Psychotherapy Volume l & ll edited by Ellen Langer, 2014, and has written for Gestalt Journal press Transference meets Dialogue and many other publications on Self Psychology. He leads clinical training programs in Los Angeles, New York, Europe, United Kingdom, Ireland, Japan, Russia and Australia. He was the director of clinical training at Ryokan College and Chair of graduate programs psychology for 20 years.

The Integration of Gestalt Therapy, Mindfulness; Somatic Experiencing therapies: New Somatic Approaches for the Treatment of Trauma & Cultivating Resiliency

This workshop will include both theory, clinical demonstrations and group guided mindfulness and trance process. Theory, discussion, group interaction and one on one therapeutic experiences will be offered so that each participant who may choose to will have the opportunity to work with the leader to observe and learn new clinical skills.

Gestalt open seat work

Somatic Experiencing Practice

Ericksonian Trance work

Somatic Breathing Practices

Mindfulness Meditation Practices

Recent advances in somatic experiencing, gestalt relational therapies and neurobiology, along with the integration of Mindfulness Meditation and Gestalt mind-body therapies into modern psychological practice, have revolutionised current thinking about the resolution of trauma, painful patterns of thought and destructive emotions. A new approach is emerging which views symptoms of suffering as the body's wisdom pathways for creating communication between the unconscious(un-aware state) and the aware self for promoting somatic re-learning, healing, and transformation. Where there is severe

pain and trauma neuroscience and mindfulness practice teaches us that the sympathetic nervous system becomes hyper aroused and can cause dissociation, numbness, and shutdown, a frozen state of somatic experience.

In this experiential workshop participants will learn how to turn down the hyper aroused sympathetic nervous system and turn on the parasympathetic nervous system that fosters relaxation, affect attunement and mind-body healing. The training will include direct experience, and clinical demonstrations including somatic exercises, guided mindfulness meditations and breathing patterns that can transform physiological and psychological blockages within the mind-body energy fields. It will use the modalities of Gestalt therapy, Somatic Experiencing (SE) and relational dialogical approaches emphasising mindfulness-based practices for accessing the somatic core-self for healing process.

Attention to the treatment of trauma and psychosomatic disorders, such as depression, anxiety, PTSD with Gestalt, Mindfulness Meditation and Somatic approaches the importance of the symptom as a pathway to inner healing.

Pre-conference Workshop #211

Christopher Mathe

USA

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Christopher Mathe, PhD, is a psychologist, educator, and longtime practitioner of experiential psychotherapy. His work centres on Redecision Therapy, an approach that integrates Gestalt therapy, Transactional Analysis, and parts-based work into a simple, embodied model of change. Rooted in the Parent–Adult–Child framework, his teaching emphasizes emotional immediacy, organismic wisdom, and the client's innate capacity to reorient toward wholeness.

Over several decades of clinical practice, supervision, and training, Christopher has refined a five-voice adaptation of the PAC model that clinicians and clients find immediately intuitive and experientially accessible. His approach prioritizes presence over technique, embodiment over interpretation, and trust in the self-regulating processes that emerge when safety, curiosity, and compassion are present.

Christopher's work aligns naturally with Taoist principles underlying Gestalt therapy: flow, non-forcing, and faith in the organism. He teaches therapists to listen deeply—to sensation, emotion, and meaning—and to support change as a lived process rather than a cognitive strategy.

He practices and teaches through Authentic Counseling Associates and the Authentic Leadership Centre, and is currently completing The Redecision Therapy Handbook: An Experiential Model for Parts-Based Change.

Redecision as Flow: An Experiential, Parts-Based Approach to Change

This workshop introduces Redecision as Flow, a structured experiential model for facilitating parts-based change in psychotherapy. While insight and interpretation are valuable, many clinicians observe that clients often remain emotionally organised around early decisions about self and relationships. Redecision as Flow offers a clear and teachable framework for guiding clients into embodied, corrective experiences that support new and life-affirming choices.

The theoretical foundation of the model integrates Gestalt therapy's emphasis on present-centred awareness and contact, transactional analysis concepts of ego states and early decisions, and contemporary parts-based perspectives. Central to the approach is a five-voice model that helps therapists track internal dynamics and facilitate focused experiential sequences in which clients revisit formative moments, confront limiting beliefs, and enact new decisions with emotional immediacy. The concept of "flow" reflects the living, relational movement between internal voices as they reorganise toward greater integration and vitality.

Designed for practising psychotherapists, supervisors, and advanced trainees interested in experiential

and parts-based work, this session combines conceptual clarity with demonstration and interactive exercises. Participants will observe a complete redecision sequence and explore key interventions that can be integrated into their own clinical settings.

Dr. Christopher L. Mathe has practiced and taught Redecision Therapy for over two decades, refining the model through extensive clinical work and the training of developing therapists. His work focuses on preserving the vitality of experiential methods while articulating them in a structured and ethically grounded way. Participants will leave with a practical experiential map and renewed appreciation for the transformative power of embodied therapeutic encounter.

Pre-conference Workshop #212

Cécile Thircuir

France

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Cécile Thircuir is a Gestalt practitioner, performer, and artistic director of Compagnie On Off, which she co-founded in 2003. Trained in the PGRO approach and currently continuing her development at the École Parisienne de Gestalt, she integrates somatic processes, voice work, and relational creativity into both her clinical and artistic practices.

For more than fifteen years, she has designed and led immersive, participatory experiences in hospitals, public institutions, museums, theaters, and community settings. Her work focuses on embodied presence, contact, and the transformative potential of aesthetic experience. She is the creator of The Song Prescription Room, a Gestalt-inspired para-musical dispositif in which live song, micro-rituals, and attentive dialogue become gateways to emotional regulation, creativity, and relational vitality.

She supports individuals and groups across therapeutic and artistic contexts, developing innovative ways of approaching care through sound, voice, and poetic encounter. Her research explores how art can enhance therapeutic presence, deepen awarenesss, and restore the field of connection between self, other, and environment.

The Song Prescription Room - Voice, Presence and Creative Contact

This workshop introduces The Song Prescription Room, a para-musical, Gestalt-inspired practice designed as a playful, accessible and experiential space open to everyone — including complete beginners and participants with no prior knowledge of Gestalt therapy. Grounded in phenomenology of contact, PGRO somatic processes and relational creativity, this approach explores how voice, sound and aesthetic experience can become sensitive pathways toward presence, expression and encounter. It offers a way of "doing Gestalt outside the consulting room," bringing therapeutic awareness into artistic, social and community spaces.

The workshop includes several live experiences of Musical Prescriptions, each followed by a shared didactic analysis. Through one or more consultations, some participants directly experience the process while others observe, allowing the group to explore figure formation, creative adjustment, embodied resonance and the quality of contact. For those who wish to engage further, a second phase invites participants to experiment with offering or receiving a song in a playful and supportive vocal environment. This experiential and reflective sequence allows people to see, hear and feel Gestalt principles unfolding in real time — through sound, movement, relational presence and co-created meaning.

The target audience includes beginners, therapists, artists, students, somatic practitioners, people interested in voice and ritual, and anyone curious about discovering Gestalt in a vivid, concrete and accessible way. No musical or clinical experience is required; curiosity and presence are enough.

My connection to this work arises from twenty years as a singer and performer, combined with my clinical practice as a Gestalt practitioner in hospitals, social institutions and community settings. The Song Prescription Room grew from the desire to transmit Gestalt differently: outside the therapy room, in direct encounter, through play, creativity and shared aesthetic experience.

Pre-conference Workshop #213

Leena Petersen

Germany

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Gestalt Psychtherapist (DVG, EAGT), BA (HU Berlin), MA, PhD (Sussex University UK).

Leena is a Gestalt psychotherapist, trainer, trauma therapist and supervisor (DVG, EAGT). She has also studied philosophy, aesthetics and literature. Next to international teaching and training, she works in a private practice and offers trauma therapy support to refugees in an NGO. She has worked in the psychiatric field for several years and was on the editorial board of the German-language journal for Gestalt therapy. Now, she is a member of the clinical theory of Gestalt Therapy group of the German speaking association Gestalt Therapy (DVG). She publishes in German and English and is particularly interested in the impact of field-oriented, situational and relational Gestalt therapy approaches, and related questions of aesthetics and resonance.

On the Situational Gestalt Approach within Traumatic Ground

The situational Gestalt approach to trauma focuses on treating trauma not just as an internal, historical event, but as a current, intertwining between the individual and their environment. This perspective, often referred to as the psychopathology of the situation, emphasizes that trauma creates a rigid, unfinished gestalt (or unfinished business) that persists in the present moment, disrupting a person's ability to live in the here and now. Trauma is regarded thus as a disorder of the situation—a result of being overwhelmed by an environment that left the individual powerless, frozen, and fragmented. It is thus important, in particular while working within traumatic situations, to develop an awareness of the respective field: Understanding that trauma exists within a context (family, culture, society), allowing for a more holistic, less stigmatizing approach. This might also benefit the inherent aspects of traumatic situations which we may encounter, like dealing with relational contradictions and challenging the paradoxical theory of change.

Pre-conference Workshop #215

Julie Goldstein

Singapore

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Julie Goldstein is a gestalt therapist, trained in the UK at the Gestalt Centre, and before that, an academic psychologist running an Integrated Degree at Goldsmiths University of London. Julie is also a qualified mindfulness meditation teacher, and has been practising as a therapist for 20 years in public as well as private settings. Julie has experience working at bereavement services and at a human rights organization in the UK, and currently runs a gestalt practice called Meaningmakers in Singapore, where she sees adolescents, adults and couples from local and international communities. Julie is sensitive to the Singapore landscape and the many ramifications of living in a very organized, industrialized fast-paced country with importance given to heritage and family values, and the up and coming pressures in the field.

Julie believes Gestalt therapy is a way of life, as well as a very suitable therapy modality in South East Asia, and is very excited to discuss the topic in the context of the Tao at the Shanghai gestalt conference.

Void-Residency: Breathing the "It" through the Fertile Field

The heart of transformative therapeutic work lies not in the brilliance of our interpretations, but in our capacity for void-residency—the disciplined practice of dwelling within the Fertile Void until the organism's life force speaks for itself. This workshop moves away from the traditional, ego-driven listening that seeks to categorise and "fix" the client, proposing instead a reorientation toward the Groddeckian "It." In this space of creative indifference, we relinquish the safety of surety and the habitual drive to manufacture clinical movement. We explore the void not as a vacuum of absence, but as fertile silence where the "It" resides, waiting for the ego's chatter to subside so it can breathe its own truth through the somatic field.

Participants will learn to cultivate a different kind of listening—one that does not listen to a story, but listens for the emergence of the life force as it pulses through the client's breath, gestures, and symptoms. By residing in this zero point, the therapist becomes a resonator for the "It," allowing words to be "breathed through" them rather than consciously constructed. This approach finds its ultimate home in The Tao of Gestalt Therapy. Just as the Taoist principle of wu wei (effortless action) suggests that the greatest results come from non-striving, void-residency allows the therapist to step out of the way of the client's internal Way. By staying in the void, we are not "doing" therapy; we are allowing therapy to happen. We align ourselves with the natural rhythm of the "It," recognising that the path to wholeness is not a mountain to be climbed by the will, but a river to be followed through the valley of the unknown. To breathe the "It" is to breathe with the Tao, trusting that the fertile void contains everything necessary for the organism's next step.

Pre-conference Workshop #216

Alejandro García

Mexico

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Dr. Alejandro García Castro is a Mexican psychotherapist with over thirty years of clinical practice and one of Mexico's leading integrative humanistic therapists. He is the Coordinator and lead faculty of the Master's Programme in Gestalt Therapy at Integro Bajío (León, Guanajuato), an institution with 41 years of history and more than 13,000 graduates across Mexico. His academic formation spans Clinical Psychotherapy (BA), Gestalt Therapy (MSc), Systemic Family Therapy (MSc), Art Therapy (MSc), and Existential Psychotherapies (PhD), complemented by formation in Family Constellations, Bioenergetics, and Vibrational & Sound Therapy. A featured presenter at Mexico's First National Encounter of Art Therapy, he works at the intersection of the body, the image, the relational field, and the existential question — accompanying individuals and groups in the process of recovering their own inner voice. He lives and practises in the heart of Mexico's Bajío region.

The Call to Being: Weaving the Inner Guide — A Dreamcatcher Workshop at the Intersection of the Tao, Gestalt Therapy, and Expressive Arts

This workshop is built around a single, ancient, and deeply symbolic act: the ritual off making of a dreamcatcher in Lakota's Indigenous traditions of the Americas, the dreamcatcher is understood as a healing ceremony to heal the sickness of those who have lost their way, because they have become disconnected from their spirit —by weaving a web that separates the noise of accumulated fears and external demands from the quiet thread of genuine inner knowing. In this workshop, the act of weaving becomes a therapeutic process: an opportunity to recover the capacity to trust the inner guide and to re-encounter the ability to resolve from one's own authenticity.

The workshop proposes that one of the most common wounds in contemporary human experience is the loss of contact with one's own inner voice — silenced by performance, perfectionism, accumulated expectations, and the noise of a world that asks us to be what we are not. This is not a crisis of knowledge. It is a crisis of trust.

Three traditions offer their wisdom to this process:

The Tao teaches that the inner guide is not something to be constructed or found — it is the natural flow (ziran) already present, waiting to be heard when the noise stops. The Te — the inner virtue of the Tao Te Ching — is

Pre-conference Workshop #217

Siegfried Louw

South Africa

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Siegfried Louw is an ordained minister in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, working at the synodal level within the Western Cape Synod with ministerial wellness, continuing education, spirituality, and facilitation. He is a Gestalt practitioner whose journey began in play therapy and has evolved into a practice integrating Gestalt phenomenology, contemplative spirituality, and community facilitation.

He is the author of Die Krimpvarkie Kursus: Fasilitering vir Brawe Mense ("The Hedgehog Course: Facilitation for Brave People"), a published facilitation manual that translates Gestalt contact modifications into animal metaphors and provides a structured process for leading difficult conversations in community settings. His facilitation toolkit includes singing bowls, custom picture cards grounded in biblical imagery, and direct phenomenological inquiry.

He works regularly with church leadership groups, ministerial teams, and communities navigating conflict and institutional change in the South African context. He holds a particular interest in the apophatic tradition and the intersection of Gestalt and Daoist thought.

He is a cyclist, tuba player, and puppeteer.

Listening Before Words: Sound, Image, and the Phenomenological Doorway

What happens in a room when we stop leading with words?

This experiential workshop opens with sound: Tibetan singing bowls played in a meditative setting, and invites participants to notice what shifts in their bodies before any concept or conversation begins. From there, we move into working with evocative picture cards: a custom deck drawing on the imagery of Job 38–42 and the Psalms, with deliberate polarities built into the images. Participants will experience how sound and image each open a different doorway into phenomenological presence, bypassing the cognitive gatekeeping that keeps groups stuck in positions and politeness.

The workshop is grounded in Gestalt phenomenology — epoché, description, and horizontalisation — and the paradoxical theory of change. A secondary thread runs through the apophatic tradition of the Christian desert fathers and mothers, where encounter happens through unknowing rather than knowledge. The presenter proposes that the apophatic posture and Gestalt epoché share a common structure: both are disciplines of emptying that create conditions for genuine contact. The picture cards draw on theophany texts where God answers human certainty with unanswerable images from the natural world. Polarities in the imagery reflect the Gestalt understanding that awareness lives in the

tension between opposites.

The workshop is suited to Gestalt practitioners, facilitators, educators, and anyone working with groups where genuine dialogue matters. No prior experience with sound meditation or picture cards is needed.

I am an ordained minister in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and a Gestalt practitioner. My practice sits at the intersection of Gestalt therapy, contemplative spirituality, and community facilitation. The picture cards are part of my published facilitation course, Die Krimpvarkie Kursus ("The Hedgehog Course"). I come to Shanghai not to teach but to share what I've found.

Pre-conference Workshop #218

Agata Sylwestrzak, Juliette Raoul-Duval, Mojca Suhadolc, Yves Buce, Una Mirkovic

Luxembourg, Belgium, Belgium, Belgium, Luxembourg

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Agata Sylwestrzak's practice integrates Gestalt's experiential approach, coaching, and group facilitation, with interest in identity, adaptation, and otherness. Alongside her therapeutic work, she brings twelve years of experience within a European institution, informing her grasp of multicultural and organizational dynamics. Born in Poland in the 1970s into a family with French roots, she studied literature and linguistics in Poland and France, completing a PhD on migrant identity published in France, working as a translator and French lecturer at the University of Warsaw. She settled in Luxembourg in 2014, training in Gestalt therapy in Kraków and qualifying in Brussels in 2023.

Juliette Raoul-Duval is a Gestalt therapist and supervisor working with adults in Belgium and online with clients worldwide. She holds the European Certificate of Psychotherapy (ECP) and is an active member of Gestalt professional organizations. Her curiosity has guided her through dreamwork, Gestalt sandplay therapy, and Violet Oaklander's approach to working with children and mediators, and later toward remarkable Gestalt body processes. She enjoys practicing in many different languages, valuing genuine connection with her clients and the discovery of each person's singular path. Her work reflects a lifelong commitment to creative exploration, presence, and the evolving practice of Gestalt therapy.

Mojca Suhadolc is a psychotherapist trained in Gestalt therapy at SFU Ljubljana and a physical education teacher, whose journey was born from a dual passion for sport and human connection. A former high-level competitive alpine ski athlete, she navigated the challenges of competitive performance before turning first to teaching and then to psychotherapy, guided by a deep inner need to support others. Today, she supports individuals on their path to well-being by integrating movement and psychology, convinced that body and mind move forward together. Her own personal journey has taught her that every transition is an opportunity to rediscover oneself.

Yves Buce is a Gestalt therapist trained at the Belgian Gestalt Institute, as well as a family and organisational system facilitator, and he also works as a practicing artist. He is a member of the K5 collective of Gestalt therapists from Belgium and Luxembourg. Together with Juliette Raoul-Duval, Mojca Suhadolc, Una Mirković, and Agata Sylwestrzak, he has initiated an experiment exploring what bridging Gestalt and Tao philosophy actually means in their personal and collective practices. He will share the results of this ongoing shared process and invite other Gestalt therapists to experience it within the framework they are co-designing together.

Una Mirković is a Gestalt practitioner with a background in artistic and human-centered practices. Her work is rooted in presence, awareness, and authentic encounters, exploring what moves people, what connects them, and what gives deeper meaning to their lived experience. Through Gestalt therapy, she

supports processes of transformation and self-discovery by creating spaces where people can slow down, explore, and develop deeper awareness of themselves and their relationships. Storytelling is central to her path, as she believes stories help us understand who we truly are. Drawn to music, memory, and quiet heritage, she lets curiosity and encounters guide her discovery.

Experiential Workshop: Exploring Contact through Analogical Tools, Movement and Tao Philosophy

This experiential workshop invites Gestalt therapists to explore their way of making contact — with themselves, with others, and with the field — through analogical tools and body movement. Rooted in Gestalt therapy and inspired by Tao philosophy, participants will engage in a variety of experiences designed to deepen awareness of presence, perception, and creative adjustment.

Through movement explorations, symbolic supports, non-verbal interactions, and embodied experiments, participants will observe how contact emerges, shifts, flows, or withdraws within the relational process. The workshop offers a space to slow down, sense, listen, and allow meaning to arise organically from immediate experience.

Tao philosophy will provide an underlying thread throughout the workshop: welcoming the movement of polarities, recognising the value of emptiness, rhythm, and non-doing, and exploring a more fluid and organic quality of presence. Rather than attempting to direct or control experience, the Tao perspective encourages following the natural flow of the process. This approach will support a living reflection on the therapist's stance and on how to accompany contact in a more attuned and embodied way.

This workshop is intended for practitioners who wish to deepen their sensitivity to the relational process and expand their clinical creativity through an embodied, poetic, and experiential approach.

Pre-conference Workshop #219

Svetlana Ovchinnik

Chile

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Svetlana Ovchinnik is a practising psychologist, Gestalt therapist, and group facilitator based in Santiago, Chile. Her work is grounded in Gestalt therapy, phenomenology, relational and field perspectives, with a special interest in embodiment, migration, trauma and crisis, intercultural experience, and group processes.

Before becoming a therapist, Svetlana worked for many years as a professional photographer. This artistic background continues to influence her therapeutic and facilitation style, bringing sensitivity to gaze, presence, composition, atmosphere, and the subtle nonverbal ways in which people meet, reveal, and recognize one another.

She works mainly with Russian-speaking clients around the world and facilitates experiential groups and workshops. Living and practising in migration and multilingual contexts, she is especially interested in how contact becomes possible when language is insufficient, through presence, silence, movement, distance, and embodied resonance.

Her current professional interests include digital therapy, contemporary loneliness, intercultural communication, and the search for human connection across languages, cultures, and borders.

Human Contact Beyond Translation

In international and multilingual spaces, words do not always allow us to be fully understood. Different languages, cultural codes, and familiar ways of explaining ourselves may become boundaries rather than bridges. Yet within this limitation, another form of meeting can emerge: through gaze, distance, silence, movement, embodied presence, and the felt sense of a shared field.

This experiential Gestalt workshop explores contact beyond words. It is grounded in Gestalt therapy's field perspective, phenomenology, and a relational understanding of contact as an event co-created between people in the present moment.

Through silent movement, gaze-based partnering, distance and boundary work, mirroring, and brief phenomenological reflection, participants will explore how contact, meaning, attraction, avoidance, hesitation, and the sense of "I" and "you" arise before speech.

The workshop speaks to experiences of migration, intercultural encounters, digital therapy, contemporary loneliness, and human connection in a world where words are often not enough.

Pre-conference Workshop #220

Sara Kinakin

Canada

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The presenter is a Registered Therapeutic Counsellor (RTC), certified Ontogonic therapeutic practitioner, and hypnotherapist in private practice in Vancouver, Canada, with over 12 years of dedicated clinical practice.

Specializing deeply in the dream process since 2018, the presenter has designed, refined, and facilitated numerous successful in-person and online experiential workshops. This specific methodology—synthesizing Gestalt, Psychodrama, and Process Work through a Taoist lens was developed and road-tested directly in the room to foster deep field awarenesss among therapy clients, clinical colleagues, and spiritual practitioners.

This rich background combines robust clinical grounding with extensive, real-world experience navigating the collective somatic and symbolic spaces required to safely facilitate composite dream field dynamics.

The Tao of the Dreamfield: Symbolic Enactment through Gestalt and Psychodramatic Experimentation.

Dreams are a living field-phenomenon unfolding in the present through movement, sensation and relational contact. Developed over 15 years of clinical practice by a Vancouver based therapeutic counsellor, this experiential workshop offers psychotherapists, group facilitators and somatic practitioners a body-centred approach to dreamwork. The methodology synthesizing Arnold Mindell's process work., the classical Gestalt methodologies of Fritz Perls, and Moreno's psychodramatic enactment through Taoist perspectives.

Central to this approach is the dynamic interplay of Yin and Yang within the group field, serving as the living movement that makes the unconscious conscious. In this framework, the process of expression is Yang - driven by active, somatic psychodramatic enactment, whist the process of containment is Yin, residing in the receptive, spacious observation held by the collective as Perls' "fertile void." Through the principle of wu wei (non-forcing action), the dream material unfolds naturally trusting the organismic self-regulation of the field.

Using a structured "Dream in a Hat" framework, participants anonymously submit fragmented segments of their dreams, categorised by beginnings, middles, and ends. Three volunteers step forward to draw one element from each category, stitching together a composite, collective dream myth. As these volunteers step into the psychodramatic roles to animate these unowned figures (the Yang expression), the wider group anchors the outer field as resonant witnesses (the Yin containment). By working with a

dream text detached from any single owner, this structure bypasses individual ego defences to reveal the profound intelligence of the collective field. The process unfolds organically, providing the supportive psychodramatic distance needed to track, enact, and integrate emergent unconscious potencies, leaving participants with a clear, embodied protocol for group facilitation.

Pre-conference Workshop #221

Stephen Vasey

Switzerland

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Born in french speaking part of Switzerland, from British parents. Father of 2 grownups. My quest and my passion for 40 years has always been to inquire about the quality of relation in couples. I have written (books and blogs) and created processes, worshops on different topics, like communication, conflicts, skills on emotional management and intimacy. I still give sessions, workshops and trainings in Switzerland, France and Belgium.

THE COUPLE - A beautiful & necessary challenge!

After 35 years of working with couples, I have learned so much. It's a very touching job to meet each couple in their intimate ways to relate, fight, love.

Research show that the couple is a fantastic place and opportunity to learn about oneself, to learn how to become a better person.

Are you ready and open to learn?

There are efficient protocols and little short tools that seem to help us express, confront, ask, share about our needs, our desires, our limits and pains.

We do have to be more aware of our unconscious patterns and reactions, take responsibility, to develop a maturity to receive feedback, work it out and move on.

You can come alone or with your partner. We'll use your questions and situations to find out better ways to respond and get less lost in painful reactions.

Pre-conference Workshop #222

Stephen Vasey

Switzerland

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Born in french speaking part of Switzerland, from British parents. Father of 2 grownups. My quest and my passion for 40 years has always been to inquire about the quality of relation in couples. I have written (books and blogs) and created processes, worshops on different topics, like communication, conflicts, skills on emotional management and intimacy. I still give sessions, workshops and trainings in Switzerland, France and Belgium.

ANGER - The function and precious use of this emotion

This emotion, may it be hot or cold anger, is one of the most difficult to feel, to express, to get free from. We are not educated on it, we don't make friends with it, actually we are very clumsy and automated in our experiences of it and it hurts.

This workshop is to open your mind, make you adopt tools, different ways to be creative with it, to have a direction and inspiration to experiment it in a new way. This is about your own anger, but also the violent anger that comes directed to you from your loved ones, or at work, or in the street.

Typical of a Gestalt approach, we will take in account the 3 dimensions of psychic, emotional and physical levels, work in a progressive and safe way.

As an Englishman by upbringing, i was lost and very awkward in all situations. As a gentleman, I needed to find a way, where I don't hurt myself, but also don't hurt the other.

We will play with this intense energy, sometimes so heavy! And in a surprising way, it might be liberating, sometimes even fun, it brings more lightness and even joy.

This workshop is for the ones that suffer from not enough (healthy) anger, or too much (violent) anger, for the ones lost in frustrating reactions. We will move the body, and come alive with the power we hold within. So be ready for it!

If your body is fragile with some medical problem, sorry this might not be conformable for you.

Otherwise it's meant for all people, young and old, who have a honest commitment to come out of (normal) violence, and find something that works and helps us connect.

Pre-conference Workshop #223

Arman Khazaei

Iran

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I work as a mental health expert at the Ministry of Health and am also actively involved in research. I am currently translating specialized Gestalt therapy books into Persian in Iran and maintain professional connections with Gestalt therapists and trainers in Europe and the United States.

Digital Burnout and the Return to Presence: A Gestalt Exploration of Attention, Contact, and Embodied Awareness in the Digital Age

In a world of constant notifications, endless information streams, and increasing digital demands, many individuals experience a growing sense of exhaustion, fragmentation, and disconnection from themselves and others. While technology offers unprecedented opportunities for connection, it can also contribute to chronic distraction, diminished awareness, relational fatigue, and a reduced capacity for presence.

This experiential workshop is grounded in Relational Gestalt Therapy, Phenomenology, Field Theory, and embodied awareness practices. It explores how digital environments shape attention, contact, and self-experience, and how individuals can cultivate greater awareness and presence in their daily lives.

The target audience includes Gestalt therapists, counsellors, coaches, educators, mental health professionals, students, and anyone interested in understanding the psychological and relational impact of digital culture.

My connection to this topic arises from observing how digital technologies increasingly influence human attention, relationships, and embodied experience. As both professionals and individuals navigate an increasingly connected world, questions emerge about how to remain present, maintain authentic contact, and care for ourselves without withdrawing from modern life.

Participants will engage in awareness exercises, phenomenological inquiry, body-centred experiments, and relational dialogue to explore their relationship with technology and discover pathways toward greater presence, balance, and meaningful connection.

Conference Workshop #1 – Theoretically-oriented

Arthur Dombrovsky

Latvia

dr.dombrovsky@gmail.com

Doctor of Psychotherapeutic Sciences, Director of the Riga Gestalt Institute, Gestalt therapist. Has thirty-five years of experience in Gestalt therapy. Graduated from the Paris Gestalt School. Founder of his own concept of Gestalt therapy - Worked with my function. Teacher of Gestalt therapy, supervisor. Certificate from the European Association for Psychotherapy. Certificate from the European Association for Gestalt Therapy. Certificate as a supervisor from the European Association for Gestalt Therapy, among others.

I - You: We Function

Gestalt therapy originated and evolved under certain historical conditions. Today, a serious and robust modernisation of gestalt therapy is required to align with the changing historical, cultural, psychological, and other trends in the surrounding environment. The development of the theory of soft gestalt therapy will be presented, featuring an additional fourth function We, which describes relational contact. This addition serves, on one hand, as a philosophical-existential complement to gestalt therapy theory that is much needed in today's context, and on the other hand, as a methodological foundation for the development of relational psychotherapy—what has recently become fashionable to call a relativist approach.

Conference Workshop #2

Ronald Alexander

USA

drron@ronaldalexander.com • Wechat: DrRonAlexander

Ronald A. Alexander, Ph.D. is the clinical director of the Open Mind Training Institute in Santa Monica, CA. He specializes in the practice of Gestalt Relational therapy with Somatic Experiencing and Mindfulness based psychotherapies. He trained and was certified at the Gestalt Therapy Institute of Los Angeles and studied extensively with Erving and Miriam Polster at the Gestalt Institute in La Jolla for over 50 years as well as with Robert Resnick Ph.D.,Jim SImpkin Ph.D. and was personally mentored with Robert Martin D.S.W. He is the author of Wise Mind Open Mind, New Harbinger Publications, 2009 and Core Creativity, 2023, Rowman and Littlefield, NYC,and chapter 33, co-author in the Wiley Blackwell Handbook on Mindfulness and Psychotherapy Volume l & ll edited by Ellen Langer, 2014, and has written for Gestalt Journal press Transference meets Dialogue and many other publications on Self Psychology. He leads clinical training programs in Los Angeles, New York, Europe, United Kingdom, Ireland, Japan, Russia and Australia. He was the director of clinical training at Ryokan College and Chair of graduate programs psychology for 20 years.

Clinical Applications of Gestalt Therapy, Somatic Experiencing and Mindfulness Meditation for Fostering Resiliency, Creativity and Trauma Resolution

This workshop will include both theory, clinical demonstrations and group guided mindfulness and trance process. Theory, discussion, group interaction and one on one therapeutic experiences will be offered so that each participant who may choose to will have the opportunity to work with the leader to observe and learn new clinical skills.

Gestalt open seat work

Somatic Experiencing Practice

Ericksonian Trance work

Somatic Breathing Practices

Mindfulness Meditation Practices

Recent advances in somatic experiencing, gestalt relational therapies and neurobiology, along with the integration of Mindfulness Meditation and Gestalt mind-body therapies into modern psychological practice, have revolutionised current thinking about the resolution of trauma, painful patterns of thought and destructive emotions. A new approach is emerging which views symptoms of suffering as the body's wisdom pathways for creating communication between the unconscious(un-aware state) and the aware self for promoting somatic re-learning, healing, and transformation. Where there is severe

pain and trauma neuroscience and mindfulness practice teaches us that the sympathetic nervous system becomes hyper aroused and can cause dissociation, numbness, and shutdown, a frozen state of somatic experience.

In this experiential workshop participants will learn how to turn down the hyper aroused sympathetic nervous system and turn on the parasympathetic nervous system that fosters relaxation, affect attunement and mind-body healing. The training will include direct experience, and clinical demonstrations including somatic exercises, guided mindfulness meditations and breathing patterns that can transform physiological and psychological blockages within the mind-body energy fields. It will use the modalities of Gestalt therapy, Somatic Experiencing (SE) and relational dialogical approaches emphasising mindfulness-based practices for accessing the somatic core-self for healing process.

Attention to the treatment of trauma and psychosomatic disorders, such as depression, anxiety, PTSD with Gestalt, Mindfulness Meditation and Somatic approaches the importance of the symptom as a pathway to inner healing.

Conference Workshop #3 – Theoretically-oriented

Yaqui Martinez-Robles

Mexico

yaquiandres@me.com • Instagram: @yaquiexistencia

Yaqui A. Martínez-Robles is a psychologist with a Master's and a PhD in Psychotherapy. He is the founder and CEO of the Circle of Studies in Existential Therapy (Círculo de Estudios en Terapia Existencial - CIREX) in Mexico and Colombia, with over 23 years of experience training existential therapists and teaching phenomenology and its applications.

He is honorary president of the Latin American Association for Existential Psychotherapy (ALPE). Throughout his professional career, he has been trained in Gestalt therapy, Group therapy, Narrative therapy, Music therapy, Holotropic Breathwork, and Certified in Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy by the Intregrative Psychiatry Institute (IPI). Completed the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) educational program in MDMA-Assisted Therapy. Certified by ICEERS Integration Training.

As a Relational Gestalt and Existential-Phenomenological therapist, PhD Martínez-Robles works individually, with couples and with groups.

He has published eight books (four as an author and four as a co-author) on topics about existential thought and therapy. He teaches Existential-phenomenological perspective and Relational Gestalt Therapy internationally.

Following What Emerges: Relational Gestalt and Existential–Phenomenological Group Work

This presentation explores a resonant dialogue between Relational Gestalt Therapy and the phenomenological–existential perspective in conversation with the Tao. It is not proposed as a comparative analysis nor as an interpretation of Taoist philosophy, but as a reflection grounded in lived practice and philosophical orientation. Both perspectives are approached as ways of understanding therapeutic work that privilege presence, openness, and responsiveness to what emerges within the relational field.

From these orientations, therapy is understood as an encounter rather than a technical intervention. Emphasis is placed on phenomenological listening, the suspension of premature explanations, and attentiveness to lived experience as it unfolds between persons. Within this shared space, the Tao is approached not as an object of knowledge, but as a horizon of resonance: a way of naming the movement of life when action gives way to participation and control softens into attunement.

This dialogue does not seek to equate Relational Gestalt Therapy or phenomenological–existential practice with Taoism, nor to claim expertise in Eastern philosophical traditions. Rather, it suggests that

certain attitudes cultivated within both perspectives naturally echo qualities often associated with the Tao, such as non-forcing, simplicity, humility, and trust in process.

Target Audience:

This presentation is intended for psychotherapists, counsellors, educators, current psychotherapy students and researchers interested in Gestalt Therapy, phenomenological–existential approaches, relational practice, and cross-cultural philosophical dialogue.

My connection to this topic arises from many years of therapeutic practice, teaching, and reflection within Relational Gestalt Therapy and the phenomenological–existential tradition. Through this work, I have become increasingly attentive to forms of presence, listening, and relational attunement that resonate with Taoist sensibilities, not as doctrine, but as lived orientation within therapeutic encounters.

Conference Workshop #4 – Theoretically-oriented

Yaqui Martinez-Robles

Mexico

yaquiandres@me.com • Instagram: @yaquiexistencia

Yaqui A. Martínez-Robles is a psychologist with a Master's and a PhD in Psychotherapy. He is the founder and CEO of the Circle of Studies in Existential Therapy (Círculo de Estudios en Terapia Existencial - CIREX) in Mexico and Colombia, with over 23 years of experience training existential therapists and teaching phenomenology and its applications.

He is honorary president of the Latin American Association for Existential Psychotherapy (ALPE). Throughout his professional career, he has been trained in Gestalt therapy, Group therapy, Narrative therapy, Music therapy, Holotropic Breathwork, and Certified in Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy by the Intregrative Psychiatry Institute (IPI). Completed the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) educational program in MDMA-Assisted Therapy. Certified by ICEERS Integration Training.

As a Relational Gestalt and Existential-Phenomenological therapist, PhD Martínez-Robles works individually, with couples and with groups.

He has published eight books (four as an author and four as a co-author) on topics about existential thought and therapy. He teaches Existential-phenomenological perspective and Relational Gestalt Therapy internationally.

In resonance with the Tao: Relational Gestalt Therapy and Phenomenological-Existential Practice

This presentation explores a resonant dialogue between Relational Gestalt Therapy and the phenomenological–existential perspective in conversation with the Tao. It is not proposed as a comparative analysis nor as an interpretation of Taoist philosophy, but as a reflection grounded in lived practice and philosophical orientation. Both perspectives are approached as ways of understanding therapeutic work that privilege presence, openness, and responsiveness to what emerges within the relational field.

From these orientations, therapy is understood as an encounter rather than a technical intervention. Emphasis is placed on phenomenological listening, the suspension of premature explanations, and attentiveness to lived experience as it unfolds between persons. Within this shared space, the Tao is approached not as an object of knowledge, but as a horizon of resonance: a way of naming the movement of life when action gives way to participation and control softens into attunement.

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certain attitudes cultivated within both perspectives naturally echo qualities often associated with the Tao, such as non-forcing, simplicity, humility, and trust in process.

Target Audience:

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My connection to this topic arises from many years of therapeutic practice, teaching, and reflection within Relational Gestalt Therapy and the phenomenological–existential tradition. Through this work, I have become increasingly attentive to forms of presence, listening, and relational attunement that resonate with Taoist sensibilities, not as doctrine, but as lived orientation within therapeutic encounters.

Conference Workshop #5

Stephanie Goldsmith

USA

StephGoldsmithPhD@gmail.com

Stephanie Goldsmith, Ph.D. is the CEO and Co-Director for Gestalt Associates Training, Los Angeles (GATLA) where, in addition to her administrative role, she is Trainer faculty for the Los Angeles program and for the international Summer Residential program. She is also the creator and host of the All Gestalt Podcast. She provides Gestalt clinical consultation and supervision via teleconferencing to therapists all around the world.

Dr. Goldsmith is a licensed clinical psychologist and the owner and Clinical Director at Goldsmith Psychological Services where she provides individual, couples, family, and group therapy as well as post-graduate supervision to associate clinicians. Her specialty areas include trauma, dissociation, interpersonal relationships and communication, eating disorders and body image concerns, and LGBTQI issues. She is a Certified Gestalt Therapist, Certified Clinical Trauma Professional, is trained in EMDR, EFT "Tapping," and Animal Assisted Play Therapy, and has completed certificate training in Emotion Focused Couple's Therapy.

Dr. Goldsmith is an Associate Clinical Professor at Loma Linda University. She specializes in teaching Emotion-Focused Therapy, Gestalt Therapy, Affective Basis of Behaviour, and Management and Professional Practice.

Trauma and Its Treatment from a Gestalt Perspective

This presentation provides a comprehensive overview of trauma and its treatment from a Gestalt perspective. Participants will learn about the current neuroscience of trauma, trauma processes from a Gestalt perspective, and relevant clinical applications for working with traumatised clients. Please note that this workshop can be a didactic by itself, however it has previously been designed to also include case conceptualisations for both classic PTSD and Complex PTSD and a live therapy demonstration by me with a volunteer participant followed by reflections and a discussion of the work. Depending on the need and availability of the conference, this can be broken into several sessions (as has been the case when I've presented this material for other international institutes).

The intended audience for this workshop is practising mental health clinicians with some knowledge of basic Gestalt theory.

I am a passionate trauma specialist and have worked with trauma survivors for over a decade. I have treated individuals who have survived mass shootings in the US, sexual assault survivors, survivors of war and natural disasters, etc. I am trained in somatic work as well as Gestalt Therapy. I have presented this workshop to Gestalt Institutes in Japan, Ukraine, Russia, Poland, and Australia as well as in the United States.

Conference Workshop #6

Clarice Fangzhou Hassan

USA

claricehassan2323@gmail.com • Wechat: ClariceFH

I am a Chinese-born psychotherapist, originally trained at Fudan University in Shanghai, where I earned my bachelpr's degree in Accounting from the School of Management in 2015. I later completed my Master of Social Work at New York University in 2017. In 2018, I joined Gestalt Associates for Psychotherapy in New York and completed the Clinical Gestalt Fellowship, becoming a Certified Gestalt Psychotherapist in 2025.

Practising Gestalt therapy bilingually in Chinese and English has profoundly shaped my understanding of how culture, language, and field interact in both clinical and group settings. My work focuses on how Gestalt principles are lived and embodied across cultural contexts, particularly where silence, non-verbal expression, and collective presence are central modes of contact.

I am the founder of Phronetic Psychotherapy LCSW P.C., a New York–based group psychotherapy practice. I am deeply committed to building Gestalt-informed, AAPI-oriented clinical spaces in the United States that are relationally grounded, culturally responsive, and attentive to field dynamics.

The Economy of Attention: A Fishbowl Experiment on Field, Power, and Visibility in Gestalt Practice

This experiential workshop explores attention not as a personal trait but as a relational and field-based phenomenon. Through a structured fishbowl experiment, participants are invited to observe how visibility, silence, charisma, withdrawal, and power emerge within a collective Gestalt field. Rather than focusing on individual expression or communication skills, the workshop examines how attention is distributed, negotiated, and embodied in groups.

By integrating Gestalt field theory with performative experimentation, participants will experience how figure–ground dynamics, contact boundaries, and organismic self-regulation operate in real time. The workshop offers a space to reflect on the ethical and clinical implications of attention in psychotherapy, group processes, and social contexts.

Conference Workshop #7 – Theoretically-oriented

Seishi Harada

Japan

harada.seishi@cosmosia.email

1991 Completed Gestalt therapist training course under Ricky Livingston(Rose Najia) at Tokyo Gestalt Institute.

Private practice in Tokyo for 35years.

Has received rave reviews in Europe and the United States, such as AAGT and the Leaders' Conference.

Book [Image Therapy that Saves you] Daisan Shokan; [Escape from addiction] Tsuge Shobo Shinsha; Translated [In and Out the Garbage Pail] Fritz Perls from Shinyosha

2000-2002 Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Educational Research Consultation Department Advisory Staff

In 2006, participated in the AAGT Vancouver Conference, gave a presentation that received rave reviews. In 2008, he participated AAGT Manchester Conference and was in charge of the Program Planning Committee.

2010 Participated in AAGT Philadelphia Conference. Gave a presentation. In 2013, invited to give a lecture and workshop at the 30th anniversary conference of Universidad Gestalt in Mexico.

2018,invited by Gestalt Wellness Institute Southeast Asia Inc. to give a lecture and workshop in Cebu, Philippines. 2020, held the International Gestalt ZOOM conference once a month with Stefan Green

Base-tongue communication

We learn to drink before we learn to chew, bite. They communicate with their mother by drinking, swallowing. He learns to manipulate his mother by drinking,swallowing. As you say, the act of "drinking (nursing)" is more than just nutritional intake in human development; it is a very important foundation for communication and development.

According to research on the function of the oral cavity, as soon as a baby is born, it starts with the typical suckling behaviour of sucking while breathing. This process has the following implications:

Japan Dental Hygienist Association

1. Drinking is the “first communication”

Babies gain a sense of security through the warmth of their skin, the smell, and the mother's gaze as they suckle.

Nonverbal Communication: Drinking behaviour (sucking, swallowing, pausing) is a two-way interaction with the mother that may involve crying, smiling, and eye contact.

Forming a bond: Breastfeeding releases oxytocin (the attachment hormone), which deepens the bond of trust between mother and child.

2. “Manipulating the mother” by drinking, swallowing and communicating her needs

The act of "drinking" is the baby's first "operation" to convey its needs to the mother and have them satisfied. So when you have problem in communication with people observing drinking behaviour can be a very effective form of therapy. Until now, Gestalt therapy has not fully recognised the significant influence of manipulation through introjection. In this workshop, I’m going to show you how a few simple exercises—focusing on your introjection and your base-tongue muscle can drastically transform your communication, almost instantly."

Conference Workshop #8 – Research

Helena Gonzalez Vallejo

Mexico

helena@gestalthumanista.com

Clinical psychologist, Master's Degree in Gestalt, PhD in Psychology, Deputy Academic Director of the Humanist Institute of Gestalt Psychotherapy in Mexico City. Teacher at IHPG Mexico for 15 years. Member of the Editorial Board of Figura Fondo Magazine with several publications in different numbers. Therapeutic practice for 18 years. International Program in Contemporary Psychopathology by the IHPG Mexico. Presentation at the IV International Congress of Research in Gestalt Psychotherapy (2019 Santiago), XIV EAGT Gestalt Conference (2023 Madrid) & 6th International Gestalt Research Conference (2025 Birmingham)

The anxiety experience in gestalt therapists and its relation in clinical practice: a look from the creative adjustment

The spectrum of anxiety has increased in its etiology and treatments. For the professional exercise of the gestalt psychotherapist, both contact, excitement and creativity are essential tools so that said exercise can be carried out in an ideal way, however in the population of gestalt psychotherapists it is increasingly common to hear manifestations of anxiety such as: disorders in sleeping and eating habits, muscle tension, panic attacks, physical problems (respiratory, palpitations, dizziness, pain), worries and irrational fears, etc. The objective of this research is to know the levels of anxiety in Gestalt therapists and the relationship they have with performance in their clinical practice. The approach is quantitative with a correlational scope. Two instruments were used for data collection: the ISRA (Inventory of Anxiety Situations and Responses) for anxiety and the GTFS (Gestalt Therapy Fidelity Scale) for performance in clinical practice. The sample is made up of ten gestalt therapists divided into two groups (therapists with anxiety and therapists without anxiety). The results show a comparative and correlational analysis of the clinical practice criteria offered by the GTFS, such as field-sensitive practice, work in the here and now, among others that show significant correlations with different aspects of clinical practice. the anxiety. The conclusions and discussion offer a reading of the results in three ways: 1. The experience of anxiety as a situation in the field, 2. The experience of anxiety as a fixed state and form, and 3. Anxiety as an experience and creative adjustment. Likewise, new questions are generated as well as contributions to previous research on the subject.

Conference Workshop #9 – Theoretically-oriented

Nikolas Krause, Robert Wickersham

USA, USA

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robert@thegestaltcenter.com • Wechat: dropofwater

Nik Krause is a former intern and affiliate at The Gestalt Centre in Colorado, bringing a global perspective shaped by six years teaching at Nanjing University, work as an affiliated researcher with the UNESCO Chair on Peace Studies, and a year as a visiting scholar at the SAIS Hopkins-Nanjing Centre. Fluent in English, German, and Mandarin, he values cross-cultural dialogue as a foundation for therapeutic presence and understanding. His clinical interests focus on present-moment awareness, trauma awareness, and relational work, exploring how principled nonviolence can be embodied in psychotherapy as an active, relational process fostering authentic contact and ethical engagement.

Robert Wickersham is a Licensed Professional Counsellor and PhD candidate in Clinical Psychology at Saybrook University, specializing in integrating Gestalt therapy, clinical hypnosis, and transpersonal psychotherapy. He trains at The Gestalt Centre for Growth and Training in Boulder, Colorado, under master Gestalt therapist Ernest McCoy, and holds EMDR certification and Certified Clinical Trauma Professional status. His private practice in Colorado focuses on trauma, altered states of consciousness, and somatic integration. His research examines the phenomenological convergence of Gestalt therapy and Ericksonian hypnosis, and his orientation draws on Taoist philosophy and Zen Buddhist practice, bridging Eastern wisdom with Western clinical modalities.

The Nonviolent Moment: Gestalt Awareness at the Contact Boundary

This contribution explores the “Nonviolent Moment,” as articulated by Michael N. Nagler, through the lens of Gestalt therapy and Taoist principle, approaching it not only as a concept but as a lived, experiential event arising at the contact boundary—an interruption of conditioned reactivity that opens the possibility for conscious, relational response. Nagler’s observation that “Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and our power to choose our response” points to a phenomenological opening that, in Gestalt terms, emerges at the boundary of contact, where awareness reveals impulse and choice allows a shift from habitual patterning toward presence. From a field perspective, familiar Gestalt disturbances such as projection, retroflection, and deflection may be understood as subtle forms of disconnection when awareness is constrained; as awareness deepens, these patterns can reorganise into contact marked by mutual recognition and ethical responsiveness. Drawing on Gestalt field theory, dialogical practice, contemplative psychology, and interpersonal neurobiology, this presentation resonates with the Taoist principle of wu wei (non-forcing), where transformation emerges through attunement to the relational field rather than through effortful control, with clinical implications explored in relation to trauma, couples work, and the cultivation of ethical presence in therapeutic and everyday contexts.

Shubo Li

Norway

kusala.nada@gmail.com

Shubo Li is a Gestalt therapist based in Norway, working with both Chinese and international clients in cross-cultural contexts. She holds a PhD in Communication from the University of Westminster and has a background in media, cultural analysis, and translation. Her clinical work integrates Gestalt field theory, embodied awareness, and expressive media, with a particular interest in relational dynamics and contact processes. She is also an established writer and translator, with multiple publications in Chinese and international contexts. Her current work focuses on developing field-based interventions using creative materials in psychotherapy.

From Play to Contact: Clay as a Field-Forming Medium in Gestalt Therapy with Couples and Individuals

This presentation explores the use of clay (plasticine) as an embodied and relational medium in Gestalt therapy, demonstrating how "play becomes real" in adult and relational clinical contexts. Building on the Oaklander approach—where clients enter an "as if" experiential state and subsequently integrate projected meanings into lived experience —this work extends the framework into couple therapy and trauma-informed individual work.

The theoretical foundation of this presentation integrates Gestalt field theory, contact boundary dynamics, and embodied cognition. Clay is conceptualised as a field-forming medium that externalises implicit relational structures and enables direct work at the level of contact regulation. Through tactile, spatial, and symbolic manipulation, clients are able to reorganise patterns of proximity, differentiation, and support within the therapeutic field.

The presentation draws on three clinical cases: a couple negotiating intimacy and autonomy, an adolescent expressing trauma through fragmentation, and a young adult reconstructing self-positioning within a disrupted family field. I invite clients to construct the field itself—to give form to relational configurations as they are lived, thereby shifting the therapeutic focus from narrative content to experiential structure. Across these cases, clay facilitates (1) projection of relational schemas, (2) embodied awareness of boundary and distance, and (3) transformation of implicit affect into actionable contact.

The presenter is a Gestalt therapist trained in Norway, working with both Chinese and international clients in cross-cultural contexts. Her clinical work integrates expressive media, field-sensitive interventions, and embodied awareness practices. This presentation emerges directly from ongoing clinical practice and supervision, where clay has become a central medium for facilitating deep contact and transformation.

Conference Workshop #13

Ann Claw

USA

ann@annclaw.com

Ann works as a psychotherapist specializing in conscious awarenesss--shifting consciousness from ego to awakening using experiential techniques such as gestalt and psychodrama.

Ann draws on over 35 years of experience in the field of psychotherapy as a private practitioner,

author, educator and international workshop facilitator.

She was the founder and executive director of Children First, Inc., a nonprofit healing centre for children and families on the Tohono O'odham Nation, which combined Western and Native American healing practices. She has spent many years on the Navajo Nation.

Ann runs sweat lodge ceremonies for people interested in deep healing and transformation.

Moving Beyond Me/You, Us/Them. Transform the ego and return to the Source. We Are One.

The ego is made up of psychological thoughts. These thoughts are heard as voices in the head. They come from the conditioning of culture, education, family, religion. Our sense of self--who we think we are--comes from conditioned thoughts.

Most of us are defined by our ego. We do not know who we really are. We swing up and down emotionally depending on how the ego translates the outside circumstances. Based on the translation of our inner ego, we separate ourselves from others and define "them" as good or bad. Fear arises. We run from our fear by attacking others or withdrawing and putting up walls. We overconsume things such as food, alcohol, money, sex, drugs, shopping. This over consumption leads to the pollution of our minds and bodies, and ultimately the pollution of our only home, planet Earth.

In this experiential workshop, participants will learn tools to identify the ego and shift into awareness of who you really are by returning to source.

"If you don't realise the source, you stumble in confusion and sorrow. When you realise where you come from, you naturally become tolerant, disinterested, amused, kindhearted as a grandmother, dignified as a king. Immersed in the wonder of the Tao, you can deal with whatever life brings you, and when death comes, you are ready.

Conference Workshop #14

Andy Powell

USA

andy@rule6llc.com

Andy Powell is a change agent and founder of Rule 6 Consulting, LLC, with a passion to support organizational transformation at individual, team, and cultural levels.

With an extensive background in change management, culture change, and team effectiveness, he works with leaders and organizations that hold a vision of a higher purpose and belief that business can enable their environment and communities to flourish while achieving best in class financial returns. He is focused on ensuring efforts are aligned with business strategy, organizational systems, and leadership capability.

With over 30 years of organizational development experience with large and small companies internationally in areas such as post-merger/acquisition integration, process improvement, culture change, strategically aligned talent management, executive team effectiveness, and executive coaching, his experience crosses all functional areas iincluding sales and marketing, manufacturing, operations, research and development, and human resources.

Andy is resourceful problem solver with a practical approach. He is a certified professional coach holding many credentials in executive coaching and team coaching. He is faculty at the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland in coaching and team/group coaching areas

Gestalt Lenses to Significantly Enhance Team and Group Coaching

Coaching is a dance. How does the way the coach is wired to think and process information support this dance? How does the coach skilfully flex into being “optimal other” with their client?

In this experiential and highly active session we will consider several coaching-style elements in dynamic tension (ways that we process information in order to draw conclusions and interact with others,) and focus on three key continua in a model for self-discovery and application in coaching and consulting settings.

Founded in researched principles and our own

private practices of working with hundreds of leaders, groups and coaches using this content, participants will also get feedback of impact from others, and assimilate their learnings into their own coaching style.

We start with lecture followed by large group experiential exercises aimed at self discovery and then applied to others in dyads and small groups. Bringing in the Paradoxical Theory of Change, participants

will learn, explore and practice continua of how they tend to process information along three dimensions, (Matcher/Contraster, Global/Analytical, Past/Present/Future orientations). Together, these continua unlock an incredibly useful model of self awareness and perspective of "the other". As the style emerges, one can then dance, (or not) with the other. With choice, each can become the "optimal other" in real time with real clients.

This workshop provides skill, knowledge and application that allows the practitioner to see the other through the lens of the other. They can move beyond their own interpretation/projection/bias to a place of seeing the other as the other sees themself. This allows the practitioner to adjust their own style with skill and confidence to be the "optimal other" in relation to their client.

Content is immediately applicable after the session. Past participants report that their professional and personal relationships are transformed.

Conference Workshop #15

Melissa Kelly-McCabe, Andy Powell

USA, USA

mkmccabe@ClearIntentStrategy.com
andy@rule6llc.com

Melissa Kelly-McCabe has worked with boards and executives worldwide for over thirty years, coaching leaders to create and implement real strategy. She often coaches women CEOs accelerating their business goals, using physical process, art, and nature to deepen self-understanding through a Gestalt lens. She leads Clear Intent Strategy, Inc., is Senior Faculty at the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland, and Faculty to the Faculty for the Fulfilment Institute in Goa, India. Early in her career, she worked with Dr. W. Edwards Deming for five years. A Certified Mentor Coach and Gestalt Professional Coach, she mentors coaches toward authenticity and presence.

Andy Powell is a change agent and founder of Rule 6 Consulting, supporting organizational transformation at individual, team, and cultural levels. With an extensive background in change management and team effectiveness, he works with leaders who believe business can help communities flourish while achieving strong financial returns, aligning efforts with strategy and leadership capability. With over 30 years of international organizational development experience spanning post-merger integration, culture change, talent management, and executive coaching, his work crosses sales, manufacturing, operations, R&D, and human resources. A certified professional coach, he is faculty at the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland.

Gestalt Coach as Optimal Other

Do your coaching clients bring their relationships with others as topics into their session? Perhaps dilemmas that involve their boss, other team members, family dynamics, or even various parts of themselves to explore...?

Are you looking to expand your repertoire to work in an innovative, creative and easy way to coach your clients to see themself in their relationship in the "here and now"?

Family and systemic constellations is a modality that is particularly useful when clients bring situations involving relationships with others (leadership, team, family, etc.) and parts of self as fundamental to their presenting dilemma/s.

The presenter adapts Bert Hellinger's seminal Family Constellations work and Mark Wolynn's It Didn't Start with You perspective in individual and group coaching processes in her private practice. The combination offers profound client insight and deep awareness right in the coaching conversation that, then, can be applied in the client's real life.

In this active workshop, participants will learn about the power of systemic constellations and experience for themself what is possible when one looks at the whole system and steps into "the other's shoes". The promise is the potential to re-imagine relational possibilities and co-create a new experiences with those others in real life. We will complete the workshop by applying key learnings and techniques to the participant's coaching style and ICF core competencies for immediate application in their coaching practice.

Content is accessible to all, and allows the intervener a balance of subjective and objective exploration in difficult-to-express topics. We will examine stories we tell ourselves in an open and "owning" way, with paths forward that invite our others to co-create a new experience for themself. All are welcome and are included to this exploration in a clear, transparent and kind manner.

Conference Workshop #16

Jorge Villalonga

Colombia

villalonga.jorge@gmail.com

Jorge Villalonga is an experienced social psychologist, consultant, teacher, coach, and international trainer, specialized in team building and leadership throughout Gestalt, Enneagram, NLP and dramatic arts. With international experience both in the private and public sectors. At present he is the Director of the Gestalt school in Bogota and the Centre of Therapeutic Theater, a private consulting firm that specializes in gestalt, coaching and therapeutic Theater.

Mr. Villalonga has been working as a teacher since 1996; and has reached hundreds of persons and organizations in Latin America, Central America, North America, Europe, and Africa. He is also a teacher on therapeutic Theater for different Universities throughout the world.

Embodied Presence: Gestalt & Therapeutic Theatre

This workshop invites participants into a process of self-recognition through clown and Gestalt-based theatre work, exploring the expression of emotions such as anger, sadness, joy, and orgasm by moving through different emotional spaces and noticing what it feels like to embody and express each one. Guided by the central question, “Which emotion is most difficult for me to express?”, participants engage in interaction games and experiential exercises that deepen awareness of the emotions they avoid or long to explore more fully. From this process, participants begin building a theatrical character that reflects familiar ways of inhabiting the world, including patterns that sabotage their own needs, while integrating core Gestalt concepts such as neurosis and self-regulation. The workshop culminates in a collective scene-creation process, where the group develops theatrical scenes inspired by both everyday and imaginary elements, using performance as a way to bring neurotic mechanisms into awareness and move toward creative acceptance, integration, and personal transformation. Designed for artists, therapists, students, and anyone interested in embodied self-exploration and creative processes, the workshop will be led by Jorge Villalonga, an international teaching expert and pioneer in the field of therapeutic theatre. He is Director of the Barcelona Therapeutic Theatre Centre and the Bogotá Gestalt School, a sociologist specialising in Social Psychology from the Complutense University of Madrid, a Gestalt Therapist trained at the Madrid School of Gestalt Therapy, and holds postgraduate studies in Performing Arts from the Autonomous University of Barcelona. He is also a professor at the Mediterranean Art Therapy School in Barcelona, a psychotherapist certified by the World Council of Psychotherapy, and a longtime disciple and collaborator of Claudio Naranjo within the SAT program.

Conference Workshop #17

Melissa Kelly-McCabe

USA

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Melissa has worked in industry, with boards and executives around the world for thirty-plus years. She coaches leaders to create and implement real strategy. Melissa often coaches women CEOs/executives as they accelerate attaining their business goals, imprint their own style on their company, and bring fun and purpose into their lives. Using physical process, art/creativity and nature, clients deepen their self-understanding and create action forward using a Gestalt lens.

In addition to leading Clear Intent Strategy, Inc., Melissa is Senior Faculty at The Gestalt Institute of Cleveland (Ohio, USA) and Faculty to the Faculty for The Fulfilment Institute (Goa, India). Early in her career, she worked with Dr. W. Edwards Deming for five years, researching and teaching Deming management principles.

A Certified Mentor Coach, ICF MCC, and Gestalt Professional Coach, Melissa mentors seasoned coaches to go deeper with their clients and bring their own authenticity and presence to their coaching. Melissa's presentation/facilitation style is lively, hands-on, and filled with examples of real-life stories. Working with large groups and small, Melissa receives accolades and "top scores" for content, clarity and presence.

Deepening Coaching Impact Using Constellations

Do your coaching clients bring their relationships with others as topics into their session? Perhaps dilemmas that involve their boss, other team members, family dynamics, or even various parts of themselves to explore...?

Are you looking to expand your repertoire to work in an innovative, creative and easy way to coach your clients to see themself in their relationship in the "here and now"?

Family and systemic constellations is a modality that is particularly useful when clients bring situations involving relationships with others (leadership, team, family, etc.) and parts of self as fundamental to their presenting dilemma/s.

The presenter adapts Bert Hellinger's seminal Family Constellations work and Mark Wolynn's It Didn't Start with You perspective in individual and group coaching processes in her private practice. The combination offers profound client insight and deep awareness right in the coaching conversation that, then, can be applied in the client's real life.

In this active workshop, participants will learn about the power of systemic constellations and

experience for themself what is possible when one looks at the whole system and steps into "the other's shoes". The promise is the potential to re-imagine relational possibilities and co-create a new experiences with those others in real life. We will complete the workshop by applying key learnings and techniques to the participant's coaching style and ICF core competencies for immediate application in their coaching practice.

Content is accessible to all, and allows the intervener a balance of subjective and objective exploration in difficult-to-express topics. We will examine stories we tell ourselves in an open and "owning" way, with paths forward that invite our others to co-create a new experience for themself. All are welcome and are included to this exploration in a clear, transparent and kind manner.

Conference Workshop #18 – Theoretically-oriented

Xuefu Wang

China

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Dr. Xuefu Wang is the founder and psychotherapist at Zhi Mian Institute for Psychotherapy, Nanjing. He has authored 13 books and numerous articles. In his extensive collaboration with existential psychologists across the world, especially in the US and UK, he has become a leading practitioner and promoter of existential psychology in China. He is an APA's Charlotte and Karl Buhler Award recipient (2013)

Unfinished business and trauma

Paying particular attention to Perls's core concept—unfinished business—this lecture attempts to understand it from a trauma-informed perspective. Those whose trauma remains unhealed continue to live within the sensation of that trauma; even as time passes, a psychological void remains within them, giving rise to a strong desire to reclaim or compensate for what was lost. Yet they are unaware that, in this very preoccupation, they are creating further voids and becoming even more fixated on the unfinished business. Consequently, trauma healing may serve as a pathway to help an individual release their fixation on unfinished business.

Conference Workshop #19

Stephen Vasey

Switzerland

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Born in french speaking part of Switzerland, from British parents. Father of 2 grownups. My quest and my passion for 40 years has always been to inquire about the quality of relation in couples. I have written (books and blogs) and created processes, worshops on different topics, like communication, conflicts, skills on emotional management and intimacy. I still give sessions, workshops and trainings in Switzerland, France and Belgium.

ANGER. Make peace and friends with this special emotion

Anger is for most people, the most difficult emotion to handle. There's too much of it or not enough. We confuse it with violence. Most of us are trying to control it.

Hot violent anger and cold passive agressive anger are both bad, unsatisfying and don't work in our important relations.

My approach is to teach how to deal with the intensity of this emotion, without damaging oneself, or the our dear partner, children, or these important connections we need around us.

The workshop will have some theory and some experiments. It will be surprisingly quite playful and sometimes even fun, because it's so liberating to get trough and free from our anger.

We all need anger, it's full of vitality, it can be healthy and needed to stand straight and in our own shoes. All are welcome

Conference Workshop #20

Tea Gogotishvili, Dimitri Nadirashvili

Georgia, Georgia

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dimitrinadirashvili@gmail.com

Prof. Téa Gogotishvili, PhD, is an EAGT-accredited and EAP-certified Gestalt therapist and full member of SPR, chairing the Training Standards and Professional Competencies Committee at the Georgian Association of Gestalt Therapists and representing the Georgian Psychological Society to IUPsyS. Co-director of the EAGT-accredited Georgian National Gestalt Institute and co-author of a Georgian-language Gestalt therapy textbook, she is also Professor at St. Andrew Georgian University. She has published four books and more than thirty articles in peer-reviewed journals, and actively practices Gestalt therapy with groups, individuals, families, couples, and adolescents, alongside involvement in charity and social activities.

Prof. Dimitri Nadirashvili, PhD, D.Psych.Sc., is an EAGT-accredited and EAP-certified Gestalt therapist, full member of SPR, founder of the Georgian Gestalt Therapeutic School, and President of the Georgian Association of Gestalt Therapists. He is Head of the Psychology Department at St. Andrew Georgian University and Director of the EAGT-accredited Georgian National Gestalt Institute, and has authored original Georgian-language textbooks in Gestalt therapy. He practices Gestalt therapy with groups, individuals, couples, families, and athletes, and is the author of seven books and more than fifty articles published in peer-reviewed journals.

Workshop: "Nosce te ipsum – The Challenge of Living in the Present"

This workshop examines the concept of Nosce te ipsum—Latin for "Know yourself"—through the dual lenses of the Gestalt approach and the Georgian Psychological School's Theory of Attitude, exploring how self awareness acts as a fundamental prerequisite for authentic engagement with the „here and now " present. The workshop explores the persistent challenge of remaining in authentic contact with the present, exploring how habitual blocks to awareness and fixed attitudes influence our capacity for contact within the present moment.

While the 'here and now' is often regarded as a space of clarity and vitality, many individuals are mostly unaware of how they lose contact with the present moment. They drift toward the past or the future, interrupting contact, diminishing awareness, and often unconsciously becoming the 'authors' of their own unhappiness.

This workshop offers a phenomenological and experiential inquiry into how such interruptions emerge and are maintained. Drawing on the foundations of Gestalt Therapy and the Georgian psychological school of the „Theory of Attitude," participants will explore how fixed attitudes limit presence and

interfere with actual, situational attitudes.

Through guided experiments, reflective dialogue, and relational exercises, participants will have the opportunity to observe their own patterns of contact and withdrawal, and to explore new possibilities of "living presence." The workshop aims not at enforcing constant presence, but at cultivating the capacity to move more freely between contact and withdrawal, with increased awareness and choice.

Conference Workshop #21

Yoko Yuile

Japan

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Yoko lives to inspire people to live their best and to serve humanity's evolution. Her work spans teaching, coaching, mentoring, facilitating, translating, and writing.

She uses transformative tools and processes such as NLP, The Passion Test, Mental Space Psychology, and Social Panorama to help people heal and thrive.

Her career also reflects a deep commitment to advocacy. Yoko has supported schools, aided victims of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, and contributed to movements like WorldShift Network Japan, etc.

As an interpreter, Yoko has had the honor of working alongside renowned thought leaders such as Dr. Bruce Lipton, Dr. Martin Seligman, Dr. John Demartini, Dr, Lucas Derks, Dr. Richard Bandler, Audrey Tang, Janet Attwood, Lynn Twist, Tony Robbins, Vinay Gunther,etc.

Her literary contributions include authoring; Creating the Best You through NLP, How to Raise a Happy Daughter, and The Miracle of Suirin; translating The Psychic Pathway, Seven Spiritual Laws for Parents, NLP Rapport based family, The Passion Test, etc

Yoko's mission is clear: to empower others to rise into their best self, and inspire a ripple effect of transformation for Peace.

Social Panorama based on Mental Space Psychology

1 Social Panorama is a psychology-based model created by Dr. Lucas Derks that says we unconsciously organise our relationships in an inner "social space," like a mental map.

Please refer to https://sociaalpanorama.nl/

Main Idea: The core idea is that the **location** of a person in your inner social landscape affects how you feel and act toward them. For example, someone you fear may seem "big" or too close, while someone you trust may feel near and supportive.

How it is used: Practitioners use it to help people notice and change their internal image of relationships with people and him/her/them-selves. It is often applied to issues like conflict, self-esteem, social anxiety, family tensions, and workplace dynamics.

The goal is to make your inner representation feel more manageable and useful.

Usage: It is not a universally accepted mainstream clinical treatment yet, the more practitioners with

Neuro Linguistic Programing knowledge and skills are talking about the effectiveness in a coaching, therapy and consultation.

Core concepts:

- It comes from social cognition and mental-space thinking, but it is also influenced by NLP-style ideas about sub-modalities and parts work.
- The model treats social reality as something we construct internally, not as a perfect copy of the outside world.
- These inner representations are usually automatic and unconscious, so people often do not notice they are using them.

The theory says that relationships feel the way they do partly because of where others and/or your own self-image are placed in the subject's internal map.

2 Target Audience: coaches, therapists, consultants, mentors and people in general who have interest in psychology.

3 Certified as an advanced social panorama consultant by Dr. Lucas Derks and a NLP trainer by Dr. Richard Bandler

Conference Workshop #22 – Theoretically-oriented

Graciela Cohen

Argentina

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Graciela Cohen, Licensed Psychologist and Director of Luz de Luna, a Gestalt Centre for study and meditation, trained by Dr. Adriana Schnake and Dr. Claudio Naranjo. She is a member of the scientific committees of national and international Gestalt congresses. She coordinates groups in Mexico, Spain, Uruguay, and Argentina. She directs the Lilah project—a culture of conscious friendship. She is the President of the ACAYA Foundation (Conscious Friendship Here and Now). She is the editor of complete Osho discourses in Spanish and the author of the books: "A Real Path: Life and Therapy According to the Gestalt Approach," "To Love and To Remain, Based on the Myth of Psyche and Eros," "Lilah: The Great Game. Psychology of the Buddhas," "Lilah: The Game of Consciousness. Sacred Psychology," "Lilah: A Culture of Friendship.Self-Knowledge", "Complementary opposites, an integrative vision","Paintings and commentaries on "The Ten Bulls of Zen", "Meditations for Everyday Life"and other books specifically dedicated to the study of her students of her Seminars called Gestalt Point 0.

Lilah, a game of consciousness. A sacred Gestalt

The word Lilah comes from Sanskrit, an ancient poetic language. It can be translated as "God is playing" and also as "love is playing," inviting us to contemplate existence as a manifestation of the sacred. It is an ancient game, estimated to be 2,500 years old, consisting of a board with 72 squares. These squares represent, across 8 levels of consciousness distributed in 9 squares each, the different emotions, feelings, and states we may experience during our development. It is played with a personal symbol and constitutes a journey energised by the opposites of arrows and snakes. A snake bites us and lowers our energy, where we may find a possible message to follow, while an arrow can lift us up and help us understand what drives us in life to move forward. I have known the game since the late 1970s, as well as the I Ching and various oracular tools. During Dr. Claudio Naranjo's first visit to Argentina in 1981 to introduce us to the Enneagram, he asked me to work with this pioneering group in my country using the Lilah game. On the other hand, I have Having visited and lived in India for two months a year for eleven years, I gained a deep understanding of key aspects of integrating East and West as ways of perceiving reality. My primary interest lies in navigating the ancient through contemporary lens and offering this game to foster a culture of friendship. Over the past fifteen years, we have played both in person and online with people from all over the world, creating an intergenerational, intercultural, and interdependent game with the aim of bridging the gap between the external world and the inner journey of consciousness.

Conference Workshop #23

Stephen Vasey

Switzerland

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Born in french speaking part of Switzerland, from British parents. Father of 2 grownups. My quest and my passion for 40 years has always been to inquire about the quality of relation in couples. I have written (books and blogs) and created processes, worshops on different topics, like communication, conflicts, skills on emotional management and intimacy. I still give sessions, workshops and trainings in Switzerland, France and Belgium.

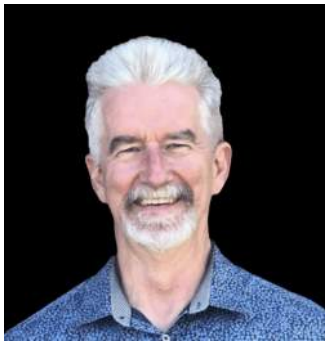
MAKE IT WORK. The art of developping maturity and connection skills in a couple.

The couple offers two spaces, one for each partner to live, experience and hopefully be alive, content. There is a balance in each being to find, some yin and some yang, skills to dance and play these two qualities. Many problems come from imbalance, from a lack of awareness and sometimes competition between the two. Understanding and experimenting new behaviors or attitudes help restore balance, complicity, deeper connection.

Addressing the habits of communication, of relating as spouse or/and parents, the skills in the confrontations of daily life, of the sharing of love and feelings etc...

Topics such as cheating, separation with or without kids etc can be included.

Conference Workshop #25 – Theoretically-oriented



Paul Gibney

Australia

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Dr Paul Gibney is a psychotherapist in private practice in Brisbane, Australia. Paul trained in Gestalt Therapy from 1978 to 1981. He then trained in Family Therapy and Psychoanalytic therapy. He has been in private practice since 1988. His publications have been mainly in Family Therapy and Relational Psychotherapy. He has a keen interest in the practical use of Jungian concepts.Paul has taught widely throughout Australia and New Zealand, and held a Senior Lectureship at the University of Queensland. He is the author of "The Pragmatics of Therapeutic Practice", which has been a set text in five Masters of Counselling courses in universities throughout Australia. Paul is known for his integrative capacity in working in practice with the multiplicities provided by a range of therapeutic traditions.

The Tao of the Relational Field: Cognition, Process and Complex.

This presentation sets out to explore two main themes and to illustrate a process in therapeutic practice.

Firstly, the concept of the relational field is explored in which the cognitions and emotions of the therapist and client form complimentaries in a continuous flux. Who is emphasising cognition and who is emphasising emotional process can be either rigid or fluctuating, and drawing on Gregory Bateson's concept of "difference", the suggestion will be that the therapist must embrace both, whilst being able to emphasise that to which the client is typically disinclined. The Tao exists in the wholeness of the process.

Secondly, the Jungian concept of a "complex" will be explored. The complex is a structure in which the client can often exist unawares and which can severely disrupt their capacity to be authentic. Here, the therapist, via her or his cognition and felt experience, can discern the complex and then can introduce the concept to the client.

The illustration will be of case studies that demonstrate how to use the concept of "complex" in therapeutic encounters to introduce fluidity and process into a static structure, to increase awareness, and to court authenticity.

The content of this presentation combines Gestalt and Jungian concepts and practices, and would be of interest to clinicians who enjoy thinking broadly, working innovatively, and like to reimagine possibilities in well established traditions.

Conference Workshop #27

Tucker Feller, Ulrich Sollmann

Canada, Germany

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Tucker Feller is a presenter at this conference, contributing to the ongoing exchange of ideas and practice within the Gestalt therapy community.

Ulrich Sollmann is a social scientist, Gestalt and body psychotherapist, systemic consultant, and executive coach working in management and politics. A publicist and podcaster, he serves on the enlarged board of the Sino-German Academy of Psychotherapy (DCAP), as Visiting Professor and Supervisor in the Department of Clinical Psychology at the First Hospital of Hebei Medical University, and as Guest Professor at Shanghai University of Political Science and Law.

Two approaches to Gestalt somatic work

This is an opportunity to see three versions of somatic work based on a Gestalt perspective demonstrated. Each presenter will work with someone from the audience, using their own approach to working with the body. They will then outline the process they used, and answer audience questions. At the end of the three sessions, the presenters will discuss with each other their approaches – exploring similarities and differences.

The body has always played an important part in Gestalt therapy - from Fritz's original 'lose your mind and come to your senses' dictum, to his incorporation of the contributions of Ida Rolf. The Gestalt experiment is fundamentally about moving from 'talking about' to embodiment, and thus a somatically integrated AHA, a reorganisation of the Gestalt not just cognitively but with the whole being.

The body in Gestalt is also a universal language, transcending culture in many ways, as we share the common humanity of our core feelings. Gestalt training is noted for going beyond the academic study of psychology, and working with the whole of body-mind.

Conference Workshop #28

Janeen Cameron

Australia

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Janeen is a Clinical Counsellor, Art Psychotherapist, and Sensorimotor Psychotherapist (Trauma Level 2) with over 30 years of experience in Australia and internationally. Based in Perth, Western Australia she runs a private practice and prioritises a person-centred, curious, and attentive approach. Janeen values diverse perspectives, is skilled in clinical yarning, and serves as an academic facilitator at several universities. Janeen is serves on the leadership group for Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation Australia - College of Creative and Experiential Therapies. She specialises in turning theory into practical clinical skills to support individuals and new graduates.

Janeen has built extensive experience as a contractor and consultant across multiple organisations. Starting her career as a registered nurse in general and mental health, she moved into occupational health and rehabilitation within mining, industry, and healthcare sectors. Specialising in creative therapies, Janeen is also skilled in EMDR, mindfulness strategies, transpersonal therapy, coaching, supervision, and mentoring. She works with adult individuals, FDV organisations, expatriate groups, and diverse communities, tailoring her approach to each person's unique needs.

Embodied Safety: Resourcing the Client's Safe Place Through Sand Therapy, Figurines and Gestalt Approaches

This experiential workshop or presentation integrates sand therapy, symbolic figurines and Gestalt-informed practice—enriched by Tao principles—to cultivate an internalised "safe place" for clients experiencing trauma, emotional dysregulation, relational distress and nervous system overwhelm. Grounded in the Tao's orientation to harmony with the natural order, the approach emphasises environments where regulation, repair and meaning-making unfold with attuned pacing and simplicity.

Participants will examine how symbolic play, sensory engagement and present-centred awareness facilitate safety, containment, self-support and emotional integration across diverse populations. Tao concepts of Yin–Yang illuminate therapeutic balance—activation/rest, expression/containment—while Wu Wei (natural, unforced responsiveness) encourages clinicians to follow, not force, the process so scenes in the sand can evolve organically. Attention to Qi (vital energy) complements Gestalt awareness of sensation, breath and posture, helping practitioners notice subtle shifts in arousal, contact and field dynamics. In dialogue with the Tao Te Ching's spirit of congruence, interventions remain client-led, culturally responsive and developmentally attuned.

A concise case example illustrates application: a 55-year-old woman, re-engaging with Buddhist principles and seeking renewed purpose, presents with spiritual disorientation and low mood. In the sand tray, she chooses several objects to include in her safe space—the therapist tracks breath and

posture, inviting micro-experiments that heighten embodied awareness (weight of a stone, feet grounded). Practising Wu Wei, the therapist limits direction, allowing the scene to stabilise. The client reports chest warmth and steadier breathing—signs of Qi settling—while Yin–Yang frames reflection on solitude/connection and withdrawal/engagement. Closing and opening the tray over several sessions, rehearses boundaries and choice; the completed scene becomes a portable anchor to support daily regulation and purpose.

Across theory, demonstration and experiential learning, clinicians will gain practical tools to create restorative therapeutic environments that support safe-place resourcing, grounding, containment and relational repair—so the "safe place" emerges as a living, embodied resource rather than a scripted technique.

Conference Workshop #29

Wang Zhen

China

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Wang Zhen is an Associate Professor and Master's Supervisor at Qilu Normal University, Ph.D. in Psychology, Visiting Scholar at Moscow State University, and Researcher at the Gestalt Therapy Institute of Israel. Founder of Shandong Zhengzheng Psychology; Chinese Chair of the Chinese Conference on Counseling and Psychotherapy; standing committee member of the Environment and Eugenics Division, China National Eugenics Science Association; member of the Social Psychological Service Committee, China Association for Disaster Prevention; member of the Social Psychological Training Committee, Chinese Sociological Association of Social Psychology; Chief Supervisor of Psychological Counselors at Jinan Demonstration Zone, Chinese CDC; President of the Mental Health Branch, Shandong AIDS Association; Executive Director of Shandong Mental Health Association and Chair of its Gestalt Therapy Committee; Vice Chair of the Child Mental Health Committee, Shandong Mental Health Association; Director of Shandong Psychological Society; Director of Shandong Social Psychology Society; and Director of Shandong Overseas Returned Scholars Association.

Gestalt technology demonstration

This workshop focuses on the Empty Chair Technique, one of the most representative methods in Gestalt therapy, exploring its theoretical foundations and practical applications as a therapeutic experiment. Founded by Fritz Perls, Gestalt therapy centers on present-moment awareness, contact, and dialogue. The Empty Chair Technique guides clients to engage in authentic dialogue with an "other" seated in the chair—be it a significant person, an inner voice, or unfinished business—thereby assisting clients in embodying unintegrated emotions, conflicts, and self-parts within a safe therapeutic setting, ultimately promoting contact, flow, and integration.

The workshop aims to establish a conceptual foundation in the core philosophy of Gestalt therapy, deepen understanding of the function and ethical considerations of experiments in Gestalt practice, cultivate participants' practical competence in conducting the Empty Chair Technique through live demonstration and supervised exercises, and explore the adaptation and application of this technique across cultural contexts, particularly within Chinese cultural frameworks.

The workshop content covers core theories including field theory, the cycle of contact, unfinished business, polarisation, and the philosophical foundations of experiments. The design balances theory and experience equally: the first segment is a theoretical lecture establishing the conceptual foundation of Gestalt philosophy and ethical framework; the second segment is a live demonstration, where the facilitator conducts a complete Empty Chair Technique demonstration with immediate process commentary; the third segment involves supervised practice and feedback, where participants engage in group exercises with on-site supervision.

Conference Workshop #30 – Theoretically-oriented

Lisa Seif

USA

lseif1@yahoo.com

Lisa Seif has been in the psychological and emotional health field since 1983. Her main focus has been substance use, adolescent and family care, cultural intelligence, and community consulting.

Gestalt has been around for decades and continues to keep professionals sensitive to inclusivity in the here and now. Lisa uses the gestalt model because it focuses on awarness, presence, authenticity,and human connection which are all core elements of belonging. Lisa draws from cross-cultural psychology. respect for group cohesion begins in the family. Lisa creates a therapeutic relationship that helps people understand themselves so they can live in harmony with family, community and society. This is all done by building inclusive relationships through present moment awarness.

What's COMPASSION Got To Do With Gestalt?

Gestalt awareness supports the Confucian value of Ten- kindness and human connection.

This workshop will introduce and explain key principles of gestalt therapy as a practical approach for improving human relationships, communication, and inclusivity.

Participants will learn how to apply gestalt -based skills to strengthen empathy, reduce misunderstanding and conflict, and how to sharpen their already good skills o continue a more welcoming and respectful environment in schools, workplaces, and communities.

Conference Workshop #31

Christa McCrorie

USA

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Christa McCrorie, LICSW-S, PIP, is an innovative therapist, certified birth doula, educator, and Fulbright Specialist dedicated to advancing holistic, client-centred care. She is the founder of Creative Therapeutic Solutions, where she provides tailored therapeutic services with a focus on trauma processing and the unique needs of queer and trans individuals. Christa employs creative, evidence-informed techniques to foster healing, growth, and empowerment, guiding clients toward sustainable paths to wellness.

In addition to her clinical work, Christa is a full-time Instructor and Continuing Education Coordinator at the University of Alabama School of Social Work. She teaches BSW and MSW courses and facilitates statewide professional development for social workers. Her commitment to mentorship, ethical practice, and interdisciplinary collaboration has made her a trusted educator and leader.

A frequent conference speaker and accomplished writer, Christa presents nationally and internationally on trauma-informed care, Gestalt-informed practice, LGBTQ+ affirmative therapy, and inclusive perinatal support. She is also an internationally recognized performer and advocate for equitable, embodied, and culturally responsive health care. As a Fulbright Specialist, Christa brings global perspectives to teaching and consultation, fostering dialogue across cultures.

Yes, And…: Improv Principles for Presence, Co-Regulation, and Joining in Social Work Practice

This experiential workshop explores how Gestalt dialogical and embodied methods can support LGBTQ + clients who experience guilt, ambivalence, or internal conflict when considering or pursuing gender-affirming medical care. Rather than approaching guilt as resistance or pathology, the workshop understands guilt as a relational and field-based phenomenon that emerges at the contact boundary between self, body, culture, and internalised relationships.

The workshop is grounded in Gestalt theory, particularly dialogical, phenomenological, and field-based approaches to awareness, contact, and embodiment. It is further informed by Taoist philosophy, especially the principle of wu wei (non-forcing), attunement to natural process, and trust in emergent change. Through this integrated framework, change is understood not as something to be imposed or resolved, but as something that unfolds through supported awareness and contact.

Participants will engage in structured body-dialogue practices that invite respectful, experiential contact with specific body parts, sensations, and internalised voices. These dialogues allow polarities—such as loyalty and transformation, stability and change, fear and desire—to be brought into relationship

without urgency to resolve them. By "letting the body speak," therapists cultivate presence and curiosity, supporting clients in listening to bodily wisdom while honouring ethical complexity, cultural context, and personal timing.

This workshop is designed for clinicians, educators, and Gestalt practitioners working in therapeutic, supervisory, or training settings. No advanced Gestalt training is required, though familiarity with experiential methods is helpful. The format combines brief theoretical framing with experiential exercises, reflective dialogue, and integration.

The presenter draws on extensive clinical, teaching, and supervisory experience supporting queer and trans clients navigating embodied decision-making, internalised guilt, and medical transition within complex relational and cultural fields. Participants will leave with practical tools for working with embodied ambivalence and a deepened understanding of how Gestalt and Taoist perspectives together support compassionate, non-coercive pathways toward wholeness and becoming.

Conference Workshop #32

Clarice Fangzhou Hassan

USA

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I am a Chinese-born psychotherapist, originally trained at Fudan University in Shanghai, where I earned my bachelpr's degree in Accounting from the School of Management in 2015. I later completed my Master of Social Work at New York University in 2017. In 2018, I joined Gestalt Associates for Psychotherapy in New York and completed the Clinical Gestalt Fellowship, becoming a Certified Gestalt Psychotherapist in 2025.

Practising Gestalt therapy bilingually in Chinese and English has profoundly shaped my understanding of how culture, language, and field interact in both clinical and group settings. My work focuses on how Gestalt principles are lived and embodied across cultural contexts, particularly where silence, non-verbal expression, and collective presence are central modes of contact.

I am the founder of Phronetic Psychotherapy LCSW P.C., a New York–based group psychotherapy practice. I am deeply committed to building Gestalt-informed, AAPI-oriented clinical spaces in the United States that are relationally grounded, culturally responsive, and attentive to field dynamics.

The Price of Words: A Gestalt Experiment on Language, Cost, and the Field

This experiential workshop explores language not as a neutral medium of communication but as a phenomenon shaped by cost, power, and relational dynamics within the field. Through a minimalistic fishbowl experiment, participants are invited to experience how speech becomes regulated, negotiated, and internalised when it is no longer "free."

Rather than teaching communication skills or encouraging emotional expression, the workshop functions as a performative Gestalt experiment in which language is treated as an embodied event. Participants encounter moments in which speaking, remaining silent, or withdrawing become responses to an implicit economy of words. The workshop makes visible how language, silence, and bodily movement emerge as relational gestures within a collective field.

Conference Workshop #33 – Theoretically-oriented

Julie Goldstein

Singapore

juliegoldstein.mail@gmail.com

Julie Goldstein is a gestalt therapist, trained in the UK at the Gestalt Centre, and before that, an academic psychologist running an Integrated Degree at Goldsmiths University of London. Julie is also a qualified mindfulness meditation teacher, and has been practising as a therapist for 20 years in public as well as private settings. Julie has experience working at bereavement services and at a human rights organization in the UK, and currently runs a gestalt practice called Meaningmakers in Singapore, where she sees adolescents, adults and couples from local and international communities. Julie is sensitive to the Singapore landscape and the many ramifications of living in a very organized, industrialized fast-paced country with importance given to heritage and family values, and the up and coming pressures in the field.

Julie believes Gestalt therapy is a way of life, as well as a very suitable therapy modality in South East Asia, and is very excited to discuss the topic in the context of the Tao at the Shanghai gestalt conference.

The Pulse of the Unseen: Groddeck's "It," the Tao, and the Creative Void in Gestalt Praxis

The heart of transformative therapeutic work lies not in the brilliance of our interpretations, but in our capacity for void-residency—the disciplined practice of dwelling within the Fertile Void until the organism's life force speaks for itself. This workshop moves away from the traditional, ego-driven listening that seeks to categorise and "fix" the client, proposing instead a reorientation toward the Groddeckian "It." In this space of creative indifference, we relinquish the safety of surety and the habitual drive to manufacture clinical movement. We explore the void not as a vacuum of absence, but as fertile silence where the "It" resides, waiting for the ego's chatter to subside so it can breathe its own truth through the somatic field.

Participants will learn to cultivate a different kind of listening—one that does not listen to a story, but listens for the emergence of the life force as it pulses through the client's breath, gestures, and symptoms. By residing in this zero point, the therapist becomes a resonator for the "It," allowing words to be "breathed through" them rather than consciously constructed. This approach finds its ultimate home in The Tao of Gestalt Therapy. Just as the Taoist principle of wu wei (effortless action) suggests that the greatest results come from non-striving, void-residency allows the therapist to step out of the way of the client's internal Way. By staying in the void, we are not "doing" therapy; we are allowing therapy to happen. We align ourselves with the natural rhythm of the "It," recognising that the path to wholeness is not a mountain to be climbed by the will, but a river to be followed through the valley of the unknown. To breathe the "It" is to breathe with the Tao, trusting that the fertile void contains everything necessary for the organism's next step.

Conference Workshop #34 – Research

Ann Watling

Wales

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Ann Watling is a UK-based counsellor and psychotherapist with many years of experience working therapeutically with adults, particularly in areas related to emotional health and life transitions. She has a background in nursing and midwifery, which informs her understanding of health-related distress and loss, and she works in private practice as well as having roles in training and supervision within the counselling profession. Additionally, she has pursued academic research, iincluding PhD-level work in counselling and psychology at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, and is accredited with professional bodies such as the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the National Counselling & Psychotherapy Society (NCPS).

Interpersonal Forgiveness Using Metaphor - A Self-Care Model

Forgiveness is frequently presented as a desirable or necessary outcome of trauma recovery. For many survivors, however, forgiveness can feel unsafe, premature, or morally imposed, risking further intrapsychic harm. This paper introduces a trauma-informed self-care model of forgiveness that removes obligation and prioritises safety, autonomy, and internal pacing.

The model is articulated through the metaphor of the wound. Trauma is understood as an injury to the self that disrupts trust, boundaries, and meaning. As with physical wounds, psychological wounds require careful assessment, protection, and time. Attempts to introduce forgiveness too early in the healing process are likened to forcing closure on a fragile or infected wound, potentially intensifying pain and delaying repair. Within this framework, self-care involves attending to the wound as it is, rather than rushing toward resolution.

The model outlines stages of psychological wound care, including stabilisation, protection, gradual processing, and integration. Forgiveness is not positioned as an endpoint or indicator of healing, but as one possible outcome that may emerge once sufficient safety has been established. Some wounds heal without forgiveness ever becoming relevant; in other cases, forgiveness may appear as a form of scar tissue—evidence of adaptation rather than erasure of harm.

Drawing on trauma theory and clinical practice, this paper offers practitioners an ethical framework for working with forgiveness that avoids retraumatisation and respects the survivor's right to refuse forgiveness. The wound metaphor provides a shared language for understanding consent, pacing, and the distinction between healing and reconciliation. Forgiveness is reframed not as a therapeutic goal, but as a possible by-product of well-tended self-care.

Conference Workshop #35

Christopher Mathe

USA

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Christopher Mathe, PhD, is a psychologist, educator, and longtime practitioner of experiential psychotherapy. His work centres on Redecision Therapy, an approach that integrates Gestalt therapy, Transactional Analysis, and parts-based work into a simple, embodied model of change. Rooted in the Parent–Adult–Child framework, his teaching emphasizes emotional immediacy, organismic wisdom, and the client's innate capacity to reorient toward wholeness.

Over several decades of clinical practice, supervision, and training, Christopher has refined a five-voice adaptation of the PAC model that clinicians and clients find immediately intuitive and experientially accessible. His approach prioritizes presence over technique, embodiment over interpretation, and trust in the self-regulating processes that emerge when safety, curiosity, and compassion are present.

Christopher's work aligns naturally with Taoist principles underlying Gestalt therapy: flow, non-forcing, and faith in the organism. He teaches therapists to listen deeply—to sensation, emotion, and meaning—and to support change as a lived process rather than a cognitive strategy.

He practices and teaches through Authentic Counseling Associates and the Authentic Leadership Centre, and is currently completing The Redecision Therapy Handbook: An Experiential Model for Parts-Based Change.

Redecision as Flow: An Experiential Map for Parts-Based Change

This workshop introduces Redecision as Flow, a structured experiential model for facilitating parts-based change in psychotherapy. While insight and interpretation are valuable, many clinicians observe that clients often remain emotionally organised around early decisions about self and relationships. Redecision as Flow offers a clear and teachable framework for guiding clients into embodied, corrective experiences that support new and life-affirming choices.

The theoretical foundation of the model integrates Gestalt therapy's emphasis on present-centred awareness and contact, transactional analysis concepts of ego states and early decisions, and contemporary parts-based perspectives. Central to the approach is a five-voice model that helps therapists track internal dynamics and facilitate focused experiential sequences in which clients revisit formative moments, confront limiting beliefs, and enact new decisions with emotional immediacy. The concept of "flow" reflects the living, relational movement between internal voices as they reorganise toward greater integration and vitality.

Designed for practising psychotherapists, supervisors, and advanced trainees interested in experiential

and parts-based work, this session combines conceptual clarity with demonstration and interactive exercises. Participants will observe a complete redecision sequence and explore key interventions that can be integrated into their own clinical settings.

Dr. Christopher L. Mathe has practiced and taught Redecision Therapy for over two decades, refining the model through extensive clinical work and the training of developing therapists. His work focuses on preserving the vitality of experiential methods while articulating them in a structured and ethically grounded way. Participants will leave with a practical experiential map and renewed appreciation for the transformative power of embodied therapeutic encounter.

Conference Workshop #36

Maria Fernanda Muñoz, Roberto Granados

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Maria Fernanda Muñoz is a specialist in Communication Sciences with postgraduate training in Human Development, Gestalt Field Theory, and Psychopathology. With over fifteen years of experience, she is a prominent humanistic counsellor and Gestalt consultant focused on relational communication and the systemic dynamics of interdependence. A dedicated educator and group facilitator specializing in group sensitization, she serves on the Board of Directors of the Instituto Humanista de Psicoterapia Gestalt (IHPG) in Mexico. She co-hosts Ajustes Creativos, IHPG's official podcast, exploring Gestalt principles and Field Theory with Roberto Granados.

Roberto Granados is a specialist in Communication Sciences and a Graduate Specialist in Gestalt Field Theory, with advanced training in Human Development and Gestalt Therapy. Focused on interdependence and humanistic leadership, he works as a communicator, therapist, and educator leading sensitization workshops, characterized by empathy and a commitment to co-constructing relational spaces that support both individual and collective growth. He co-hosts Ajustes Creativos, IHPG's official podcast, where he and Fernanda Muñoz explore Gestalt principles and the practical application of Field Theory for a global audience.

The power of my emotional voice: Exploring the Embodied Field of Introjections Workshop

Theoretical Basis: This 90-minute experiential workshop is grounded in Gestalt Field Theory and the phenomenology of the body, it posits that introjections are not merely verbal mandates but modelled behaviours from significant authorities that are "swallowed" without processing. These mandates shape the individual's field, manifesting as chronic bodily tensions and restricted contact possibilities.

Connection to the Topic: As specialists in Relational Communication and Humanistic Counseling at the IHPG, the facilitators have dedicated over 15 years to exploring how systemic mandates crystallize in the body. Their work in group sensitisation and clinical practice focuses on shifting from unconscious "shoulds" to a conscious, embodied "emotional voice," a journey they also explore through their specialised podcast, Ajustes Creativos.

Methodology and Process: The experiential design facilitates awareness through three phases:

Somatic Exploration: Participants identify adolescent mandates (e.g., "You must be…") and map their current impact on bodily sensations.

Childhood Origins: Using guided imagery, participants trace the earliest memories of censorship,

representing these limitations through a sustained physical posture. This allows for a profound realisation of the energy required to hold historical "don’ts."

Relational Mirroring: Through dyadic work, participants externalise these postures. This "witnessing" process in the relational field allows for a shift from internalised constraints to new possibilities of expression.

Target Audience: This experiential workshop is open to all individuals seeking personal exploration of their life history. It is particularly valuable for Gestalt students, therapists, and professionals interested in bodywork, as well as any participant eager to transform their "emotional voice" through a deep, lived experience of field dynamics.

Conference Workshop #37 – Theoretically-oriented

Robert Wickersham, Nikolas Krause

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Robert Wickersham is a Licensed Professional Counsellor and PhD candidate in Clinical Psychology at Saybrook University, specializing in integrating Gestalt therapy, clinical hypnosis, and transpersonal psychotherapy. He trains at The Gestalt Centre for Growth and Training in Boulder, Colorado, under master Gestalt therapist Ernest McCoy, and holds EMDR certification and Certified Clinical Trauma Professional status. His private practice in Colorado focuses on trauma, altered states of consciousness, and somatic integration. His research examines the phenomenological convergence of Gestalt therapy and Ericksonian hypnosis, and his orientation draws on Taoist philosophy and Zen Buddhist practice, bridging Eastern wisdom with Western clinical modalities.

Nik Krause is a former intern and affiliate at The Gestalt Centre in Colorado, bringing a global perspective shaped by six years teaching at Nanjing University, work as an affiliated researcher with the UNESCO Chair on Peace Studies, and a year as a visiting scholar at the SAIS Hopkins-Nanjing Centre. Fluent in English, German, and Mandarin, he values cross-cultural dialogue as a foundation for therapeutic presence and understanding. His clinical interests focus on present-moment awareness, trauma awareness, and relational work, exploring how principled nonviolence can be embodied in psychotherapy as an active, relational process fostering authentic contact and ethical engagement.

Contact, Trance, and the Tao: Where Gestalt Presence Meets Hypnotic Flow

This contribution explores the “Nonviolent Moment,” as articulated by Michael N. Nagler, through the lens of Gestalt therapy and Taoist principle, approaching it not only as a concept but as a lived, experiential event arising at the contact boundary—an interruption of conditioned reactivity that opens the possibility for conscious, relational response. Nagler’s observation that “Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and our power to choose our response” points to a phenomenological opening that, in Gestalt terms, emerges at the boundary of contact, where awareness reveals impulse and choice allows a shift from habitual patterning toward presence. From a field perspective, familiar Gestalt disturbances such as projection, retroflection, and deflection may be understood as subtle forms of disconnection when awareness is constrained; as awareness deepens, these patterns can reorganise into contact marked by mutual recognition and ethical responsiveness. Drawing on Gestalt field theory, dialogical practice, contemplative psychology, and interpersonal neurobiology, this presentation resonates with the Taoist principle of wu wei (non-forcing), where transformation emerges through attunement to the relational field rather than through effortful control, with clinical implications explored in relation to trauma, couples work, and the cultivation of ethical presence in therapeutic and everyday contexts.

Conference Workshop #38

Inna Miglāne

Latvia

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My professional philosophy centres on simple things, helping people discover their unique talents, develop creative potential, and connect with their true self in a changing world.

I'm a Business mentor, Gestalt therapist, aesthetic coach, Gestalt Practitioner in Organizations (GPO) with more than 20 years of experience in international companies. I'm also the founder and board member of training company and work in business consulting, team development, and training, iincluding soft skills programs "The Art of Humanity" and leadership development.My education includes an master degree in quality management systems from University RTU, training in Gestalt psychotherapy at the Riga Gestalt Institute, MBA psychology studies in Prague, and adult education pedagogy at the University of Latvia. My proposal - workshop "High impact Gestalt-the role of Gestalt therapists in Sustainability" has been accepted for the EAGT 2026 Conference in Dubrovnik.

High impact Gestalt-the role of Gestalt therapists in Sustainability

This proposal explores how Gestalt therapy can contribute meaningfully to sustainability by expanding the therapist's role from individual support to broader ecological and social awareness. Sustainability is not only about protecting natural resources; it is also about building healthier relationships between people, communities, and the environments they inhabit. From a Gestalt perspective, this means working with awareness, contact, responsibility, and the whole field in which human beings live and act.

The goal of this presentation is to highlight how Gestalt therapists can become catalysts for sustainable change. By helping individuals and groups notice habitual patterns, disconnection, and avoidance, therapists can support more conscious choices and more adaptive responses to complex modern challenges. In this sense, Gestalt practice can foster resilience, collaboration, and ethical engagement with both human and ecological systems.

The concept behind "high-impact Gestalt" is that therapeutic work can extend beyond personal healing and contribute to collective transformation. Gestalt therapists are uniquely positioned to address issues such as climate anxiety, burnout, alienation, and the loss of connection with nature and community. Through awarenesss-based dialogue and relational presence, they can help clients reconnect with values, strengthen agency, and develop a deeper sense of responsibility toward the world around them.

This proposal invites conference participants to consider sustainability as a lived process rather than an abstract goal. It emphasises that Gestalt therapists can play an active role in supporting sustainable mindsets, relational health, and systemic change. By integrating psychological insight with ecological consciousness, Gestalt therapy can offer a powerful framework for building a more humane, resilient, and sustainable future.

Conference Workshop #39

Edie Ye

USA

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Edie Ye, LCSW, is a second-generation Chinese-American psychotherapist based in the South Bay of California. Trained in the Process Model of Psychotherapy at the Process Therapy Institute, Edie integrates the principles of depth psychology, relational somatics, transpersonal psychology, and process-oriented approaches. Her clinical focus is dedicated to the intersections of trauma, embodiment, and the Asian diaspora, with a passion for supporting deep feelers and those with highly sensitive nervous systems. Holistically oriented, Edie is also a certified Reiki practitioner and is trained in Ketamine-Assisted Psychotherapy (KAP).

East Meets West: Completing the Trauma Stress Cycle

This experiential workshop presents a clinical synthesis designed to facilitate the completion of the trauma stress cycle by integrating Western bio-behavioural frameworks with Eastern energetic systems. Neuroscience, principles of somatic work, and Polyvagal Theory are introduced to examine how trauma activates self-protective mechanisms that disrupt both internal and interpersonal connections. To provide a holistic perspective on the body's natural processes, Taoist Five Element Theory (Water, Wood, Fire, Earth, and Metal) is used to demonstrate how trauma disrupts the flow of Qi and leads to stuck survival patterns that correlate with Western concepts of fight, flight, and freeze. As cognitive insight alone does not engage the subcortical regions of the brain where primitive survival scripts and senses of safety are stored, the workshop presents a comprehensive framework for bottom-up approaches that address incomplete stress responses.

Through process-oriented experiential methods, including Gestalt, parts work, and relational somatics, participants will progress through the essential stages of the trauma stress cycle: establishing support, creating space, activating trapped energy, discharging tension, and grounding to facilitate completion.

This workshop is designed for practitioners seeking advanced trauma application skills, those with foundational knowledge in somatic and depth-oriented work who are ready to deepen their practice, and clinicians who feel stalled by top-down models. This offering also serves practitioners who identify with a background of trauma and wish to enhance clinical self-awarenesss and regulation capacity. Deeply informed by the facilitator's journey of navigating complex trauma from a root cause perspective, the workshop invites participants to explore frameworks and experientials that access and resolve trauma symptoms that endure after the external threat has passed.

Conference Workshop #40

Siegfried Louw

South Africa

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Siegfried Louw is an ordained minister in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, working at the synodal level within the Western Cape Synod with ministerial wellness, continuing education, spirituality, and facilitation. He is a Gestalt practitioner whose journey began in play therapy and has evolved into a practice integrating Gestalt phenomenology, contemplative spirituality, and community facilitation.

He is the author of Die Krimpvarkie Kursus: Fasilitering vir Brawe Mense ("The Hedgehog Course: Facilitation for Brave People"), a published facilitation manual that translates Gestalt contact modifications into animal metaphors and provides a structured process for leading difficult conversations in community settings. His facilitation toolkit includes singing bowls, custom picture cards grounded in biblical imagery, and direct phenomenological inquiry.

He works regularly with church leadership groups, ministerial teams, and communities navigating conflict and institutional change in the South African context. He holds a particular interest in the apophatic tradition and the intersection of Gestalt and Daoist thought.

He is a cyclist, tuba player, and puppeteer.

The Apophatic Facilitator: Phenomenological Dialogue in Spaces of Conflict

What happens in a room when we stop leading with words?

This experiential workshop opens with sound: Tibetan singing bowls played in a meditative setting, and invites participants to notice what shifts in their bodies before any concept or conversation begins. From there, we move into working with evocative picture cards: a custom deck drawing on the imagery of Job 38–42 and the Psalms, with deliberate polarities built into the images. Participants will experience how sound and image each open a different doorway into phenomenological presence, bypassing the cognitive gatekeeping that keeps groups stuck in positions and politeness.

The workshop is grounded in Gestalt phenomenology — epoché, description, and horizontalisation — and the paradoxical theory of change. A secondary thread runs through the apophatic tradition of the Christian desert fathers and mothers, where encounter happens through unknowing rather than knowledge. The presenter proposes that the apophatic posture and Gestalt epoché share a common structure: both are disciplines of emptying that create conditions for genuine contact. The picture cards draw on theophany texts where God answers human certainty with unanswerable images from the natural world. Polarities in the imagery reflect the Gestalt understanding that awareness lives in the

tension between opposites.

The workshop is suited to Gestalt practitioners, facilitators, educators, and anyone working with groups where genuine dialogue matters. No prior experience with sound meditation or picture cards is needed.

I am an ordained minister in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and a Gestalt practitioner. My practice sits at the intersection of Gestalt therapy, contemplative spirituality, and community facilitation. The picture cards are part of my published facilitation course, Die Krimpvarkie Kursus ("The Hedgehog Course"). I come to Shanghai not to teach but to share what I've found.

Conference Workshop #41 – Theoretically-oriented

Abraham Sharkas

USA

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Abraham Sharkas is a licensed therapist, doctoral candidate in Counsellor Education and Supervision at Walden University, and founder of Wellness Dynamics and Movement Lab (WDML) in New Jersey. His work lives at the intersection of clinical counseling, somatic psychology, movement, and meaning, grounded in the belief that real change does not happen in the mind alone. It happens in the whole person.

His integrative practice draws from Gestalt, positive psychology, somatic approaches, mindfulness, and strength-based models, always shaped by cultural humility and nervous system awarenesss. His doctoral research examines the lived experience of embodied relational avoidance, specifically what happens when people have done the work, gained the insight, and still cannot enact genuine connection. The body, he argues, is not the obstacle. It is the site.

Outside the therapy room, Abraham trains Capoeira, studies Sufism and contemplative traditions with clinical rigor, and published collections of poetry. He also was strength and conditioning as well as gymnastic coach and a lifelong student of what it means to be human in a body, in relationship, in the world.

When the Body Won't Follow: Contact, Resistance, and the Gestalt of Not-Forcing

Across cultures and continents, loneliness and social disconnection have emerged as defining public health concerns of our time. Research spanning millions of adults worldwide links chronic disconnection to increases in mortality, depression, anxiety, and physical illness. And yet the clinical picture reveals something paradoxical: many people who seek therapy, gain insight, and understand their patterns still cannot close the gap. They know how to connect. They cannot do it. This is not a knowledge problem. It is a somatic, relational, and field-level problem that Gestalt therapy, at its deepest, has always been equipped to address.

This workshop explores embodied relational avoidance: the lived experience in which the nervous system, the body, and habitual contact patterns interrupt connection at the boundary, even when the person consciously desires it. Drawing on Gestalt contact theory (Kepner, Hycner and Jacobs, Zinker) and mindfulness-informed awareness (Gold and Zahm), we examine how resistance at the contact boundary is not failure. It is information.

The conference theme offers a profound frame. The Taoist principle of wu wei (non-forcing) maps directly onto Gestalt's understanding of organic contact: connection cannot be willed into being. It arises

when conditions are present and nothing is withheld. This parallels the Sufi concept of sohbet (transmission through presence) and the embodied relational intelligence of Capoeira, where two people improvise contact in a shared field without scripting the outcome.

Participants will explore how the body holds the history of contact interruptions, how field conditions shape what is possible at the boundary, and how the therapist's own embodied presence is the primary intervention. This workshop is grounded in the presenter's clinical practice and doctoral research into embodied relational avoidance in adults with persistent social disconnection.

Conference Workshop #42 – Theoretically-oriented

Gordana Bojanić

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Gordana Bojanic, MD, Specialist in Urology, is a physician, homeopathy practitioner, and facilitator of systemic constellations. Her work is grounded in an integrative view of health that brings together medical knowledge, holistic care, and sensitivity to the relational and systemic dimensions of human experience. She is particularly interested in the body as a living process through which regulation, imbalance, stress, and deeper patterns of meaning may become visible. Drawing from clinical medicine, homeopathy, and systemic work, she explores how embodied awarenesss can support more responsive forms of care and a more nuanced understanding of symptoms, contact, and self-regulation. Her professional orientation emphasizes careful listening, respect for complexity, and the meeting point between scientific responsibility and holistic understanding. Through this integrative approach, she seeks to support a deeper dialogue between body, awarenesss, and the wider field in which health and suffering unfold.

Listening to the Body as Field: A Holistic Perspective on Symptom, Contact and Meaning

This presentation explores the body not only as a biological organism, but also as a field-sensitive process in which symptom, contact, regulation, and meaning are closely interconnected. In times of stress, overload, and relational imbalance, the body may express what has not yet found form in awareness or contact. From a holistic perspective, symptoms can be approached not only as phenomena to be controlled, but also as signals that invite deeper listening to embodied experience, systemic context, and the person's way of being in relation.

The conceptual basis of this presentation draws on an integrative dialogue between medical practice, holistic care, systemic awareness, and key Gestalt concepts such as contact, organismic self-regulation, embodied awareness, and field sensitivity. In resonance with the conference theme, Gestalt and the Tao, the presentation reflects on how attentive, non-forcing listening may support a more responsive and meaningful relationship to the body without abandoning clinical responsibility.

This presentation is intended for Gestalt therapists, physicians, helping professionals, and practitioners interested in the meeting point between body, symptom, relational context, and holistic care.

My connection to this topic comes from my work as a physician specialist, homeopathy practitioner, and facilitator of systemic constellations. Across these fields, I repeatedly encounter the need to listen beyond symptom control alone and to include the body as part of a wider field of regulation, meaning, and relationship.

Conference Workshop #43

Miriam Torres Brinkmann

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Dr. Miriam Torres Brinkmann, PhD, LMFT, is a couples therapist working with multicultural and international clients in English and Spanish. Her work is grounded in Gestalt therapy and informed by contemporary relational approaches, iincluding Gottman Method, EFT, EMDR, and Ericksonian hypnosis.

She specializes in high-conflict couples, betrayal, discernment counseling, and couples intensives, with a focus on depth-oriented, efficient work. Her approach emphasizes awarenesss, contact, and the relational field, supporting couples in moving from rigid patterns toward more flexible and authentic ways of being together.

My work integrates Gestalt therapy, couples work, and sexuality, focusing on desire, shame, and relational intensity as they emerge in the field. I bring experience with high-conflict couples and multicultural dynamics, having worked with clients from over 25 countries, and offer an experiential, process-oriented approach that supports therapists in working at the edge of contact

The Quiet Violence of Trying to Change Each Other: Differentiation, Desire, and Contact in Couples

Most couples enter therapy with a quiet conviction: if my partner changed, we would be fine. What follows is rarely quiet. Partners pressure, persuade, withdraw, seduce, shame, or collapse, each move an attempt to reshape the other. Beneath these strategies lies a common function: the effort to regulate one's own discomfort by altering the other, which is what happens when differentiation becomes hard to hold.

Drawing on the nonviolent communication tradition, I use "violence" in the quiet sense: the demands, judgments, and strategies by which partners try to make each other different, and by which each loses touch with their own needs and with the other as a separate person.

Differentiation, the capacity to stay oneself while remaining in contact, is the thread of this workshop. When it collapses, couples slide into fusion, control, or distance, and each partner loses the ability to meet the other as a separate person.

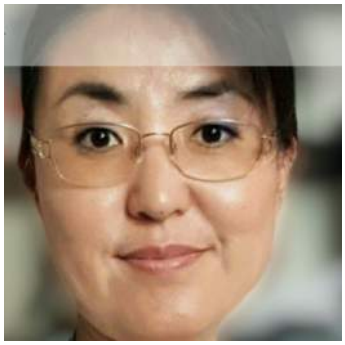
Nowhere is this clearer than in desire. Desire cannot be demanded, scheduled, or produced by effort, and it needs two distinct people: when partners merge, or retreat into distance, there is no one left to reach toward. Low sexual desire, in women and in men, is frequently approached as an individual deficit to be diagnosed or corrected. Through a Gestalt lens, it is instead a meaningful adjustment within the erotic field between partners, often linked to pressure, obligation, resentment, and diminished differentiation.

Grounded in Gestalt field theory and the paradoxical theory of change, this experiential workshop moves from content (the story each partner brings, frequency, technique, who needs to change) to process (how partners meet, avoid, and interrupt contact in real time, including how each story is told and received). Drawing on my work with couples from many cultural contexts, including high-conflict couples, betrayal, and desire discrepancies between partners, I use low desire as the central case showing how mutual coercion maintains impasse while both partners long for connection.

Through live demonstrations and exercises, participants will learn to support each partner in differentiating, knowing and voicing their own experience without demanding that the other change; to recognise control disguised as care; to work with intensity and shame; and to support co-regulation between partners (helping one partner stay present and steady with the other's distress, rather than forcing change or withdrawing).

Participants will take home three practical tools for their next session: a short set of process questions that shift a conversation from content to contact, a simple practice for supporting each partner's differentiation, and a co-regulation practice for the steadier partner. These are not techniques to make relationships work or to increase desire, but ways of supporting a different stance: from fixing to attending, from control to contact, from fusion or distance to differentiated closeness. In the spirit of the conference, the workshop asks what becomes possible when we stop forcing change and attend to what

Conference Workshop #44



Jeongmi Moon

USA

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Dr. Jeongmi Moon is a licensed Clinical Psychologist in California, USA, and presenter specializing in Gestalt therapy with an integrative, culturally attuned approach. Her work emphasizes present-moment awarenesss, the therapeutic relationship, and the exploration of contact boundaries to support authentic self-experience and growth. She is particularly interested in how individuals interrupt contact with themselves and others, and how these patterns can be gently brought into awarenesss and transformed within the therapeutic encounter.

Drawing from her cross-cultural background, She is born and raised in Korea, Came to USA as an adult, and clinical experience, Dr. Moon works with high-functioning adults navigating anxiety, depression, trauma, relational difficulties, and identity-related concerns. She integrates Gestalt therapy with mindfulness, somatic awarenesss, and cognitive approaches, helping clients reconnect with their embodied experience while developing greater self-support and emotional regulation.

Dr. Moon's clinical and teaching focus includes experiments in session, the use of here-and-now dialogue, and the cultivation of awarenesss through experiential processes. She is especially passionate about applying Gestalt principles within diverse cultural contexts, exploring how cultural values shape contact, expression, and the sense of self.

Between Two Worlds: A Gestalt Approach to the Mental Health of Second-Generation Asian Americans from Refugee Families

This presentation is grounded in Gestalt therapy's core principles of awareness, contact, and relational process, focusing on the mental health of second-generation Asian Americans whose parents immigrated as refugees. It examines how intergenerational trauma, displacement, and survival-based adaptation influence identity development, emotional regulation, and patterns of contact in the second generation.

Within many refugee families, traditional Asian parenting styles—characterised by high expectations, emotional restraint, implicit expressions of care, and emphasis on sacrifice—interact with unresolved trauma and acculturation stress. From a Gestalt perspective, these dynamics often contribute to contact interruptions such as retroflection, deflection, and confluence, which may manifest as self-criticism, emotional suppression, and difficulty expressing needs.

This workshop is designed for clinicians, therapists, and advanced trainees working with culturally diverse populations. Through experiential exercises and case reflections, participants will explore how these patterns emerge in the therapeutic relationship and how awareness can support integration.

Dr. Moon's connection to this topic is rooted in her clinical work with second-generation Asian American clients navigating identity conflict, family expectations, and the lasting psychological impact of their parents' refugee experiences.

This session aims to deepen clinicians' cultural sensitivity and enhance their use of experiential, Gestalt-based interventions to support authentic contact and healing

Conference Workshop #45

Daria Bokova

China

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Daria Bokova is a Russian Gestalt therapist and florist living in China since 2013, which gives her a unique perspective on cultural and intercultural dynamics. With over 10 years of experience working with flowers, she uses natural materials as a medium to explore impermanence and present-moment awarenesss. Her practice combines symbolic and creative approaches to relationships and group dynamics, helping participants deepen their awarenesss of both individual and collective processes.

Flowers in the Field: Exploring Contact, Figure–Ground, and Field Dynamics through Flowers

This experiential workshop explores contact, awareness, field dynamics, and impermanence through the medium of flowers. Its theoretical foundation includes the phenomenological approach, figure–ground formation, and field theory. Because flowers embody ongoing change — from bud to bloom to withering — participants experience impermanence directly rather than as an abstract idea. The workshop also resonates with Taoist thought by inviting participants to allow experience to unfold naturally, without imposing interpretation.

In the first stage, each participant selects one flower from a varied selection. They observe it, exploring what it evokes: feelings, bodily sensations, thoughts, or associations. The flower acts as a projective mirror of the current state, facilitating contact with oneself in the here-and-now, including contact with the Id function (immediate, pre-verbal experience). Special attention is given to figure–ground processes: how and why this particular flower becomes a figure against a background of multiple possibilities. Participants are invited to notice what emerges spontaneously and then share their impressions in small groups.

In the second stage, participants combine their flowers into a collective composition and observe how each element affects the whole field: taking space, retreating, connecting, resisting, or supporting. Changes in one element shift perception of the entire composition, allowing participants to experience field dynamics and I–Thou contact as they adjust the arrangement. Throughout, they reflect on their interaction with the composition and the group, linking these processes to everyday relational experience.

Audience: Gestalt practitioners and others interested in symbolic and creative ways of exploring contact and relationships.

Presenter's connection to the topic:

Daria's combined experience as a florist and Gestalt therapist enables her to guide participants in

exploring contact, field dynamics, and impermanence through flowers, engaging directly with change, present-moment awareness, pre-verbal phenomena, and relational processes in a hands-on, embodied way.

Conference Workshop #46 – Open communication session

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Stéphanie Pillon, born in Morocco and based in France, is a Gestalt therapist, organizational coach, and Mental Health First Aid trainer. Her career across international technological transformations exposed her to a central paradox: as systems grow more efficient, human contact often becomes more fragile. Working at the intersection of clinical practice, organizations, and social engagement, she explores how contact can be restored amid acceleration and disconnection, drawing on relational and field perspectives, particularly with uncertainty and difference as fertile ground. Her work with people in exile, alongside a long-standing yoga practice, has deepened her understanding of belonging, presence, and embodiment.

Ariane Hebraud spent over fifteen years as a business leader guiding teams and organizational transformation before realigning her career toward Gestalt therapy. Now a certified Gestalt therapist, she continues to pursue learning, supervision, and personal growth. She supports individuals on personal and professional themes, specializing in borderline personality and trauma, blending structure with authentic connection to meet people where they are. She also develops professional practices for evolving leadership and authored an article on Unfreezing Trauma in Gestalt. Her upcoming Shanghai workshop will explore engaged Gestalt, bridging presence and active connection.

Between Non-Action and Engagement: Reconfiguring Contact in Contemporary Gestalt Practice – Reaching the Other Where They Are

We share a common world, yet our capacity to live together is increasingly strained. Contemporary societies—shaped by acceleration, fragmentation, and virtual interactions—challenge intersubjectivity, emotional regulation, and meaningful contact. Encounters with otherness are often avoided or polarised, contributing to relational fatigue, disconnection, and psychological suffering.

Therapists frequently meet clients with fragile relational capacities, affective dysregulation, agitation, and unrecognised loneliness. Many struggle to engage intersubjectively and appear insufficiently grounded in themselves and their environment.

This invites a re-examination of a key Gestalt assumption: is the therapist's presence always sufficient today? In dialogue with "The Tao of Gestalt," this session explores the tension between non-action (wu wei) and intentional engagement. While Gestalt emphasises organismic self-regulation, current contexts may require actively "reaching the other where they are."

Key questions include: when does engagement support contact, and when does it become intrusive? How can the therapist discern readiness for contact? What are the implications for the therapist in terms

of intensity and balance? This inquiry examines how such shifts may extend or challenge Gestalt therapy's ethos.

Theoretical or Conceptual Basis Grounded in Gestalt principles (contact, awareness, self-regulation) and field theory (Lewin; Robine), this proposal emphasises the co-constructed nature of experience. Relational approaches (Yontef; Jacobs) frame the therapist's role and participation.

It engages Taoist philosophy (wu wei), alongside social theory (Rosa) and trauma studies (van der Kolk; Levine), to contextualize current clinical challenges. Together, these perspectives explore whether the therapist's stance requires reconfiguration in response to contemporary forms of disconnection.

Target Audience: Gestalt therapists and mental health professionals interested in relational practice and contemporary clinical issues.

Our clinical experience highlights deep loneliness and the importance of meeting clients where they are. This stance informs our ongoing inquiry into balancing presence, engagement, and intrusion within the therapeutic relationship.

Conference Workshop #48

Ling Chen

UK

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Ling Chen is a psychosynthesis psychotherapist and therapeutic counsellor based in the United Kingdom. Her work integrates relational, psychodynamic, and psychospiritual perspectives, with a particular interest in how awarenesss, identity, and meaning unfold within the therapeutic relationship.

Originally from Xi'an, one of China's ancient cultural capitals, Ling's journey into psychotherapy has been shaped by a deep curiosity about the human search for authenticity, wholeness, and inner freedom. Before retraining as a psychotherapist, she spent many years working in finance, an experience that continues to inform her understanding of the psychological and existential tensions that often accompany achievement and contemporary professional life.

Ling's clinical work explores themes of shame, embodiment, identity, and the emergence of personal will, while remaining attentive to the deeper dimensions of human experience. She is particularly interested in how moments of uncertainty and "not knowing" can create space for new awarenesss and integration to emerge.

Alongside her therapeutic practice, Ling writes reflectively about psychotherapy as a meeting place between psychological understanding, lived experience, and the unfolding process of human becoming.

Psychosynthesis and the Tao: Holding the Map, Walking the Mystery

How do we hold psychological understanding while remaining open to the mystery of human becoming? Developed by Roberto Assagioli, psychosynthesis offers a comprehensive view of human consciousness and development. At the heart of its theoretical framework lies the Egg Diagram, a model illustrating different dimensions of human experience and the dynamic relationship between personality and Self. Often described as a psychology of hope, psychosynthesis looks not only to personal history but also human potential, inviting individuals to reorient their lives toward Self.

Within this framework, human experience is understood as extending beyond the familiar realms of body, feelings, and mind. Psychosynthesis situates psychological life within a broader psychospiritual context, acknowledging human longing for meaning, purpose, and deeper connection. Assagioli emphasised the innate impulse toward wholeness and a more authentic experience of Self, recognising the unfolding potential inherent within. As connection with this deeper centre of awareness becomes more integrated, it often expands beyond the personal into a wider sense of relationship and responsibility toward the greater whole.

This presentation brings psychosynthesis into dialogue with Taoist philosophy, exploring the creative

tension between psychological orientation and openness to the unfolding process of life. While psychosynthesis offers conceptual guidance, Taoist wisdom reminds us that transformation cannot be fully controlled or predicted. In therapeutic practice, the practitioner learns to hold both understanding and mystery simultaneously.

The presentation is intended for psychotherapists, counsellors, trainees, and members of the general public interested in personal growth.

My personal connection to this theme arises from my own journey of becoming: growing up in China, later building a career in finance, and eventually turning toward psychotherapy in search of deeper meaning.

A short video piece will accompany the presentation, adding an experiential dimension to the exploration of psychosynthesis and the balance between holding understanding and walking the mystery together.

Conference Workshop #49

Cherisse Southern

USA

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Dr.Cherisse is developmental and general psychology professor for Riverside Community College and San Bernardino Valley College for the past 6 years in Southern California United Stated of America. Dr. Cherisse practices Gestalt therapy along with other modalities in her nonprofit community mental health clinic H.E.A.L.S. Inc where we reduce mental ills and increase healthy feels. Dr. Cherisse has a passion for therapy and teaching where she bridges theory with real life applicable elements so that her participants have the ability to understand how these applications and tools in their everyday lives. Dr. Cherisse enjoys learning, teaching and exchanging knowledge.

Flowing Awareness: Presence, Polarity, and the Tao of Being

This workshop explores the dynamic interplay between structured awareness and natural unfolding through an integration of Gestalt practice and Taoist philosophy. Drawing from the experiential emphasis of Fritz Perls and the non-dual, flow-oriented wisdom of the Tao Te Ching, participants are invited into a direct encounter with present-moment experience.

Rather than prioritising intellectual understanding, the workshop centres embodied awareness, relational presence, and the integration of internal polarities. Participants will engage in guided experiments, dialogical processes, and reflective practices designed to illuminate habitual patterns of control, resistance, and fragmentation.

Through the lens of Gestalt, awareness becomes the vehicle for integration; through the Tao, effort gives way to alignment. Together, these approaches create a paradoxical field in which intentional attention and effortless action coexist. Participants leave with a felt sense of how to move from forcing to allowing, from analysis to presence, and from division to wholeness. Gestalt provides a structured method for contacting experience, while Taoism invites a release of over-structuring. Together, they form a productive paradox: awareness with minimal interference.

This workshop is designed for:

* Therapists, counsellors, and coaches seeking experiential methods

* Facilitators and educators interested in embodied learning

* Individuals engaged in personal growth or self-inquiry

* Leaders exploring presence, adaptability, and non-reactivity

* Anyone curious about integrating psychological and contemplative approaches

No prior knowledge of Gestalt or Taoism is required.

My interest in this work emerges from a recognition that many people oscillate between over-efforting and disengagement—between trying to control experience and feeling disconnected from it. In my own practice and exploration, I've found that Gestalt Therapy offers a powerful pathway into awareness, while Taoism provides a counterbalance that softens striving and invites trust in natural unfolding.

This workshop reflects an ongoing inquiry into how structure and flow, intention and allowing, can coexist.

Conference Workshop #50

Shea Pines

USA

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I am a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist LMFT,LCMFT and the founder of EnSpire Wellness Christian Therapy, serving clients in Maryland and Virginia. My work focuses on helping individuals and couples engage their present experiences with honesty and awarenesss, supporting healing that is both practical and meaningful.

I integrate experiential approaches, iincluding Gestalt therapy, along with mindfulness and cognitive techniques to help clients identify patterns, process unresolved experiences, and strengthen emotional and relational functioning. I have experience working with trauma, life transitions, relationship challenges, and perinatal mental health.

My approach is grounded in the belief that lasting change begins with awarenesss. When desired, I incorporate a faith-integrated perspective, supporting clients in exploring the connection between their emotional and spiritual lives.

I am passionate about creating spaces where individuals can begin with truth—emotionally, mentally, and spiritually—and build healing from that place.

"Where We Are Is Where We Start: A Gestalt Approach to Healing"

This workshop is grounded in the principles of Gestalt therapy, which emphasise present-moment awareness, the integration of emotional, cognitive, and somatic experiences, and the development of personal responsibility. Gestalt theory posits that meaningful change occurs through increased awareness rather than direct attempts to control or eliminate symptoms.

Key concepts informing this workshop include awareness, contact, unfinished business, and authentic expression. Participants are guided to explore their internal experiences in real time, recognising patterns of avoidance, disconnection, or suppression that may interfere with growth.

This approach is further supported by experiential and humanistic frameworks, incorporating mindfulness-based practices and, when appropriate, a faith-integrated perspective that honors the role of spirituality in healing. The workshop prioritizes experiential learning, allowing participants to engage directly with concepts rather than solely through didactic instruction.

Conference Workshop #51

Linda McFalls

Canada

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Linda McFalls, PhD, RSW, is a clinical social worker and facilitator based in Edmonton, Canada, and Director of Touchstone Counselling & Consulting. Her work is grounded in somatic and relational practice, with a focus on how emotion is lived and known through the body, particularly in moments of tension, uncertainty, and transition.

Her doctoral research at the University of Alberta explores emotion as a form of embodied knowing, developing a somatic-to-symbolic (S2S) process in which felt sensation becomes the entry point for awarenesss. By staying with bodily experience, images, metaphors, and impressions begin to emerge, offering a bridge between what is known and not-yet-known. In this movement, meaning is not imposed, but unfolds through attention, allowing shifts in perception, self-understanding, and relational presence.

Linda facilitates experiential sessions that centre present-moment awarenesss, creating space for participants to engage sensation, image, and emerging meaning as pathways to insight, integration, and new possibilities for action.

Entering the Not-Yet-Known: From Sensation to Image in Experiential Practice

In moments of tension, uncertainty, or relational strain, something in experience presses forward before it can be articulated—a tightening in the chest, a sense of pressure, or unease. These moments arise in decision-making or relational complexity, where the body registers what has not yet come into language. This workshop invites participants to turn toward such moments as openings for awareness, working with the movement from sensation toward image as engaging the not-yet-known.

This experiential approach draws from analytical psychology and affective neuroscience and is informed by doctoral research exploring emotion as embodied knowing. The work reflects a somatic-to-symbolic orientation in which felt bodily experience gives rise to image, metaphor, or impression. Participants are guided to pause and remain with present-moment sensation, allowing images to emerge without force or interpretation. These images are engaged symbolically—not as fixed meanings to decode, but as living forms through which bodily experience begins to take shape and become knowable. In this unfolding, meaning is not imposed but allowed to emerge through sustained attention and contact, revealing subtle shifts in perception, relational stance, and possibilities for action.

Rather than seeking to resolve or explain, the practice emphasises staying with what is arising. Through attention to sensation and emerging image, participants may notice new connections, a softening of

positions, and increased capacity for presence. The work resonates with Gestalt principles of awareness and contact and with approaches that value non-forcing and the unfolding of experience.

Designed for clinicians, educators, and practitioners interested in experiential, awarenesss-based work, the workshop includes guided somatic awareness, optional image-making or visualisation, and reflective dialogue. The facilitator brings over 35 years of experience in clinical practice, art/play-based approaches, and leadership, grounding this work in lived practice and ongoing inquiry into emotion, body, and image in processes of change.

Conference Workshop #52

Paula Gilding

Australia

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Paula Gilding is a Gestalt therapist and Accredited Mental Health Social Worker based in Australia, with nearly 30 years of practice in arts-based and Gestalt approaches with children, youth, families and trauma.

She holds three Masters degrees: a Masters in Gestalt Psychotherapy (Clinical) Australia, a Masters in Integrative Arts Psychotherapy (Research) from the Institute for Arts in Therapy and Education, London,UK; and a Master's in Social Work (Professional Qualifying), Australia.

Paula's practice is grounded in phenomenology, somatic awarenesss, existentialism, neuroscience and arts-based contact. She works at the intersection of Gestalt therapy, integrative arts psychotherapy and relational trauma-informed practice, bringing a depth of embodied clinical experience to her work with children, young people and families. Paula has a private practice in Ballina NSW Australia, and she loves her work deeply.

The River Knows: Presence, Body and Creative Field in Gestalt and the Tao

The River Knows: Presence, Body and Creative Field in Gestalt and the Tao

The Tao that can be named is not the eternal Tao. In Gestalt therapy, the field that can be fixed is not the living field. This workshop explores the profound resonance between Gestalt and Taoist principles — specifically how presence, somatic awareness and arts-based contact mirror the Taoist qualities of Wu Wei (non-striving), flow and the wisdom of not-knowing.

Theoretical and Conceptual Basis

The workshop draws on core Gestalt principles — phenomenological inquiry, field theory, the paradoxical theory of change (Beisser), somatic awareness and the primacy of contact — held alongside Taoist concepts of Wu Wei, Tzu-jan (spontaneous arising), emptiness and natural unfolding. These frameworks are not presented as parallel systems but explored experientially as expressions of the same underlying truth: that presence, not technique, is the most powerful therapeutic act. The nervous system is understood as field; creativity as emergence; and relational contact as the site of healing.

Target Audience

This workshop is designed for trainee and qualified Gestalt therapists, practitioners working with children, youth and families, and therapists from other modalities with curiosity about Gestalt. No prior

knowledge of Taoism is required.

The Presenter's Connection

Paula Gilding is a Gestalt therapist whose practice has been shaped by nearly 30 years at the intersection of arts-based therapy, somatic awareness and relational Gestalt. Trained directly with Steve Vinay Gunther and also Brisbane Gestalt, she holds Masters degrees in Gestalt Psychotherapy (Clinical), Integrative Arts Psychotherapy (Research) from the Institute for Arts in Therapy and Education London, and Social Work (Professional Qualifying). Her sustained clinical work with children, youth, families and trauma is the lived ground from which this workshop arises.

Conference Workshop #53

Aliaksandra Buturlina

Belarus

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My name is Aliaksandra Buturlina, and I am from Belarus. I graduated from Belarusian State University with a degree in psychology (2004-2009). During this period, I also began studying Gestalt therapy. I am a certified Gestalt therapist accredited by the Minsk Gestalt Institute (MiGi) and also by the European Association for Gestalt Therapy (EAGT).

My main areas of interest include perinatal psychology, parenting psychology, and women's health. I have conducted childbirth preparation courses and work with women during the transition to motherhood. Additionally, I am interested in developmental crises and identity crises.

I have been living in China with my family for the past three years. I am eager to build professional connections and actively engage in the professional community.

Life Lines: Creative Integration of Life Path Events

A life path reflects a person's development and experience of living.

When faced with significant life events, we respond holistically, influenced by their emotions (the id function) and knowledge of ourselves (the personality function). Such events transform both the individual and their environment, leading to significant changes.

As gestalt therapists, we understand that experiences processed in isolation can lead to trauma; without relational support, assimilation is impossible. When we navigate life events with support, these experiences can be integrated into our life story and become part of the Self. J. Francesetti states: "Trauma is an incomplete experience due to a lack of relational support." Our role is to facilitate connectivity and continuity, offering a relational home for what cannot yet be expressed.

Integrating these events into one's life helps develop a sense of connectedness and supports the reorganization of the Self.

The workshop is intended for psychologists and Gestalt therapists who work with crises, life transitions, and trauma, as well as those interested in exploring their life journey from a holistic perspective.

For me, one such event was moving to China three years ago. It was a profound change — a different language, climate, culture, food, and way of life. I also needed to help my children adapt. My life before moving to China began to feel like a separate life.

I experienced similar feelings during other significant transitions, like the birth of my first son. Life

changed significantly, and so did I.

Recognising myself during these phases and acknowledging the changes was essential. Support from family, friends, and my professional community was vital in this journey.

Conference Workshop #54

Aliss Wang

USA

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Aliss Wang, M.A., LMFT, PATP, ELI-MP is a licensed marriage and family therapist and certified psychedelic-assisted therapy provider based in California, with practices in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles and telehealth throughout California. Her work integrates relational presence, psychological depth, and embodied awarenesss through Gestalt Therapy, the Tamura Method, and ketamine-assisted psychotherapy. She works with individuals and couples whose lives carry responsibility, visibility, or significant transition — offering care that is grounded, steady, and oriented toward integration, supporting clarity that can be lived and meaningful movement over time.

In addition to private practice, Aliss serves as a trainer and facilitator in psychedelics assisted psychotherapy and has contributed to psilocybin clinical studies with UCSF's Translational Psychedelics Research Program, psychedelics assisted therapy certification program with Integrative Psychiatry Institute, MDMA clinical studies with Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, and TBI with the Love Your Brain Foundation. She currently serves on the board of the Bay Area Gestalt Institute. Earlier work in technology, media, and harm-reduction first-response at large-scale events informs an approach marked by clarity, discernment, and attunement under pressure.

Wu Wei and the Wounded Child: Where Gestalt, the Dao, and Psychedelic Therapy Meet

This workshop explores the clinical integration of four interconnected frameworks for working with developmental trauma and the wounded child in adult clients: Daoist philosophy (the Dao and Wu Wei), Gestalt therapy, and somatic therapy through the Tamura Method, with applications drawn from psychedelic-assisted therapy clinical research.

Workshop content includes:

An exploration of therapeutic presence and non-directive, non-forcing intervention

Gestalt theory of contact, field, and the contact cycle as a framework for understanding how developmental trauma creates unfinished situations in adult clients, as it relates to the Dao and Wu Wei as clinical principles

The Tamura Method of hands-on somatic attunement therapy as an embodied bridge for clients unable to access verbal or empty chair work, includes a fishbowl demonstration.

The role of the therapist as compassionate intermediary, meeting the wounded child through safe, non-agenda, attuned contact.

Clinical applications from Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy education and practice, and Psilocybin Assisted Psychotherapy research at UCSF's Translational Psychedelic Research Program, illustrates how supportive psychedelic assisted therapy mirrors Wu Wei: Minimal input, relational safety, and trust in the client's authentic inner direction.

Experiential practices on therapist and practitioner presence, contact, and withdrawal in the field.

Theoretical basis: Daoist philosophy, Wu Wei, Gestalt contact cycle and field theory, Tamura Method somatic therapy, psychedelics assisted therapy frameworks.

Target audience: Licensed therapists, somatic practitioners, and mental health clinicians at all levels.

Presenter's connection: The presenter is a head injury and trauma survivor whose recovery came through lived experiences in the fields practiced. Born in Taiwan with lineage roots in Jiangsu and Anhui, China, lived in the US, Taiwan, and UK, trained at California Institute of Integral Studies, Integrative Psychiatry Institute, Institute of Professional Excellence in Coaching, and the Tamura Method. Aliss is a current psilocybin researcher at UCSF and practices as LMFT at the intersection of these frameworks.

Conference Workshop #55

Aditi Shah

USA

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Aditi Shah M.A., AMFT is an emotional deep diver who is dedicated to exploring the psyche through all its presentations, especially how it expresses itself through the body. Her movement explorations are inspired by her yoga practice, Open Floor dance practice and extensive training in Indian Classical dance combined with her therapy training at the Process Therapy Institute. Aditi specializes in creating experiential containers where participants can somatically track, express, and integrate their present-moment awarenesss.

Moving into the Now: Playing with Somatic Gestalts

While Gestalt therapy is theoretically rooted in the immediate, embodied here-and-now, contemporary clinical practice often falls back into over-intellectualized "talking about" experience. Clients frequently present as profoundly fragmented, remaining disconnected from the somatic field where their emotional blocks live. This experiential workshop addresses that critical clinical gap, moving beyond intellectual dialogue to actively process experience through the body.

Integrating somatic resources from Open Floor movement with core Gestalt principles, this session offers a direct, embodied exploration of the present moment. Participants will practice tuning into movement impulses as they organically emerge into figure-ground awareness. By moving with what is foreground in the body, we support unfinished gestalts in reaching natural completion—freeing up vital energy to make fuller, more creative contact at the relational boundary.

The session is lightly guided, weaving together evocative music and a minimalist structure to offer a safe anchor and a spacious container for individual and collective processes to unfold. Moving out of the analytical ego and into direct alignment with the emergent "now," attendees will discover an embodied roadmap to transition from rigid mental strategies to fluid, present-moment responsiveness.

As a therapist and movement facilitator, I have personally witnessed the immense freedom, self-strength, and spontaneity that emerges from this practice. Participants will leave with a heightened capacity for aliveness and embodied presence.

This workshop is suitable for all conference attendees.

Conference Workshop #56

Annette Coulter

Australia

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Annette M. Coulter is an art psychotherapist, published author and practising artist. She is an accredited supervisor registered with PACFA, and an approved supervisor for ANZACATA. Her work is mainly child, adolescent and family mental health and she has taught on art therapy programmes in Australia and overseas. She helped pioneer art therapy in Australia, Britain and Singapore. Through The Centre for Art Psychotherapy she provides supervision, consultation, and training.

Publications include: The Introductory Guide to Art Therapy, 2014; Art Therapy 'Down Under', 2015; Australia - Family Art Therapy, 2015; Contemporary Art Therapy with Transient Youth, 2012; Couple Art Therapy, 2007.

Interactive Drawing Therapy

Interactive Drawing Therapy (IDT), works in the moment of what the client is saying. Through drawing processes the bigger picture and associations spontaneously reveal themselves. This workshop demonstrates how this technique sits in a Gestalt framework and works with right-brain experiences with left-brain processing of those experiences. This effective drawing technique is unique to New Zealand and Australia and was developed by Russell Withers in the 1990s. IDT can be used across a wide range of situations, client groups and presenting problems and in conjunction with Gestalt Therapy. This practical, versatile modality focuses on client-generated metaphors that help deepen the work through client-centred processes.

Adam Taborsky, Roksana Taborska

Czech Republic, Czech Republic

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Adam Táborský, Ph.D., is a psychologist and psychotherapist specializing in humanistic approaches, particularly Person-Centred and Gestalt Therapy. He works at the Psychiatric Hospital Bohnice's Centre for Crisis Intervention and at the psychosomatic Tulsia Clinic. Adam is the founder of Therapy Among Trees, a project integrating nature and psychotherapy, and author of a book of the same name. He co-leads postgraduate training in Humanistic Ecopsychotherapy, has published on this emerging approach, and serves on the committee of the Czech Association for Psychotherapy.

Roksana Táborská is a psychologist, psychotherapist, and researcher from the Czech Republic working at the National Institute of Mental Health, part of a research team focused on suicide prevention within the Department of Public Mental Health. She also provides psychotherapy in natural outdoor settings and is interested in how nature can become an active therapeutic factor. She is currently pursuing her PhD in psychology at Charles University, focusing on subjective experiences of nature-based therapeutic work, including the perceived benefits and limitations of ecopsychotherapy.

Ecopsychotherapy as Antidote to the Technologized Mode of Relating to the World

Ecopsychotherapy is an emerging approach at the intersection of psychotherapy, ecological awareness, and embodied human experience. In a time of ecological crisis and social fragmentation, it invites renewed reflection on the relationship between inner psychological processes and the natural world. This contribution explores how trainees experience the role of nature during a two-year ecopsychotherapy training program.

The presentation is based on qualitative research with 30 trainees. At the end of each training meeting, participants completed a modified questionnaire focused on significant and helpful events. Thematic analysis identified nine themes: nature as co-therapist, nature as mirror, nature as resource, metaphors, nature as backdrop, bodily experience, spiritual topics, safe place, inspiration for practice, and the bridging of nature and psychotherapy.

Drawing on Gestalt Therapy and the Person-Centred Approach, the presentation situates these findings within a humanistic and relational framework. Both approaches emphasise contact, awareness, embodiment, and the dynamic field between person and environment. From the trainees' perspective, nature appears not only as a setting for therapeutic learning, but as an active participant in reflection, emotional processing, self-awarenesss, and professional identity formation.

The contribution discusses how these findings may support the development of clearer theoretical

foundations for ecopsychotherapy training. It also reflects on ecopsychotherapy as a bridge between self and world, human and more-than-human life, therapeutic presence and ecological responsibility. In the spirit of the Tao of Gestalt, the presentation invites dialogue on how therapists can cultivate openness to nature as a living field of contact, support, difference, and transformation.

Based on our book in Routledge:Ecopsychotherapy on the Rise: Theory Methodology and Vision

Conference Workshop #58

Naoum Liotas

UK

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Naoum Liotas is a Gestalt psychotherapist, Gestalt coach, supervisor and lecturer based in London. He teaches Integrative Psychotherapy at Metanoia Institute, where his work includes relational, embodied and theoretical approaches to psychotherapy training. He also trains supervisors across multiple settings, bringing together clinical, coaching and educational perspectives. Naoum is a Professional Certified Coach with the International Coaching Federation (ICF), an Accredited Member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and holds the European Certificate of Psychotherapy from the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP). He is trained in Gestalt psychotherapy, Gestalt relational coaching, intuitive coaching and relational supervision. His interests include field theory, embodied awarenesss, relational presence, transpersonal process, Jungian thought and the ways in which meaning emerges through dialogue, body, culture, the implicit field and creative experimentation.

From Fertile Void to Meaningful Coincidence: Tao, Synchronicity and the Implicit Field - An inquiry through the I Ching, inner alchemy and the liminal field of change

This workshop explores the subtle territory where Gestalt practice, Taoist sensibility, the I Ching and Jung's concept of synchronicity meet. We will consider how silence, coincidences, bodily atmosphere, symbolic pattern and relational timing become figural in the field before they can be fully spoken.

The conceptual basis draws on the Gestalt fertile void, figure/ground formation, field theory and the contact boundary, placed in dialogue with Taoist non-forcing, the I Ching as a symbolic language of change, Jung's understanding of synchronicity and The Secret of the Golden Flower as an East to West transmission of inner alchemy. The workshop also opens a cross-cultural inquiry: how does a therapy shaped by Western existential and phenomenological assumptions about awareness, choice, authenticity and embodied contact meet Chinese spiritual and philosophical sensibilities of harmony, relational embeddedness, cultivation and alignment with the wider order of things?

My connection to this topic arises from my work as a Gestalt psychotherapist, coach, supervisor and lecturer teaching theories of change, transpersonal psychotherapy, Jungian thought, psychosynthesis and embodied relational practice. I am interested in how the unspeakable becomes present in the implicit field, and how practitioners can remain with mystery without reducing it to Western psychological explanation or romanticising it as spiritual certainty.

The workshop is intended for Gestalt therapists, psychotherapists, coaches, supervisors, educators and trainees interested in spirituality, field process, symbolism and cross-cultural dialogue. It will include theoretical input, reflective dialogue and experiential inquiry.

Conference Workshop #59

Gugulethu Zondo

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Gugu Zondo is a Clinical Psychologist based in South Africa, Durban. Her clinical approach is grounded in empathy, contextual understanding, and research-informed practice. She holds a Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology, with research focused on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and their long-term cognitive, emotional, and psychological impact — an area that remains central to her professional interests.

Her research was among the early studies exploring the integration of mental health support into youth development programmes, contributing to broader conversations around enhancing the lives and wellbeing of children and young people. In addition to her Master's degree, She holds an Honours degree in Development Studies, an Honours degree in Psychology, a Bachelpr's degree in Psychology, a Diploma in Youth Development, as well as National certificates in Facilitation, Coaching and Mentoring.

Prior to qualifying as a Clinical Psychologist, Gugu accumulated over six years of experience in the mental health field across the public healthcare sector, non-governmental organisations, and community-based initiatives. Her academic and professional experiences have shaped her holistic understanding of human behaviour, relational healing, and emotional resilience.

I See You in the Here and Now, and in the Greater Context You Exist In: Gestalt Therapy Through an African Psychological Lens

Gestalt therapy is an existential, phenomenological, and process-oriented therapeutic approach grounded in the understanding that individuals cannot be separated from their environments. The concept of the "here and now" requires therapists to understand individuals within the context of their relationships, communities, and lived realities. Similarly, African Psychology and community psychology reject fragmented understandings of human beings and instead emphasise wholeness, interconnectedness, relational existence, and contextual understanding.

This presentation explores the relationship between Gestalt therapy and African Psychology, arguing that African worldviews extend Gestalt principles beyond perception and relational systems into spirituality, ancestry, history, collective identity, and community life. Drawing from African psychological ideologies, the presentation examines how Gestalt therapy can serve as a meaningful therapeutic framework when working within African contexts, particularly through its emphasis on awareness, field theory, contact, and holistic understanding of the person.

The presentation is aimed at psychology professionals, psychotherapists, students, and practitioners from related disciplines who are interested in African Psychology, Gestalt therapy, and contextual

approaches to mental health.

My connection to this topic emerges from my training during my Master's degree in Clinical Psychology, where I was trained within systems theory as a meta-theoretical framework encompassing multiple therapeutic modalities. This training shaped my understanding of individuals as inseparable from their relational and social fields. Through both training and clinical experience, I have increasingly come to understand that a person cannot be separated from community, ancestry, history, and collective humanity.

Conference Workshop #60

Caroline Moon

Australia

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Caroline Moon is a gestalt psychotherapist in private practice in Sydney. She works with complex trauma and has a particular interest in ethical boundary violations in therapy. Prior to training as a psychotherapist, she practised as a barrister, iincluding in matters involving ethical boundary violations by therapists.

Her therapeutic approach is relational, somatic, embodied and experiential drawing on her gestalt training, psychodrama, internal family systems, family constellations and EMDR.

She is particularly interested in the intersection between psychotherapy, neuroscience and spirituality.

Caroline's clinical work emphasises presence, emotional honesty, embodiment, and relational depth, while remaining grounded in ethical awarenesss.

Between Authenticity and Ethics: An Experiential Exploration of Intimacy, Eros and Relational Shadow

Relational Gestalt invites depth, encounter, vulnerability and authentic human connection. Yet many therapists receive little experiential training in how to recognise and work with the powerful relational forces that can emerge in intimate therapeutic fields: attraction, longing, idealisation, rescue fantasies, shame, secrecy, dependency, spiritualisation and eros.

This experiential workshop invites participants into a deeper embodied exploration of the living dilemma at the heart of relational practice: how much intimacy can we tolerate while remaining grounded, differentiated and ethically responsible?

Using Gestalt experiments, psychodramatic processes, relational inquiry and polarity work, participants will explore the tensions between authenticity and ethics, intimacy and asymmetry, freedom and responsibility, longing and restraint. Particular attention will be given to the process of mythologisation — the human tendency to experience intensely charged relationships as uniquely destined, transformative or spiritually exceptional.

The workshop aims neither to moralise nor romanticise these dynamics, but to create a reflective experiential space in which therapists can encounter their own relational vulnerabilities with greater honesty, compassion and awareness.

This workshop is intended for therapists, trainees and supervisors interested in relational practice, ethics, embodiment and the shadow aspects of intimacy within therapeutic work.

My connection to this topic is personal and professional. I have lived the experience of being a client in a therapeutic relationship where boundaries were crossed, I have practised as a barrister in the area of ethical boundary violations and I am now a practising psychotherapist.

Conference Workshop #61 – Theoretically-oriented

Irina Chekhova

Russia

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Irina Chekhova - psychologist, physiologist, Gestalt therapist, supervisor, and trainer of educational programs.

Irina Chekhova has been working in the Gestalt approach for many years and has consistently explored its methodological foundations. In recent years, her professional interest has increasingly focused on self theory and its contemporary interpretations within clinical practice and in dialogue with psychoanalytic traditions.

Field, Self, Contact, and Relationship: A Contemporary Map of Dialogue Between Gestalt Therapy and Psychoanalysis

What unites Gestalt therapy and contemporary psychoanalytic approaches today? Why have the concepts of field, relationship, and shared experience become central across different psychotherapeutic traditions at the same time?

This presentation is devoted to a comparative exploration of ideas from Gestalt therapy, intersubjective psychoanalysis, relational psychoanalysis, and psychoanalytic field theory. Through examining key concepts - self, contact, relationality, presence, field, and unconscious interaction - participants will be able to trace the gradual shift in the very way we understand the person and the therapeutic process.

We will discuss the aims of therapy and the specific nature of therapeutic relationships in psychoanalytic approaches and Gestalt therapy:

what constitutes the goal of therapy;

what takes place between people before interpretations and words appear;

how the role of the therapist is changing in contemporary psychotherapy.

The presentation is aimed not only at theoretical comparison, but also at identifying living points of intersection between these approaches. Participants will be invited to consider how the understanding of psychotherapy is evolving - from a model of observing the psyche to a model of co-existence and co-creation of experience.

Viktoria Spitsa

Russia

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Victoria Spitsa is a crisis psychologist, Gestalt therapist, supervisor, and lecturer. Specializations:

"Methodology of Teaching Gestalt Therapy,"

"Working with Traumatic Experiences and Developmental Crises in Gestalt Therapy,"

"Working with Gender Identity in Gestalt Therapy,"

"Organizational Consulting in the Gestalt Approach,"

"The Gestalt Approach in Working with Children,"

"Gestalt Therapy in Family Work,"

"An Integrative Approach to Sexual Dysfunctions in Men and Women,"

"Working with Sexuality and Sexual Issues in Psychotherapy and Psychological Counseling,"

and "Clinical Hypnosis Based on Neuroscience."

She leads training programs for psychologists in the fields of Gestalt therapy and sexology.

Pleasure as an Experience of Freedom

Freedom is often sought outside ourselves — in circumstances, permissions, or ideologies. Yet there is a space where it can be experienced directly: our body and its capacity to feel.

Today, our gaze is increasingly directed toward screens: we scroll through profiles, consume images, and replace living presence with digital interaction. In this context, encountering a real, imperfect Other becomes both rare and deeply valuable. And the ability to experience pleasure turns into an act of inner freedom — a way of remaining alive, sensitive, and connected.

In this lecture, I will share reflections and professional experience — my own and that of colleagues — gathered through therapeutic practice and educational Gestalt projects.

We will explore:

— eros as a life force, and why the contemporary era is increasingly described as experiencing "the agony of eros"

— what happens to our experience of contact when, instead of the Other, we increasingly interact with

technology and artificial intelligence

— how pleasure, joy, and embodiment can restore contact with oneself

— what supports us, as practising therapists, in conditions of chronic stress and instability

— how to create spaces in which life, sensitivity, and human presence remain possible

This lecture is an invitation to explore pleasure not as a side effect, but as a profound resource of freedom and a way of being in contact with oneself and the world.

Conference Workshop #63

Joy Chen

China

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ICF Certified MCC

EMCC Certified Coaching Supervisor

Leadership & Team Development Coach

Gestalt Therapist

Senior Mindfulness Trainer

MBA Gothenburg University, Sweden

- Internal Coach（2014 - 2019）

IKEA China Coaching Leadership & Team Development Program Manager 2014 - 2019. Equipped 400+ IKEA managers with coaching and team development capabilities, developed coaching culture at IKEA China.

- Independent Professional Coach（2019 till now）

Support leadership development for senior executives and high-potential talents

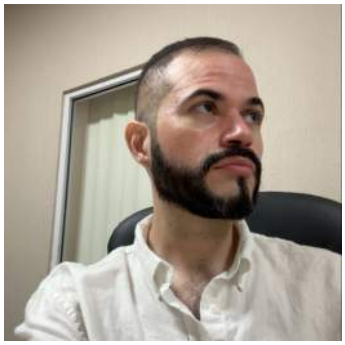
Clients industries cover retail, internet, media, manufacturing, finance, like IKEA, INGKA CHINA, HSBC Asia Pacific, BAT Asia, UBAL, Ottobock, Chinaccte

A natural integration experience of Gestalt and Coaching/Supervision

Through interactive workshop, coaches are supported in developing a more present and deeper awareness and reflection on coaching issues using a gestalt approach.

The process includes embodied experiences of the present moment, the relationship between "I" and "you," fixed figures, and experimental experiences.

Conference Workshop #64



Isaías Plascencia

Mexico

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Isaías Plascencia (he/him) is a Mexican psychologist, Gestalt therapist, thanatologist, and university professor. Born and raised in Tijuana, on the Mexico–United States border, his work has been shaped by the experience of living within a cross-cultural field.

His professional formation integrates several Gestalt traditions, iincluding the Mexican Gestalt Therapy School (IHPG, INTEGRO), the Spanish school (CTP), the Italian school (IHCC), and relational Gestalt therapy (PGI).

With 15 years of clinical practice and 9 years of experience as a group facilitator and university professor, his work focuses on the relational field, the co-construction of therapeutic processes, and the use of art as a fundamental resource in psychotherapy.

His clinical work has been supervised by Margherita Spagnuolo Lobb.

Between Closeness and Distance: A Gestalt Perspective on Borderline Experience

Borderline experience is often described in clinical literature through diagnostic frameworks that emphasise instability or pathology located within the individual. While these perspectives may offer useful classifications, they can obscure the relational processes through which borderline suffering emerges and is lived in contact. Gestalt therapy offers a different lens by understanding psychological experience as unfolding within the organism–environment field and the dynamics of contact.

This workshop presents an example of clinical work from a Gestalt perspective, focusing on the relational movement that often characterises borderline experience: the oscillation between closeness and distance within the therapeutic relationship. Through the presentation of a clinical case from the presenter's practice, participants will explore the therapeutic process of working with borderline experience, including movements of approaching and withdrawing, intensifying and regulating contact, and the ways therapist and client co-create new relational possibilities.

The conceptual basis of this workshop draws primarily from contemporary Gestalt perspectives on borderline experience, particularly the work of Margherita Spagnuolo Lobb and Gestalt field theory, along with contributions from Gianni Francesetti and other Gestalt clinicians working with personality processes.

The presenter's connection to this topic is rooted in early clinical experience working in crisis intervention in a hospital emergency department. One of his first patients was a young woman

presenting with borderline dynamics, an encounter that became a turning point and inspired a lasting clinical interest in working with borderline experience in Gestalt psychotherapy.

This workshop is intended for psychotherapists, Gestalt therapists, and mental health professionals who work with borderline processes. It invites participants to reflect on relational dynamics of closeness and distance in therapy and explore how presence, awareness, and sensitivity to the therapeutic field can support grounded ways of accompanying borderline experience.

Conference Workshop #65 – Research

Tracy Joy

Canada

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Dr. Tracy Joy is a clinical counsellor and PTSD specialist based in Vancouver since 2008. She recently completed her doctoral research examining observable physiological markers associated with traumatic and positive memory recall through theory-building qualitative methodologies and is currently completing internship training. Her broader interests include Gestalt-informed trauma work, neuropsychology, embodied awarenesss, and innovative theoretical models of memory and human experience.

Revisiting Richard Semon: Toward a Biological Theory of Traumatic Memory

Traumatic memory remains central to the conceptualisation and treatment of PTSD, yet dominant models have largely emphasised associative and behavioural frameworks of memory. This presentation revisits traumatic memory from a biological and embodied perspective, drawing on Gestalt theory and Richard Semon's mnemic theory (1905/1921) to develop an emerging theoretical framework of embodied memory processes.

The seminar explores memory as an organismic, biologically mediated phenomenon and proposes that traumatic and non-traumatic memory may be differentiated through observable embodied and phenomenological markers. Within this framework, attention is given to physiological and expressive indicators that may accompany different modes of memory recall, with implications for clinical observation and conceptualisation of therapeutic change.

The presentation will contrast live phenomenological observation of positive memory recall with pre-recorded observational material of traumatic memory responses. This comparative approach is used to explore emerging patterns within a Gestalt-informed, theory-building methodology.

Conference Workshop #66 – Theoretically-oriented

Stanislav Kochetkov

Russia

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Stanislav Kochetkov is a gestalt therapist working at the meeting point of two fields. By his first training he is an engineer of computing systems and large language models, and was part of the team that built AI solutions at Sberbank. By his second training he is a practising psychotherapist and gestalt trainer at the International Institute of Gestalt Analysis and Supervision (MIGAS) — the only EAGT-accredited gestalt institute in Russia. He maintains a private practice, leads training groups, and supervises.

His professional focus is the meeting point of two transformations: how AI technology actually develops, and how the human psyche actually changes under it. He works with this double perspective both in clinical practice and in public teaching.

In February 2026 he gave a public lecture on AGI and psychology in Kaliningrad. For Shanghai this work has been substantially reworked. He does not claim expertise in the Taoist tradition — he approaches it as a researcher. He lives and works in Russia.

An Existential Given Called AGI. Communism Wins — and That Is the Gestalt Therapist's Problem

By 2030–2033, by reasonable engineering estimates, AGI will arrive — a system able to perform most economically valuable tasks better than the average human. And then a question returns that was deemed utopian for two hundred years: what becomes of a person when work turns from necessity into choice? When capital, as a condition of survival, is no longer needed? When the only remaining reason to do something for another is love — in the densest, least sentimental sense of the word?

Marx predicted this. If the forecasts hold, within a decade the prediction acquires a material base.

I want to explore with the room what this means for the psyche and for our profession. I speak not as one who knows the answer, but as one who asks the questions and invites the search.

Three lines of inquiry.

First. The human being's creative adjustment to a world where scarcity disappears — of answer, of help, of information, of emotional presence. Our relationship to error, to helplessness, to the pause, to the non-instant reply changes. The very ground on which a person has answered "what am I for" begins to move.

Second. What this asks of the gestalt therapist. The relational model meets an interlocutor with no body and no "no". Classical mastery is built over years through the very helplessness and error that AI promises to cancel for the client. What in our contact remains untransferable — and is it not time to

rediscover it?

Third. I turn to the place hosting this conference. China is the only civilisation where the communist idea met the Taoist tradition not on paper. Wu wei, emptiness, non-doing — what the new technology displaces from human life. Perhaps this meeting holds an answer. I have come to look for it.

Conference Workshop #67

Lucia Berdondini, Valentina Fortunati Barlacchi

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Dr. Lucia Berdondini is an Associate Professor in Psychology at the University of East London, a Gestalt therapist, researcher, and trainer with expertise in psychosocial intervention, intercultural counselling, trauma, grief, and loss, and the mental wellbeing of humanitarian workers and communities affected by conflict and displacement. Her work integrates Gestalt therapy, existential and relational approaches, and community-based psychosocial practice in humanitarian and intercultural contexts, and she has extensive experience training and supervising professionals working with refugees, displaced populations, and communities affected by war and collective trauma.

Valentina Fortunati Barlacchi is Director of the Istituto Gestalt Firenze in Italy, a Gestalt therapist, trainer, and facilitator interested in embodied relational processes, voice work, and creative approaches to connection and healing. Her work integrates Gestalt therapy with experiential and expressive practices, exploring voice, presence, listening, and non-verbal communication in relational and group settings, with experience training and delivering psychosocial interventions in intercultural contexts. She is especially interested in creating relational spaces that foster awareness, dialogue, resilience, and collective meaning-making, emphasizing the embodied and aesthetic dimensions of Gestalt practice and transformation through creativity and authentic contact.

Creating Healing Spaces: Metaphor, Voice and Collective Resilience in Gestalt Practice

This experiential workshop explores how metaphor, voice and relational presence can contribute to the creation of healing spaces in contexts of collective suffering, uncertainty and fragmentation. Grounded in Gestalt field theory, relational and existential approaches, and informed by psychosocial work in humanitarian and intercultural settings, the workshop invites participants to explore how painful or overwhelming experiences may be transformed through symbolic storytelling, embodied listening and collective witnessing.

Within Gestalt therapy, healing emerges not only through verbal insight but also through awareness, contact and the co-creation of meaning within the relational field. The workshop draws particularly on Gestalt concepts of field process, creative adjustment, embodied awareness and the aesthetic dimension of experience. Metaphor and symbolic narration are approached as ways of giving form to experiences that may otherwise feel too fragmented, painful or complex to express directly. Voice work and relational resonance are integrated as embodied and non-verbal dimensions of contact, presence and emotional attunement.

Participants will be invited into experiential exercises involving grounding, voice, metaphorical storytelling, reflective dialogue and group resonance. No previous experience with voice work or performance is required.

This workshop is intended for Gestalt therapists, counsellors, trainers, group facilitators and professionals interested in psychosocial, intercultural and community-based practices.

Our connection to this topic emerges from our shared experience working in Gestalt training and psychosocial contexts, including work with communities affected by displacement, social rupture and collective trauma. We are interested in how relational and creative practices may support resilience, dignity, meaning-making and human connection beyond the traditional therapeutic setting.

Conference Workshop #68

Chen Xiao Qing

China

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A psychological counsellor with over 12 years of study and practice, iincluding completion of the full-level training programme of the Sino-Australian Gestalt Association (eight years). Has engaged in sustained interpersonal process group experience, personal therapy, individual counselling, and facilitation of parent growth groups. Current orientation integrates Gestalt therapy with somatic healing and hypnosis. Five years ago, following a personal traumatic loss, she began exploring and practising the healing of traumatic grief from a Gestalt perspective.

Taoism is natural, and the complete form is sad: the way to integrate unfinished matters in the empty chair dialogue

This experiential workshop is rooted in Gestalt core concepts: unfinished business, contact cycle, and present-centered awareness. Aligned with the conference theme Gestalt and the Tao, it integrates Eastern natural wisdom with Gestalt practice to work with traumatic grief, unresolved loss, lingering regret, and suspended emotions.

Based on eight years of advanced Gestalt training, clinical practice, and embodied life experience, the facilitator offers a gentle, safe, non-abreaction group process. Through the empty-chair dialogue and embodied writing exercises, participants can gently recognize, contain, and integrate unfinished grief, release inner resistance, and restore wholeness in the present moment.

Participants will learn controllable, ethically sound group interventions for grief work that can be applied in professional helping settings and self-healing practice.

Keywords: Gestalt therapy, unfinished business, grief healing, empty chair technique, Tao of nature

Conference Workshop #69

Irina Bondarenko

Russia

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I trained in Gestalt at the Moscow Institute of Gestalt and Psychodrama, at GATLA, and in various international Gestalt programs. I have completed specializations in family therapy, group work, personality disorders, sexual relationships, and supervision.

I have been working with clients since 2009 and training Gestalt therapists for over 10 years. I am a member of the Association of Russian-Speaking Gestalt Institutes and Therapists.

Around 80% of my clients are women — in both individual and group work. I integrate a feminist lens alongside Gestalt principles. Over the past six years I have witnessed how collective upheavals shape people and transform the way they show up in therapy — deepening my interest in how the external world enters the therapy room.

What captivates me about Gestalt is its capacity to work across different cultures and with vastly different people. I believe sincerity, and the honest acknowledgment of both our privileges and our limitations, lie at the heart of genuine therapeutic work.

Context Matters: How History and Culture Live in the Body and Experience of Women

Every woman comes to therapy with a story — but not only her own. Behind her symptoms, bodily patterns, and ways of relating lie layers of cultural prescriptions: what it means to be a woman in her family, in her society, in her body.

This masterclass explores how cultural and family context shapes women's experience — often long before a woman has words for her own needs and desires. We will examine how the injunctions to "be the right kind of woman" become embedded in the body, in one's relationship to desire and sexuality, and in the capacity to say "I want" and "I need."

Special attention will be given to the moment of returning to oneself: when a woman begins to hear her authentic needs, she often encounters anxiety, shame, and social pressure that read this authenticity as "something wrong." A therapist working with women's experience will inevitably meet this dynamic in the therapeutic field.

Eria Chourdakis

Greece

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Eria Chourdakis, is a Neuroscientist and Psychotherapist, holding an MSc in Applied Neuroscience from King's College London. Eria worked for UK Government and earned a student fellowship in the Institute of Neurosciences and Medicine at Forschungszentrum Julich, where she worked on Cognition. She completed a four-year training as a Gestalt psychotherapist and works as a psychotherapist at her own private practice in Athens, Greece.

As a “survivor” Eria works with any type of addictive behaviour, trauma, shame, guilt and their connection and relation in the formation of Being, Personality and interaction with others. She sees addiction not only as a dependency from illicit substances; to her addiction is part of daily life and refers to habits, relationships, patterns that are compulsively and excessively repeated on a day-to-day basis. Her focus is on the individual aiming to create a safe environment to build an authentic relationship and alliance to work towards self-growth and strengthen.

Dog-assisted Gestalt psychotherapy to promote sustained abstinence and recovery in opioid use disorder with comorbid depression: a research proposal

Opioid overdose death rates remain a critical public health concern in the USA and Europe. In 2023, 107,543 drug-related overdose deaths occurred in the USA, and the UK recorded 5,565 such deaths in 2024, marking the highest figures since 1993. Notably, the risk of fatal overdose is highest within the 30 days following detoxification, due to reduced opioid tolerance. Approximately 47% of individuals with opioid use disorder (OUD) also suffer from depression, a comorbidity that complicates recovery and increases relapse risk.

This paper presents a novel research proposal, which investigates in a randomized, triple-blind controlled clinical trial, the efficacy of dog-assisted Gestalt psychotherapy in promoting sustained abstinence and recovery among individuals with OUD and comorbid depression.

Gestalt psychotherapy, a holistic and experiential approach emphasising present-moment awareness, grounded in field theory and the phenomenological "I-Thou" framework, is combined with the canine presence as a relational anchor in the "here-and-now," fostering emotional awareness and organismic self-regulation.

This study hypothesizes that dog-assisted Gestalt psychotherapy promotes restoration of frontostriatal and limbic neural reward circuits, thereby reducing depressive symptoms and substance cravings.

To test our hypothesis we use comprehensive multi-modal methodology—integrating psychometric measures (HAM-D, BDI-II, OCQ) with structural MRI and fMRI cue-reactivity tasks—to track

neurobiological markers of hippocampal-dependent memory circuits and reward processing, which facilitate recovery.

We ultimately discuss, how integrating the experiential self-awareness and relational depth central to Gestalt psychotherapy with the neurobiological and biobehavioural benefits of canine-assisted intervention may provide a novel, multifaceted approach to enhance self-regulation, reduce craving, and foster resilience, offering a viable framework for sustained abstinence and recovery in opioid use disorder.

Conference Workshop #71

Wei Nar

China

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Wei Na previously founded the publication Mind Growth. She is a CAGA-certified Gestalt therapist (PI -0042) with systematic training in classical, relational, and contemporary Gestalt, and has passed the EAGT (European Association for Gestalt Therapy) professional competency assessment. Integrates transpersonal psychology into her practice.

Complete form and spiritual trauma ~ Use complete form to treat spiritual group trauma

Topics include: introjection of spiritual beliefs, philosophy, and dogma; abuse of power; shadow and trauma in spiritual communities. Theoretical frameworks: transpersonal psychology; Gestalt trauma therapy. Target audience: members of spiritual communities, volunteers in public interest organisations, members of spiritual organisations. Personal connection to the topic: she has participated in an extreme mind-control organisation, and is a Gestalt psychotherapist with long-term professional Gestalt training.

Conference Workshop #72 – Open communication session

Lucia Nemaric

Australia

I have been practising Gestalt therapy for 20 years. For the last 14 years I have been a Senior Rapid Response Consultant, working to build trust and rapport across all levels of an organisation.

I have delivered short-term psychological interventions for critical incidents and major organisational change across 70+ organisations. Iincluding the 2021 QLD Rail Westwood train disaster, 2022 Queensland floods and the 2019 Batemans Bay bushfires.

I also work with domestic violence and complex trauma in therapy.

The male as an invisible victim of DFV perpetrated by women.

Challenging the not so hidden narrative driving Domestic Violence Services and the Civil Court system.

Are we enabling female perpetrators in current social and political culture, to be created, celebrated and ultimately framed as empowered.

Conference Workshop #73

Nicoleta Porojanu

UK

office@nicoletaporojanu.com

Nicoleta Porojanu is a Romanian British psychologist, therapist and trauma specialist and has over 20 years of experience in the field of mental health and wellbeing in the clinical, voluntary and private sectors.

Nicoleta's professional identity has been shaped by a variety of roles, from clinical psychologist in a palliative care hospital, to manager of residential and supported living mental health services, and also psychotherapist and counsellor in private practice.

Nicoleta is a survivor of childhood trauma and Triple Negative Breast Cancer and takes great interest in working with trauma, relationships, addiction, depression, anxiety, and various others relational, social, physical and mental health challenges.

Nicoleta's approach is holistic and integrative and in her work she blends a variety of tools and interventions and a variety of disciplines to help trauma survivors in their process of self-discovery, healing and personal growth.

Nicoleta finds it rewarding to share her learnings with the others. She is the host of the Open To Happiness podcast and also the founder of the mental health charity The Significant You, both considered her gift to the humanity.

A Gestalt Approach to Healing Relational Trauma

Relational trauma is highly prevalent and can arise through experiences of abuse, neglect, betrayal, loss, or repeated relational ruptures within family, intimate, social, professional, and institutional relationships. Such experiences often disrupt an individual's sense of safety, trust, emotional regulation, and capacity for healthy attachment, resulting in anxiety, depression, emotional instability, addictive behaviours, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships.

This presentation explores a Gestalt approach to healing relational trauma through the lens of awareness, embodiment, relational contact, and integration. Grounded in the understanding that individuals exist within an interconnected relational field, the presentation considers how unresolved trauma fragments the self and disrupts authentic contact with oneself and others.

Drawing on these Gestalt foundations, the presentation introduces the 7-Step Trauma Healing Model, developed through the author's personal healing journey and informed by extensive practitioner research conducted through thousands of clinical hours in psychology and psychotherapy practice. The

model offers a practical and experiential framework that guides trauma survivors through the processes of understanding the impact of trauma, accepting what cannot be changed, surrendering resistance to painful realities, learning through post-traumatic growth, practising forgiveness towards self and others, healing emotional wounds, and ultimately allowing transformation to emerge from within.

Central to the model is the cultivation of present-moment awareness. Through increasing awareness of triggers, bodily sensations, emotional responses, and relational patterns in the here and now, individuals can begin to process unresolved emotional pain while developing greater nervous system regulation, groundedness, and inner safety. The process also supports the integration of fragmented, conflicting, or denied aspects of the self that often emerge following relational trauma, while encouraging greater self-support, responsibility, and more authentic ways of relating.

Ultimately, this Gestalt-oriented approach aims to restore balance, wholeness, resilience, and the capacity for meaningful and supportive relationships, fostering deeper wellbeing, freedom, and personal transformation.

Conference Workshop #74

Ekaterina Piatashova

Belarus

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We want to present a workshop together (4 colleagues founders of the Gestalt institute in Minsk called DNK Gestalt

Kate Piatashova - Gestalt Therapist, Supervisor Trainer, Leader of Specialisation Gestalt Therapy in working with Money issues, author of the articles

Olga Ilchik - Ph D in Psychology Gestalt Therapist, Supervisor, Trainer, Leader of Specialisation Gestalt Therapy with Families

Vera Kashtalian - Gestalt Therapist, Supervisor Trainer, Leader of Specialisation Gestalt Therapy in Sexual Issues

Lena Koyan - Gestalt Therapist, Supervisor Trainer, Leader of Specialisation Gestalt Therapy in Psychosomatic Disorders

4 ways to look on the therapeutic process in the Gestalt Approach

Filed perspective and the possibility in different dimensions (body, metaphors, emotions and intellectual) help to look on one issue from different point of views

We offer gestalt therapists to tell their issue to each of us in turn and receive 4 feedbacks in 4 ways

Audience - practising gestalt therapists

We supervise a lot - in private and in training groups

Conference Workshop #75

Anna Maria Mishel Yudin

Cyprus

anna.yudin.gestalt@gmail.com

I am a Gestalt therapist, teacher, and supervisor with 16 years of clinical practice (since 2009). Founder and Head of Stemning – Centre for Advanced Training in Gestalt Therapy, Oslo, Norway. An independent trainer at: Kharkiv Institute of Gestalt and Psychodrama (Ukraine), Tbilisi Gestalt Institute (Georgia), Riga Gestalt Institute.

Areas of expertise: relational-field supervision, methodology of Gestalt therapy education, and meta-ethical aspects of Gestalt theory.

Professional Memberships:

- European Association for Gestalt Therapy (EAGT) – accredited supervisor.

- Norwegian Association for Psychotherapy (NFP) – member of Committee for Professional Development.

- Foreningen for gestaltterapeuter (FGT), Kristiansand, Norway.

- Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR).

New York Institute for Gestalt Therapy.

Publications:

Workshop “Guilt and Resentment”

This workshop is grounded in Gestalt therapy theory, with a particular focus on the figure–ground process and the contact cycle of needs. It explores how guilt and resentment emerge when frustration in the contact cycle is not supported and the person becomes stuck in disorientation. In this state, clients often take on excessive responsibility, direct aggression inward or outward, and develop persistent patterns of guilt and resentment as creative adjustments to disorientation rather than to safety.

The target audience includes Gestalt therapists and trainees interested in working with guilt, resentment, and responsibility in a process-oriented and relational way.

My connection to this topic is both professional and personal. I have myself suffered from a strong sense of guilt, and in developing a deeper methodology for working with this experience, it was essential for me to study the cycle of the figure of need more thoroughly and to integrate it with Buddhist practices of presence. This combination has informed my therapeutic approach and forms the basis of the workshop.

Conference Workshop #76 – Theoretically-oriented

Aaron Roldan

USA

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Aaron Roldan, ASW, SUDCC is a therapist and doctoral student specializing in liberation-focused and identity-affirming care for marginalized communities. Their clinical work centres on relational psychodynamic approaches, with training in Gestalt Therapy, IFS, and

psychodynamic group work. They have worked extensively with LGBTQ+ clients, particularly

Transgender and Neurodivergent individuals navigating disordered eating, trauma, and systemic oppression. Their approach integrates clinical theory, social justice, and lived experience to support healing and transformation.

Political Affect as Creative Adjustment: A Gestalt Field Theory Perspective

Within Gestalt therapy experience is understood as emerging at the contact boundary between organism and field. This presentation proposes political affect such as: anger, grief, despair, and moral outrage as a relational phenomenon arising from field conditions and further shaped by power, oppression, and systemic inequity. Rather than viewing affect as resistance or dysregulation, it is reconceptualized as a creative adjustment to an inhospitable social field.

Drawing on Gestalt field theory, phenomenology, and relational practice, the presentation examines how systemic suffering is often privatised within clinical work and metabolised as individual shame when political realities remain unarticulated. In such moments, figure–ground formations become distorted, and the client's adaptive responses are misrecognized as personal failure rather than field-based necessity.

Through theoretical integration and brief clinical illustrations, the paper explores how therapist presence, dialogic engagement, and explicit attention to field conditions can support awareness, restore contact, and transform shame into shared meaning. Re-centring political affect within Gestalt theory challenges notions of therapeutic neutrality and invites a relational ethics that recognises suffering as co-created within social contexts. Political affect, when engaged phenomenologically, becomes not an intrusion into therapy but a vital expression of organismic self-regulation within a complex field.

Conference Workshop #77 – Theoretically-oriented

Leena Petersen

Germany

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Gestalt Psychtherapist (DVG, EAGT), BA (HU Berlin), MA, PhD (Sussex University UK).

Leena is a Gestalt psychotherapist, trainer, trauma therapist and supervisor (DVG, EAGT). She has also studied philosophy, aesthetics and literature. Next to international teaching and training, she works in a private practice and offers trauma therapy support to refugees in an NGO. She has worked in the psychiatric field for several years and was on the editorial board of the German-language journal for Gestalt therapy. Now, she is a member of the clinical theory of Gestalt Therapy group of the German speaking association Gestalt Therapy (DVG). She publishes in German and English and is particularly interested in the impact of field-oriented, situational and relational Gestalt therapy approaches, and related questions of aesthetics and resonance.

'The dark side of the hill': On the Quality of Situational Intuition in Relational Gestalt Therapy

Particularly in recent years, I have observed changes in my Gestalt therapy practice: The clients who come to me increasingly present with structural challenges. They experience multifaceted splitting phenomena extending far beyond conventional psychopathologies. These bring field aspects even more into sharp focus. By splitting phenomena, I mean that—additionally to the assumption that we live in polarities—parts of our experience are faded or dissociated. One cause of this experience lies in the increasing number of crises—social, ecological, and economic.

Fragmentation undermines relational capacities, highlighting the need for intentional pauses that foster relational responsiveness to the field aspects. Drawing on Taoist Yin principles—receptivity, introspection, and the emergence of subtle insights—Gestalt therapy similarly values the spontaneously arising process within an interconnected field. In this framework, therapeutic intuition is not impulsive but arises from the integration of relational awareness and contextual knowledge, informed by experience and aesthetic understanding.

Within this framework, therapeutic intuition is essential in relational Gestalt therapy. Rather than impulsively acting on gut feelings, intuition is understood as the integration of relational and contextual elements, informed by accumulated experience and aesthetic knowledge of the therapeutic field. Pausing the habitual flow of therapy, as advocated in Taoist Yin philosophy, creates space for contemplation and emotional attunement, enabling practitioners to access intuitive insights and uncover hidden aspects of the situation.

Intuition often reveals relational fears and barriers to verbalisation and connection, frequently rooted in

isolation and shame. These concealed elements enrich the complexity of the therapeutic field by highlighting the inherent otherness present in each situation

The dark side of the hill refers to these relational field aspects within the therapeutic situation which – if we listen and allow ourselves to pause in the present moment – may surface and reveal complex relational elements of the situation.

Conference Workshop #78 – Theoretically-oriented

Catherine Silver

USA

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Catherine Silver is a licensed professional counsellor and Gestalt-informed clinician whose work focuses on authenticity, contact, and relational depth in contemporary therapeutic practice. She holds graduate training in mental health counseling, music, and strategic marketing & communication, and brings an interdisciplinary lens to questions of ethics, visibility, and professional identity in psychotherapy.

Catherine's clinical work is grounded in phenomenological inquiry, dialogic presence, and responsibility within relationship. She is particularly interested in how inherited training norms, institutional culture, and power dynamics shape how therapists are taught to show up—or disappear—in the therapy room. Her work examines the tension between ethical practice and emotional rigidity, and the ways therapists' own constriction can interrupt contact, evoke defensiveness, and limit aliveness in the therapeutic field.

Catherine writes and speaks from lived clinical experience and is committed to developing therapeutic practices that are congruent, culturally responsive, and ethically grounded without sacrificing humanity. Her work invites clinicians to re-examine professionalism not as invisibility, but as presence, discernment, and accountability in relationship.

Stop Being So Fucking Weird: Authenticity, Contact, and Ethics in Modern Therapy

Contemporary psychotherapy has increasingly confused ethical boundaries with emotional rigidity, resulting in clinical practices that interrupt contact rather than protect it. While Gestalt therapy was founded on principles of contact, congruence, dialogic relationship, and aliveness, many therapists continue to be trained within professional norms that prioritise invisibility, affective restraint, and excessive self-monitoring. In a visible, relational, and culturally shifting world, these inherited norms can weaken the therapeutic field and undermine relational depth.

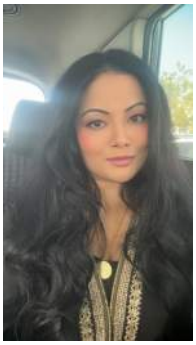
Grounded in Gestalt theory, phenomenological practice, and field theory, this presentation examines how rigid models of professionalism, shaped by anxiety, control, institutional tradition, and power dynamics, can contribute to emotional hiding rather than ethical responsibility. Drawing from lived clinical experience, the talk differentiates clearly between ethical boundaries and emotional withdrawal, authenticity and over-disclosure, responsibility and rigidity. Particular attention is given to how therapists' constriction around language, affect, and ordinary humanity can shape the relational field and evoke client defensiveness that is then misinterpreted as resistance.

The presentation is intended for practising therapists, supervisors, educators, and trainees interested in deepening their understanding of contact, congruence, and ethics in contemporary Gestalt practice. In

keeping with Gestalt's experiential tradition, the session incorporates brief moments of present-moment awareness to track participants' embodied responses as they arise.

It concludes by reframing ethical practice not as therapist invisibility, but as congruence, discernment, and accountability within relationship, inviting clinicians to critically reflect on how they are trained to show up, and who that way of being ultimately serves

Conference Workshop #79



Sabina Rokib

UK

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Dr Sabina Rokib, CPsychol, MBACP is a British South Asian psychologist and psychotherapist specialising in culturally responsive, trauma-informed and integrative practice. Born and raised in the United Kingdom to parents who migrated from Bangladesh, her personal and professional journey has shaped a deep commitment to exploring how culture, identity, and systemic factors influence psychological wellbeing.

Dr Rokib works across clinical, therapeutic, and community settings, supporting individuals experiencing trauma, anxiety, depression, identity-related distress, and intergenerational patterns. She has extensive experience working with culturally diverse populations and marginalised communities, with a particular interest in bridging Western psychological models with cultural wisdom and lived experience.

Her work centres on expanding traditional understandings of mental health, challenging pathologising frameworks, and advocating for more inclusive, humane, and context-aware approaches to healing. Dr Rokib is also an author and speaker, passionate about making psychological knowledge accessible beyond clinical spaces and contributing to the future development of culturally informed psychotherapy.

Psychology and Culture

Psychology, Culture, and the Field: A Gestalt Perspective in Dialogue with the Tao

Mainstream psychological theory has largely emerged from Western, individualistic frameworks that prioritise autonomy and intrapsychic explanation. While valuable, these models often overlook the cultural, relational, and systemic fields in which human experience unfolds. Drawing on integrative, trauma-informed, and decolonizing perspectives, this presentation explores how culture shapes identity, attachment, emotional expression, and meaning-making within the therapeutic encounter.

Grounded in Gestalt principles of phenomenology, field theory, and relational presence, the session invites an expanded understanding of distress as emerging within a dynamic field rather than residing solely within the individual. In dialogue with the conference theme “Gestalt and the Tao,” the presentation reflects on how the Tao’s emphasis on interconnectedness, flow, and balance resonates with Gestalt’s relational and holistic view of the person-in-context. Both perspectives challenge rigid categorisation and instead honour process, polarity, and the unfolding nature of experience.

Using case vignettes and reflective inquiry, the presentation examines how culturally incongruent formulations may contribute to misdiagnosis, internalised shame, and therapeutic rupture, particularly

for individuals navigating migration, intergenerational trauma, honour and shame dynamics, and racialised stress. Emphasis is placed on cultural humility, collaborative meaning-making, and the therapist's reflexive awareness of their own positioning within the field.

Intended for psychotherapists, psychologists, trainees, and supervisors working across diverse contexts, this session encourages participants to hold complexity with curiosity. By integrating Gestalt field theory with culturally responsive practice and Taoist philosophy, the presentation aims to support more fluid, ethical, and humane approaches to psychotherapy.

Conference Workshop #80

Andrei Alpatov, Mikhail Isupov

Russia, Russia

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Andrei Alpatov is director of the Ural Institute of Gestalt and Contemporary Psychology, where he focuses on applying Gestalt principles across diverse fields. Alongside his institute work, he leads a school for children built on Gestalt-based pedagogy, exploring how its core principles can shape education and child development from an early age.

Mikhail Isupov is the founder of the Ural Institute of Gestalt and Contemporary Psychology, where he has helped shape the development and application of Gestalt therapy in the region.

Gestalt Beyond Therapy

For many years, we have been exploring the application of the Gestalt approach beyond the therapeutic process.

Every year, a large number of students begin training in our institute's Gestalt therapist education program. At the same time, we increasingly encounter requests from people who do not want and do not plan to become Gestalt therapists. Among these requests, there is certainly a demand for therapeutic work, but there is also a strong interest in developing communication and emotional skills — the ability to cope more effectively and authentically with various life situations: at work, at home, in close relationships, and beyond.

We believe that the Gestalt approach is well suited for teaching these skills. It allows us to move beyond superficial training methods, which often prove ineffective, toward deeper changes that remain with participants long after the group experience.

We have accumulated results that we would like to share. In 2026, we are launching a large-scale program titled "Gestalt for Life," which will run for one and a half years. It is designed for those who do not plan to become Gestalt therapists. By the time of the conference, we will be ready to present preliminary results. However, we already have substantial experience applying the Gestalt approach beyond therapy.

Conference Workshop #81 – Theoretically-oriented

Svetlana Vuković

Serbia

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Svetlana Vukovic, MA, is a Gestalt psychotherapist, supervisor, and facilitator of systemic and organizational constellations based in Belgrade, Serbia. She works with individuals, groups, and organizations, integrating Gestalt therapy, field perspective, embodied awarenesss, and systemic thinking. Her professional focus includes psychotherapy, supervision, relational processes, leadership communication, and organizational dynamics in times of uncertainty and change. She is particularly interested in contact, organismic self-regulation, impasse, and the restoration of movement in personal and professional systems. Through her clinical, educational, and organizational work, she explores how awarenesss, boundary, and relation can support vitality, responsibility, and more coherent forms of human contact.

From Control to Flow: A Gestalt Perspective on Organismic Wisdom in Times of Uncertainty

In times of uncertainty, individuals and systems often respond by increasing control, tightening boundaries, and relying on fixed interpretations of safety, identity, and action. From a Gestalt perspective, however, excessive control may weaken organismic self-regulation and interrupt the living movement of contact. This presentation explores the shift from control to flow as a movement from rigidity toward responsive presence, from defended certainty toward organismic wisdom.

The theoretical basis of this proposal draws on Gestalt concepts of organismic self-regulation, creative adjustment, contact boundary, field sensitivity, and impasse. It also resonates with the conference theme, Gestalt and the Tao, through an inquiry into how non-forcing, presence, and attunement to what is may support psychological and relational vitality without collapsing into passivity.

The presentation is intended for Gestalt therapists, trainers, supervisors, and practitioners interested in the relationship between uncertainty, regulation, and the restoration of living contact in clinical, relational, and organizational contexts.

My connection to this topic emerges from many years of practice in psychotherapy, supervision, and systemic work with individuals, groups, and organizations. Across these settings, I repeatedly encounter the same paradox: when fear intensifies, control increases, yet genuine support often becomes available only when contact regains movement. My interest in this topic comes from exploring how flow is not the opposite of structure, but a deeper form of embodied responsiveness grounded in awareness, boundary, and relation.

Conference Workshop #82

Svetlana Vuković

Serbia

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Svetlana Vukovic, MA, is a Gestalt psychotherapist, supervisor, and facilitator of systemic and organizational constellations based in Belgrade, Serbia. She works with individuals, groups, and organizations, integrating Gestalt therapy, field perspective, embodied awarenesss, and systemic thinking. Her professional focus includes psychotherapy, supervision, relational processes, leadership communication, and organizational dynamics in times of uncertainty and change. She is particularly interested in contact, organismic self-regulation, impasse, and the restoration of movement in personal and professional systems. Through her clinical, educational, and organizational work, she explores how awarenesss, boundary, and relation can support vitality, responsibility, and more coherent forms of human contact.

The Tao of Contact: Embodying Flow, Boundary and Relation

This workshop approaches contact as a living, rhythmic process rather than a fixed state or interpersonal technique. Within Gestalt therapy, contact is shaped through movement at the boundary: approaching and withdrawing, sensing and responding, meeting and differentiating. When this movement becomes overcontrolled, rigid, or unsupported, contact may lose vitality and shift into strain, impasse, or relational deadening. Flow, in this context, is not spontaneity without structure, but an organismically grounded capacity to remain in living responsiveness.

The conceptual basis of this workshop draws on Gestalt understandings of contact boundary, organismic self-regulation, creative adjustment, embodied awareness, and impasse. It also speaks directly to the conference theme, Gestalt and the Tao, by exploring the paradox that life cannot be forced into aliveness, yet it cannot remain frozen without cost. From this perspective, the workshop invites inquiry into how contact regains movement when effort gives way to presence, when boundary becomes responsive rather than defensive, and when relation is restored as a dynamic field event rather than a fixed relational role.

This workshop is intended for Gestalt therapists, trainees, supervisors, and practitioners who wish to deepen their embodied and relational understanding of contact and its interruptions in both personal and professional practice.

My connection to this topic emerges from years of psychotherapy, supervision, and systemic work, where I repeatedly encounter the suffering that follows not only from pain itself, but from arrested movement: when contact hardens, support recedes, and life is held too tightly. This workshop grows from my ongoing interest in how movement, boundary, and organismic support can be restored without forcing process.

Conference Workshop #83

Elise Khanijao

USA

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Elise Khanijao, MA, LPC, LCPC, is the founder of ENK Therapeutics, PLLC, serving clients in Washington, DC and Maryland, USA. She specializes in trauma-informed and transpersonal psychotherapy, with an integrative approach that draws from Gestalt, somatic, mindfulness-based, and relational frameworks.

Her work centres on supporting individuals navigating complex trauma, identity exploration, and systemic stressors, with a strong commitment to multicultural, anti-oppressive, and LGBTQIA+ affirming care. Elise brings particular interest in how nervous system regulation, embodiment, and present-moment awarenesss intersect with broader cultural and relational contexts. Her approach is shaped by both professional practice and lived experiences of multiculturalism, with an emphasis on creating therapeutic spaces that are responsive, inclusive, and grounded in relational presence.

The Body Reads the Headlines: Presence and Practice in the Gestalt Field

This experiential workshop offers a structured and supportive space to reconnect to Self and Other with particular attention to the lived experience of neurodivergence and trauma within the intensity of a conference environment. The workshop will begin with a brief collaborative introduction to establish shared agreements, orient participants to the space, and clarify boundaries. The majority of the session will consist of 3 to 5 guided dyadic/triadic experiential exercises, each designed to explore sensory awareness, relational contact, and varying levels of engagement, processing, and regulation. Exercises will be adaptable, with options that do not require eye contact or verbal participation. Clinician will actively guide the group throughout, offering structure, attunement, and optional support as participants move through each exercise. Emphasis is placed on collaborative care and inclusivity, creating a space where different nervous system responses are welcomed rather than managed or separated.

This workshop is grounded in Gestalt therapy and informed by Taoist philosophy: core concepts include present-centred awareness, contact boundaries, and experimentation, alongside Taoist principles such as wu wei, flow, and yin yang. Together these frameworks support participants in noticing and adjusting patterns of effort, engagement, and relational contact.

Masking (adapting one's expression, needs, sensory responses, to meet external expectations) is explored as both a necessary strategy and source of strain. Participants will be invited to notice how masking and unmasking emerge in real time, including patterns of over-efforting, pushing beyond capacity, or difficulty shifting between states.

This workshop is open to anyone with a nervous system who is curious about and/or in need of regulation. Clinician brings a trauma-informed, relational, and mindfulness-based clinical lens, informed by both professional practice and lived experience of working with and navigating nervous system regulation, neurodivergence, and identity in clinical and personal contexts.

Conference Workshop #84

Elise Khanijao

USA

elise@enktherapeutics.org

Elise Khanijao, MA, LPC, LCPC, is the founder of ENK Therapeutics, PLLC, serving clients in Washington, DC and Maryland, USA. She specializes in trauma-informed and transpersonal psychotherapy, with an integrative approach that draws from Gestalt, somatic, mindfulness-based, and relational frameworks.

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A Space to Breathe: Neurodivergence, Regulation, and the Practice of Unmasking through Gestalt and Taoist Approaches

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Conference Workshop #85 – Research

Julie Wratten

UK

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Julie Wratten, MA in Humanistic Counselling, British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) accredited counsellor, psychosexual and relationship therapist.

Julie has a private practice in the North East of England. She began seeking an existential approach to therapy whilst working with cancer within a clinical psychology team in the National Health Service (NHS). Julie was introduced to an Existential-Humanistic model of therapy after seeking to experience this way of working, both as client and as therapist. Since joining Orah Krug's E-H consultation group Julie is integrating the E-H way of being into her life and into her work as a therapist.

The Lived Experience of Existential-Humanistic Therapists: A Study of the Intentions and Processes within E-H Consultation Groups.

Fellow Travellers: The experience and findings of a participant-researcher investigation into the lived experience of Existential-Humanistic consultation groups members

This paper presents the findings of a qualitative study of the lived experience of Existential-Humanistic (E-H) group members and the experiences of its participant researchers. Initially conceptualised by the primary author (Orah Krug) in response to an invitation to contribute to a book on "Existential wellness: Alternatives to the medical model," the study aimed to explore the ways in which E-H consultations groups enhanced the professional and personal lives of its members. In line with the emerging practice of participant research, that aims to utilise "insiders" to provide nuanced understandings of subject matter while simultaneously empowering them to engage in research, the study was designed and carried out by individuals who are all currently members of E-H consultation groups. It will be argued that the safety and sense of community fostered in E-H consultation groups not only contributes to therapeutic presence and the growth of the person of the therapist, but that it also enabled the participant researchers to produce a strong piece of scholarly work quickly, joyfully and with ease.

Statement of the presentation relating to the theme of the conference:

When exploring the felt sense of participation in E-H consultation groups, we identified an arc that participants go through in their group. Beginning with the invitation to focus on therapist process, participants initially experience a sense of vulnerability and resistance. However the experience of safety in the group leads to self-acceptance and the freedom to be authentic, and more present in the group. Ultimately as these qualities deepen in the group they simultaneously deepen with clients. Our discussion and conclusions align with the stance that the mystery of being, moment-to-moment genuine encounter facilitates growth in therapists and clients alike.

Links to the themes of the conference

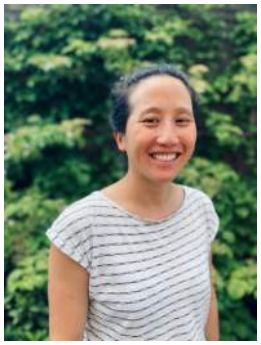
When I think about authenticity being at the core of existential ideas which have influenced gestalt practice, I experience a creative process that emphasises the here and now and trusts organismic healing by having faith in the clients drive toward change.

I recall where I began my journey almost three decades ago training in Humanistic counselling and I am reminded of Carl Roger's belief that it is the relationship that heals.

As I reflect on my personal transformation through my experiences of my E-H group, I continue to ask myself where am I stuck, what are my protections and defences. I become more alive, more grounded, more present, more authentically me. In turn my internal shift changes my clinical work.

This takes courage, wu wei, being with what is akin to doing by not doing, knowing by not knowing or unknowing, trusting in the process. cultivating faith in the wonder of human potential. It is a gestalt.

Conference Workshop #86



Sjouke Liem

Netherlands

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Sjouke Liem (Siauw Ling Liem) is a Gestalt Therapist and Psychologist based in the Netherlands,

currently practising privately and working within addiction care and primary mental health services, Sjouke supports clients navigating addiction, trauma, anxiety, burnout, and life transitions. Known for bridging Dutch and Chinese heritage, Sjouke uniquely applies systemic and phenomenological methods to help individuals find "ground" amidst personal and global disruption, focusing on the "here and now" to gain clarity and movement.

The Tao of Migration: Finding Ground Between Roots and Home

In a world of increasing mobility, many live in a "field of displacement": physically present in one place while emotionally anchored in another. This workshop, born from my own experience bridging Dutch and Chinese heritage, invites participants to explore the systemic field of "Home" and "Roots."

Theoretical Basis

Grounded in Gestalt Therapy, we focus on the "here and now" to bring awareness to bodily sensations, emotions, and thoughts. Systemic Constellation principles map the invisible field connecting us to our places of origin. The methodology draws on Taoist flow (Wu Wei), encouraging participants to follow the natural tendency of the field without forcing outcomes.

Target Audience

Open to anyone who has moved from their birthplace, those whose roots differ from their current home, and anyone curious about making the "unseen" dynamics of belonging visible.

Personal Connection

Standing in Shanghai, I embody the tension between "West" and "East." My name, Sjouke Liem (Siauw Ling Liem), carries this duality: a Dutch first name, a Chinese surname. My home is in the West, my roots in the East. This workshop is born from my personal quest: Where do I find ground when my roots lie elsewhere?

Bruna Mendonça, Marina Monjardim

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marina.monjardim@gmail.com

Bruna Mendonça is a clinical psychologist with a PhD and Master's in Psychology from UFBA, a Gestalt therapist, ecopsychologist, and forest therapy guide. She is managing partner of the Instituto de Gestalt-terapia da Bahia (IGTBa) and professor at Gestalt therapy institutes across several Brazilian cities, and is an author and editor of books and academic articles in the field, as well as a facilitator of nature immersions and retreats.

Marina Monjardim is a biologist with a PhD in Biological Sciences from the Federal University of Espírito Santo, including research at the American Museum of Natural History. She works as a researcher and facilitates retreats and nature-based activities, with research focused on the web of life, evolution, and interactions among living beings, alongside interest in sustainable living and environmental education. As a research fellow at the National Institute of the Atlantic Forest, she develops projects in citizen science and biodiversity engagement, creating educational initiatives fostering reconnection with nature, and is the author of a book and scientific articles.

Gestalt Ecotherapy: Reconnection, Meaning-Making, and Ecological Belonging Through Immersive Nature-Based Interventions

Gestalt Ecotherapy is an emerging field within Gestalt therapy that intentionally integrates nature as a co-therapist in processes of awareness development, healing, and human flourishing. Expanding the traditional clinical setting, this approach recognises natural environments as relational fields capable of fostering transformation, existential meaning, and ecological belonging. Grounded in Gestalt therapy, Ecopsychology, systems thinking, contemplative practices, and Indigenous wisdom traditions, we developed an ongoing transdisciplinary project investigating how immersive experiences in nature influence meaning-making, purpose, resilience, and connection with the web of life.

The project emerges as a response to the growing existential suffering associated with the contemporary disconnection between human beings, nature, ancestry, and community. From a Gestalt perspective, human beings cannot be understood apart from the relational field that constitutes them. Thus, the current ecological crisis reflects not only environmental collapse, but also a crisis of contact, belonging, and embodied awareness.

The interventions include two immersive programs lasting 3 and 6 days, respectively, combining forest bathing (Shinrin-Yoku), contemplative practices, Gestalt-ecopsychological group processes, artistic experiences, reflective exercises, and collective meaning-making practices. The project also integrates psychophysiological assessments, including cortisol, heart rate variability, blood pressure, and validated

scales related to well-being and nature connectedness.

The project is coordinated by Bruna, psychologist, Gestalt therapist, ecopsychologist, forest therapy guide, and PhD in Psychology, in partnership with Marina, biologist, researcher, and PhD with training in ecopsychology and forest therapy. The interdisciplinary collaboration also includes researchers from psychology, physiology, and theosophy, as well as traditional Earth-based knowledge keepers, integrating clinical practice, ecological thinking, scientific research, and experiential methodologies.

The target population includes adults voluntarily enrolled in the project, divided into two age groups (30–45 and 45–65 years old) in order to better accommodate the physical demands of each intervention.

Conference Workshop #89

Greg Janiszek

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Greg is a psychotherapist and counsellor based in London, living and working across different cultural contexts. His practice is grounded in relational, integrative, and field-oriented approaches to psychotherapy, with particular interests in Gestalt therapy, relational process, identity, shame, embodiment, and therapeutic presence.

His work is influenced by phenomenology, dialogical philosophy, and relational approaches that understand psychological experience as emerging within broader interpersonal, social, cultural, and embodied fields. Greg is particularly interested in how contact develops within therapy through presence, difference, dialogue, and responsiveness, especially in contexts shaped by vulnerability, uncertainty, and intercultural encounter.

Alongside his clinical practice, he has a growing interest in the intersections between relational dynamics, culture, diversity, sexuality, and contemporary Gestalt practice. His approach emphasises curiosity, relational ethics, and awarenesss of the wider field in which therapeutic experience unfolds.

The Tao of Contact: Presence, Difference and Relational Field in Gestalt Therapy

This workshop combines theoretical reflection with dialogical and experiential exploration of contact in Gestalt therapy as an emergent relational and cultural process rather than a technique or therapeutic objective. Drawing from relational Gestalt therapy, field theory, phenomenology, dialogical philosophy, and Taoist perspectives on process and non-forcing, the workshop considers how contact develops through presence, difference, responsiveness, and mutual influence within the organism–environment field.

Particular attention will be given to how experiences of identity, language, culture, vulnerability, and social context shape the possibility of therapeutic meeting. From a field perspective, contact is not understood as occurring solely between two isolated individuals, but as arising within wider relational, historical, embodied, and sociocultural processes. The workshop explores how Gestalt therapy can remain responsive to diversity and intercultural dialogue while avoiding rigid assumptions about selfhood, relationship, and psychological health.

The presentation will also examine the paradoxical nature of contact: that closeness cannot be forced, that withdrawal may itself be part of contact, and that meaningful relational meeting often emerges through uncertainty, difference, and dialogue rather than certainty or technique.

This workshop is intended for Gestalt therapists, counsellors, psychotherapists, and trainees interested

Conference Workshop #91

Wu Ai Jin

China

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Holds degrees from Beijing Normal University and Hong Kong Baptist University. Previously worked as an organisational development specialist at Alibaba. Since receiving Gestalt training and personal therapy in 2019, now works as a family counsellor and business coach.

The body knows the answer

This is an integrated Gestalt and movement workshop for participants at the Gestalt International Conference. Grounded in the core Gestalt position that the body stores all unprocessed emotions and unfinished situations, and that 'returning to the body' is the key pathway for re-establishing the contact boundary. Participants will directly experience the body as an entry point for awareness and contact through a simplified body outline drawing, awareness of areas of tension, and a miniature movement experiment with 'unaccepted parts.' The workshop uses phenomenological feedback — members describe only what they see and feel (colour, line, tension, temperature) without analysis or interpretation.

Conference Workshop #92

Zhao Yi Qing

China

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Member of the Chinese Mental Health Association; psychological counsellor at a Beijing institution; senior graduate of the Sino-Australian Gestalt Association. She values authentic interpersonal engagement and finds richness in the uncertainties of relationship. Her practice is characterised by a creative, curious approach to difference and the unexpected dimensions of human encounter.

True Adventure: Experience your true self in Gestalt

This workshop focuses on experiential exploration of the 'authentic self,' using 'truth or dare' — candid expression (truth) and breakthrough attempts (dare) — as metaphors. Employing core Gestalt concepts — awareness, contact, responsibility, and field — it designs a series of structured experiential activities. Theory integrates the phenomenological practice of accurate description with the present-moment interaction of dialogical relationship, guiding participants to face, express, and integrate those 'parts' of themselves that they avoid or suppress, within a safe field. Target audience: general public, psychology enthusiasts, and helping professionals wishing to enhance self-awareness, inner congruence, and courage.

Conference Workshop #93 – Theoretically-oriented

Anna Kiuselinh, Roman Sydorchenko

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Anna Kiuselinh is a clinical psychologist, psychotherapist, supervisor, and group leader specializing in the Gestalt approach to sexology and sexopathology, the clinical application of Gestalt therapy, and Gestalt-based work with crisis states, trauma, violence, and the body.

Roman Sydorchenko is a psychiatrist, psychotherapist, supervisor, and NAGTU trainer, with clinical practice since 2003 and psychotherapeutic practice since 2005. His areas of in-depth interest include clinical-range mental states, psychosomatics, the psychology of crisis states, the psychological and psychopathological phenomenology of social systems, and the interaction between the human psyche and the digital environment.

Dialogue in the Epicenter of the Storm: I-Thou vs. I-It

In this report, we explore how a person can preserve their humanity and sense of self under conditions of extreme social tension and external pressure. Drawing on the ideas of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, we discuss the dangers of dehumanisation, the importance of personal responsibility, and the role of healthy boundaries in preserving authentic human dialogue

Conference Workshop #94

Maria Mazurina

Russia

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Maria Mazurina is a Gestalt therapist and clinical psychologist in private practice from Russia, with a Master's degree in Psychology. She is a member of the Russian Psychotherapeutic Association and serves on the organising committee of the Russian Gestalt conference "Evolution of Gestalt". Her clinical work focuses on anxiety-related experiences, panic attacks, loneliness, relational difficulties and the restoration of contact.

Maria writes and speaks publicly on psychological topics, iincluding through local media and television. Her broader professional interests include the philosophical and cultural dimensions of Gestalt therapy, cross-cultural dialogue, authenticity, human presence, and the ways contemporary Gestalt therapy can respond to changing social and digital conditions.

The Perfect Other and the Imperfect Therapist: AI, Loneliness and Authentic Contact in Contemporary Gestalt Therapy

This experiential workshop is based on an anonymised clinical case of a young man who came to therapy with apathy, anxiety, loneliness and loss of vitality and interest, while increasingly using ChatGPT as a constantly available, accepting and intellectually precise companion. In the therapeutic field, AI gradually appeared as a "perfect Other": safe, non-frustrating, always responsive and seemingly more accurate than the human therapist.

From a Gestalt perspective, the workshop is grounded in field theory, dialogical relationship, phenomenological inquiry and the contact boundary. It explores AI not as a threat or rival to therapy, but as a meaningful figure in the field that reveals important questions about loneliness, idealisation, the longing for a risk-free Other, and the conditions necessary for real contact.

The connection with the conference theme "The Tao of Gestalt" lies in exploring contact not as something that can be controlled, perfected or made risk-free, but as a living process that requires presence, uncertainty, mutuality and openness to real otherness. In this sense, the therapist's human imperfection - subjectivity, limits, fallibility, vulnerability and living response - is considered not as a failure of therapy, but as a condition for authentic contact.

The target audience includes Gestalt therapists, supervisors, trainers and mental health professionals interested in contemporary relational practice, digital culture and clinical work with loneliness. My connection to this topic comes from my clinical practice with anxiety-related experiences, panic attacks, loneliness, relational difficulties and the restoration of contact, as well as from my broader interest in how contemporary Gestalt therapy can respond to changing social, cultural and digital conditions.

Rahim Thawer

USA

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Rahim Thawer (he/him) is a clinical social worker, educator, and author specializing in queer men's mental health, relational dynamics, and anti-oppressive practice. He has worked extensively in healthcare, community-based, and educational settings, supporting individuals and organizations through clinical practice, training, and consultation. Rahim integrates Gestalt therapy, cognitive-behavioural, and psychodynamic perspectives, with particular attention to embodiment, shame, and the impact of sociocultural contexts on mental health.

He is the author of The Mental Health Guide for Cis and Trans Queer Guys (New Harbinger Publications), which offers skills-based and reflective approaches to coping, self-understanding, and relational healing. Rahim is a full-time instructor in social work and a doctoral candidate, and he regularly facilitates workshops internationally on queer mental health, organizational dynamics, and culturally responsive care. His work emphasizes presence, curiosity, and ethical relational contact across difference.

Coming Home to the Body: Gestalt, Tao, and Embodied Skills for Queer Men's Mental Health

This experiential workshop explores queer men's mental health through the lens of Gestalt therapy and Taoist philosophy, emphasising presence, embodiment, and organismic self-regulation. Drawing from Gestalt field theory and Taoist concepts of flow, balance, and non-striving, the workshop invites participants to examine how cis and trans queer men often become alienated from bodily knowing through shame, minority stress, relational trauma, and cultural expectations around masculinity.

Using clinical vignettes and embodied experiments adapted from contemporary queer mental health practice, participants will explore how Gestalt principles—such as awareness, contact, and creative adjustment—can support queer men in reconnecting with their felt sense and cultivating greater self-trust. Particular attention will be paid to how sociopolitical forces, internalised oppression, and cultural dislocation shape figure–ground processes for queer men across different cultural contexts.

The workshop balances brief conceptual framing with experiential exercises, small-group reflection, and large-group dialogue. Participants will be invited to notice how effort, control, and self-judgement interrupt flow, and how a Tao-informed Gestalt stance can support gentler, more attuned therapeutic contact. The session is relevant for clinicians, trainers, and Gestalt practitioners interested in embodied, culturally responsive, and relational approaches to working with sexual and gender minorities.

My connection to this topic arises from my clinical work with queer men across healthcare and community settings, and from my authorship of The Mental Health Guide for Cis and Trans Queer Guys, which integrates Gestalt, CBT, and psychodynamic perspectives through an anti-oppressive lens.

Conference Workshop #97

Olga Kadysheva, Mikhail Baytalskiy, Mikhail Slutskin

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Olga Kadysheva is a psychologist, crisis psychologist, Gestalt therapist, and leading trainer at NAGTU, who completed the program Philosophy in the Gestalt Approach. In 2010 she developed Psychological Support for Ukrainian Immigrants in Madrid, and since 2014 has run a crisis psychological support service in Kharkiv, working closely with the UN and UNICEF. In 2023 she co-organized Dialogues in Toulouse and Online Dialogues, an interdisciplinary project bringing together Gestalt therapists, philosophers, and cultural theorists. She also has a background as a civil engineer and as an image consultant, a member of the Union of Designers of Ukraine.

Mikhail Baytalskiy was born in Kharkiv in the early 1970s and trained in theoretical physics before completing postgraduate studies in philosophy, with a dissertation on the psychic within the contemporary episteme. He completed Levels 1 through 3 of Gestalt training in Kharkiv, and since 2018 has worked as a Gestalt therapist and facilitator, more recently as a field-oriented supervisor. His two emigrations, and identity crises tied to social catastrophe, sit at the centre of his work and spiritual development. Since 2023, with two colleagues, he co-created the project Gestalt Dialogues, holding events on philosophy, culture, and Gestalt theory.

Mikhail Slutskin was born in Kharkiv in the late 1970s, into an intellectual family of Soviet scientists, with an expected path of education followed by continuing the family tradition. When the country collapsed in the 1990s, that anticipated future dissolved along with it, and in searching for himself while

War, Peace and Identity

In this workshop, we will offer a philosophical perspective on war and peace, on the relationship between them, and on how crises of identity is experienced within a fragmented field. We will explore how Gestalt therapy, as a humanistic approach, helps people move beyond the trauma of war and political belonging toward a space of psychological and philosophical reflection on traumatic experience.

Theoretical and Conceptual Basis:

Our work is grounded in field theory, the theory of Self, theory of Identity, ideas from Taoism, Eastern and ancient philosophy, as well as

the works of philosophers of the Dialogue and the Other, such as Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas.

Target Audience: gestalt therapists working with existential issues, trauma, and crises of identity.

Our Connection to the Topic:

We are Gestalt therapists from Ukraine, where war has continued for more than four years, simultaneously destroying and shaping identities.

We are personally involved in these processes through our own therapeutic work and existential crises, and we believe we can share our

experiences that may be meaningful for others.

Conference Workshop #98

Florie Allenet

France

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I am Florie Allenet, Gestalt-practitioner, Professional coach, Active listening Ambassador and collective intelligence Facilitator.

My purpose is to create spaces for sharing, conversation, presence, and movement to help people and organizations thrive. As a Gestaltpractitioner,

my approach is pragmatic and centred, with a systemic perspective, based on 20 years of professional experience as an engineer

and a finance expert.

I welcome womxn, LGBTQIA+ and neurodiverse people, with an inclusive and situated sociocultural framework. I also welcome people with different intercultural backgrounds and international experiences, having worked in several countries in Europe, as well as China, and with many nationalities (North & Latin America, Asia and Africa)

My values: Listening, Excellence, Structure, and Joy.

Working with Womxn, Queer, Neurodiverse clients

How as Gestalt-practitioners and therapists, are we welcoming “the other” during therapy?

The “Other” can be cultural, social, ethnical, gender, ethnical background. When we meet a new client, we tend to insist on what is shared, to create a therapeutic link, safety between client and therapist so that the therapy can start.

Othering someone can revive exclusion, discrimination within our societies, based on

skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, cultural or ethnic background, body shapes, neurodiversity, etc.

But how do we welcome what is intrinsically different? Not a subject of therapy, but what comes with the client and cannot be changed?

Building from my personal experience, and my experience as a Gestalt-practitionner, I will share insights and build links with Gestalt and psychotherapy frameworks, as well as feminist, queer and intersectional works, to improve understanding and ability to support all clients in Gestalt-therapy.

Target audience

Gestalt-practitioners and therapists sensitive to systemic issues in society

Theoretical / Conceptual Basis

Intersectionality, Queer Gestalt and psychotherapy

Feminist and queer works

My connection to the topic

Being queer, neurodiverse and born a woman, I present myself as a feminist and

intersectional Gestalt-practitioner. Clients come to me with this in mind, although they don't necessarily want or need to speak about their womanhood, queerness or neurodiversity. But that's something mentioned from the beginning of therapy, and I understand they feel safe working with me because I am situating myself as a person and as a therapist, and I am also aware of what therapy can put onto "different" customers in regards to the norms, the standards.

I also have a strong intercultural interest in participating in The Tao of Gestalt workshops. I lived in Wuhan in 2005-2007, I connected at a young age with Chinese culture, which nourished my professional and personal developments.

Conference Workshop #99

Chen Ting Ting

China

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A facilitator with over ten years of frontline teaching experience and a deep understanding of children's learning psychology. Currently a Gestalt psychological counsellor, family education instructor, sandplay counsellor, and adolescent learning facilitator. A National Level II Psychological Counsellor, she specialises in deeply integrating Gestalt psychology theory with children's intrinsic learning motivation. Through core frameworks such as the 'Experience Cycle,' she accompanies families in identifying where a child's learning energy is blocked and restarting the natural flow of growth.

Let learning follow the trend - the stimulation of children's learning internal drive from the perspective of perfection

This workshop uses the core Gestalt model — the Experience Cycle (sensation, awareness, energy mobilisation, action, full contact, satisfaction, and withdrawal) — as its theoretical foundation to re-examine the nature of children's intrinsic learning motivation. Intrinsic motivation is understood as a life energy that needs to flow completely: when a child becomes stuck at a stage of the learning cycle (e.g. procrastination, avoidance of difficulty, learned helplessness), an 'unfinished situation' forms, continuously draining psychological energy. Through theoretical explanation, case analysis, and experiential exercises, the workshop demonstrates how to precisely identify the point of rupture in the cycle and use Gestalt methods — awareness, contact, and experiment — to help children regain their motivation and sense of completion. Target audience: Gestalt therapists, psychological counsellors, educators, and parents interested in children's psychological and learning development.

Conference Workshop #101

Li Cui Ping

China

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Began studying Gestalt with Vinay in 2019 and has experienced a profound process of reclaiming many dimensions of her own life through Gestalt awarenesss — living with increasing authenticity and deepening capacity for genuine encounter. Committed to sharing the wisdom of Gestalt with more people, meeting them fully in the present moment.

At this moment, I am in--complete perception experience

This workshop is based on three core Gestalt concepts: Here and Now (bringing attention back to present experience); Awareness (using body signals and continuous speech to distinguish fact from imagination); and Contact and Boundary (using exercises to recognise social patterns and sense oneself in contact practice). All activities take the form of 'experiments,' emphasising experience before theory. Target audience: psychological counsellors, social workers, coaches, educators, and general participants interested in personal growth and relational improvement. No psychology background required, but willingness to engage in experiential activities is needed.

Conference Workshop #102

Xia Chen

China

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A long-term practitioner who has integrated Gestalt therapy (eight years) with Chinese aesthetic pathways — flower arranging, incense, movement, tea ceremony, and classical garden and architecture traditions — under multiple teachers. Has personally journeyed through a complete process from somatic energy awakening to experiencing the luminosity of the self. Her strength lies in translating 'effortless' embodied experience into workable workshop designs.

Travelling by Objects: Complete Awareness and "Tao" in Chinese Art - A Body Experience Workshop

This workshop is grounded in core Gestalt constructs (field theory, contact boundary, figure/ground flow) and integrates embodied cognition with the Zhuangist philosophical perspective of 'riding things to roam the heart.' The theoretical premise is that 'the Tao' is not abstract speculation but reveals itself in the present-moment contact between body and environment. Through scent guidance (using the olfactory system to bypass the neural mechanisms of verbal criticism) and 'roaming gaze' practice (a moving way of seeing derived from classical Chinese gardens), participants experience the activation of perception 'without preset goals' within two hours. Target audience: Gestalt therapists, body workers, psychological counsellors, and practitioners interested in Chinese philosophy.

Conference Workshop #103 – Theoretically-oriented

Jingrui Fang

UK

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Jingrui (Jennifer) Fang is a Gestalt trainee counsellor at the Gestalt Centre in London, expected to qualify as a BACP Registered Member (MBACP) by the end of 2026. She holds an MSc in Financial Economics from the University of Oxford and a first-class honours degree in Economics from the National University of Singapore.

Before turning to therapy, Jennifer spent a decade in strategy and technology, working at McKinsey as a management consultant and in senior roles at leading London fintechs iincluding TrueLayer, ClearScore, and Seccl. She grew up in Huangshan, Anhui province, and has lived in Singapore, Copenhagen, Oxford, and London, where she has been based since 2015.

Jennifer's practice bridges Eastern and Western perspectives. She draws on Taoism, the I Ching, Chinese calligraphy, and somatic practice alongside her Gestalt training. She facilitates career workshops for women in demanding professions, writes on Substack, and is an amateur opera singer.

Settled, But Not Quite Settled: Selfing at the Intersection of East and West

As a Chinese Gestalt trainee counsellor who has lived and worked in the UK for twelve years, I have experienced different versions of self in different relational contexts. I often miss China when I am in England, and miss England when I am in China. Settled, but not quite settled. Not quite Chinese, not quite British. I carry two names, one Chinese, one English, and when I am called by each, I experience myself differently. The same shift happens when I move between languages.

This presentation explores how the Gestalt concepts of figure and ground formation and the selfing process illuminate this lived experience of cultural in-betweenness. Drawing on the paradoxical theory of change, I see the selfing process as fundamentally relational and paradoxical, something that resonates with the Taoist concept of Yin and Yang, the unity of opposites. The migrant's in-between existence is not a problem to be solved, but a rich ground for integration.

I draw on my own journey, from growing up in Huangshan, China, through academic life in Singapore, Denmark, and Oxford, to a decade at McKinsey and leading London fintechs, and now training as a Gestalt counsellor at the Gestalt Centre in London. Each crossing between fields, cultures, and identities has been a reconfiguration of figure and ground, opening up new contact possibilities and calling for new creative adjustments.

This session is for Gestalt practitioners, trainees, and professionals exploring Gestalt in multicultural and intersectional contexts, as well as those working with clients navigating migration or bicultural identity.

Dunja Vesic, Milena Stevanovic

Serbia, Serbia

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Dunja Vesic is a Gestalt psychotherapist who graduated from the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade, majoring in Social Work and Social Policy. She completed her Master's and doctoral studies in psychotherapy in Malta, alongside specializations in Gestalt in Organizations in Belgrade and a phenomenological approach to psychopathology in Turin. In private practice in Belgrade, her recent work has focused on shame and existential loneliness during challenging times for clients and therapists alike. Beginning her career working both face-to-face and online, she grew interested in the phenomenon of contact in online psychotherapy, the subject of her doctoral research.

Milena Stevanović graduated from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Belgrade in 2005, later specializing in homeopathic medicine and completing a specialist degree in psychiatry in 2021. She trained extensively in Gestalt psychotherapy, with basic studies in Belgrade, a Master's at EAGT Malta, and four years of postgraduate training in Turin. She also worked as a research associate studying thrombosis risk in antiphospholipid syndrome and is nearing doctoral studies in epidemiology. An author of national and international publications, she works as a psychiatrist at the Clinic for Psychiatry, University Clinical Centre of Serbia, and in private psychotherapy practice.

Digital Embodiment Lab: Dopamine, Limbic Friction, and the Gestalt Contact Cycle

This is experiential workshop on embodied online attention within contemporary Gestalt theory, embodied cognition, and multi timescale dopamine models, and it cites primary neuroscience evidence linking tonic/phasic dopamine dynamics to response vigour and showing that voluntary autonomic challenges produce robust catecholaminergic shifts useful for practice design.

Embodied Presence in Online Awareness is an experiential workshop that integrates the Gestalt contact cycle with embodied cognition perspectives and contemporary neurobiological models that distinguish phasic dopamine spikes from tonic or baseline dopaminergic signals that support sustained motivation and response vigour. The Gestalt frame explains why rich pre-contact (sensorimotor, affective attunement before task entry) is necessary for full contact and integrative postcontact; embodied cognition locates cognition in ongoing brain–body–environment coupling; and neurobiological work links tonic dopamine to the control of action rates and motivational vigour while phasic signals encode rapid reward prediction errors.

Target audience includes therapists and mental health practitioners, other professionals and participants seeking to integrate neurobiological insights into embodied practice; who want practical tools to reduce

attention fragmentation and cultivate steady baseline motivation.

Participants will engage in guided pre-contact routines, short within-session experiments contrasting high-stimulus with grounded breaks, and structured postcontact integration to consolidate learning. The workshop emphasises measurable experiential outcomes: improved capacity to initiate and sustain focused tasks, increased awareness of bodily cues linked to dopamine, and concrete plans for habit repetition. A brief within-session experiment demonstrates how different break strategies affect subjective focus and motivation, providing immediate data for reflection and planning.

Our connection to this topic is both theoretical and practical: this program elements that translate neurobiological concepts such as dopamine baselines and limbic friction into accessible embodied exercises, and have guided participants through these practices in online formats. This workshop translates that synthesis into evidence-informed experiential protocol for sustainable attention in the digital age.

Conference Workshop #105

Phoebe Hao

USA

hao.phoebe@hotmail.com • Wechat: iampheebee

I am a psychotherapist with a professional background in tech and finance, specializing in helping high-performing professionals and couples bridge the gap between outer achievement and inner alignment. My practice centers on Gestalt therapy, a holistic approach that moves past intellectualizing challenges to focus on the immediate, "here-and-now" experience of what is holding you back. I help individuals move from habitual, exhausting performance into a more authentic, cohesive, and present way of living.

When Success Is Not Enough: Gestalt Therapy with High Achievers Across Cultures

High-achieving clients are often admired for their discipline, adaptability, and professional success, yet these same capacities may conceal chronic self-pressure, shame, emotional isolation, relational disconnection, and difficulty recognising their own needs and desires. These dynamics may be especially complex for Chinese expatriates, international professionals, and bicultural clients navigating achievement-oriented family expectations alongside Western ideals of individuality and self-expression.

We propose that many of these clients experience a profound lack of contact: contact with their own feeling bodies, and contact with others. They may become highly skilled at performing, adapting, and meeting external demands while losing access to bodily sensation, emotion, imagination, desire, and relational spontaneity. Achievement can therefore be understood not simply as a personal trait, but as a creative adjustment shaped by family, cultural, migration, and professional fields.

This experiential workshop explores how Gestalt therapy can support high-achieving clients in moving from performance, self-monitoring, and over-adaptation toward embodied awareness, relational presence, and greater freedom of choice. Our work focuses on restoring contact with clients' own sense of desire through attention to feelings, emotions, bodily sensations, and imagination, alongside relational and dialogic interventions within the therapeutic encounter.

Drawing from clinical work with Chinese and cross-cultural clients in Silicon Valley, the presenters will examine perfectionism, shame, introjected expectations, emotional restraint, and the polarities between achievement and vulnerability, control and responsiveness, and doing and being.

The workshop will also engage the conference theme, "Gestalt and the Tao," by exploring the tension between striving and allowing. Rather than asking clients to abandon ambition, we will consider how achievement may become less rigid and more grounded in embodied awareness, relational contact, and responsiveness to the emerging field.

Conference Workshop #106 – Theoretically-oriented

Marina Nikolic

Serbia

marina.nikolic.ff@gmail.com

Marina Nikolic (1993) is a Serbian psychotherapist, calligrapher, artist, and long-term dharma practitioner. After graduating in Gestalt therapy in 2024 and working at various psychotherapy centres in Belgrade, she established her private practice. A keen researcher of Eastern traditions, Marina has spent extended periods with the monastic community of Plum Village in France.

Her main interests in psychotherapy include individuation, trauma, somatic work, transgenerational dynamics, and diverse interpersonal issues. Outside of her therapeutic work, she enjoys knitting, particularly creating small animals designed to serve as emotional support companions. Her knitwork earned her a place at the 2025 Maritime Silk Road Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition in Quanzhou, China.

Breathing as a Doorway to Presence: Gestalt, Buddhism and Daoism

This paper aims to serve as bridgework between two traditions: Gestalt therapy and collective Eastern teachings represented by Buddhism and Taoism, which converge at the act of breathing. Grounded in phenomenological perspective and field theory, breath is approached not as a physiological function or therapeutic technique, but as a pre-reflective, embodied experience that structures perception, presence, and relational engagement. Gestalt therapy, breath is understood as an immediate expression of the contact boundary, where subtle variations are not observed as symptoms but are approached as phenomena in their own right. This approach shifts the therapeutic focus from regulation to description. Breath is not something to be controlled; it is a reflection of the inner workings of a person; a doorway to their inner reality. Buddhism and Taoism, each from different standpoints, adopt a similar perspective. In Buddhism, the Anapanasati Sutta teaches that awareness of breathing offers a direct path to experiencing reality without conceptual elaboration. Taoism threads on similar ground, with the principle of wu wei dictating that "breathing should breathe itself." While not direct precursors, these Eastern teachings resonate with Gestalt therapy's aspiration: to cultivate a more embodied presence in the therapist, transforming the therapeutic field and spontaneously opening space for the client to connect more deeply with themselves and become aware of their ongoing experience. This paper is intended for psychotherapists, contemplative practitioners, and scholars interested in integrating embodied awareness with relational and contemplative approaches. Drawing on my experience as a Gestalt therapist and long-term Dharma practitioner, I reflect on how these perspectives on breath can enrich therapeutic practice and support clients to be more present in their lives.

Conference Workshop #107

Julia Safronova

Russia

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I started my psychology studies in 2021.

In 2023, I received a state-issued diploma from Lomonosov Moscow State University, qualifying as a Psychological Consultant and Psychodiagnostician.

In 2026, i completed the second stage of Gestalt therapy training at the Moscow Institute of Gestalt Analysis and Supervision. I specialized in "Gestalt Approach in Family Therapy" and "Gestalt Approach in Group Work."

I participated as a speaker at the International Clinical Conference of MIGAS.

I also participated as a speaker at the Moscow Conference of Psychodramatists organized by IPKIRT.

In 2024, l completed my studies in Museum Art Therapy.

I run the “Territory of Art” psychological club, where we work with pease of art as symbolic material.

I have 5 years of psychotherapeutic practice.

There was a period in my life when I worked in finance for 10 years, iincluding the Ministry of Finance of Russia and at NOVATEK, the largest oil and gas production and refining company, Based on the Master of Finance and Investment degree obtained in 2010 at the Queen Mary University of London.

Working with symbolic material when interacting with a client's traumatic

The seminar is devoted to the study of the relationship between the Gestalt psychological approach and the ancient Chinese philosophy of Tao. The target audience are: practising psychologists and psychotherapists with basic experience (1-3 years) and those who are interested in an integrative approach; Gestalt therapists who want to expand their conceptual base; consultants who are studying Eastern practices for application in psychotherapy; and senior students of psychology departments who are interested in transpersonal and existential approaches.

Gestalt therapy, developed by F. Perls focuses on awareness of the "here and now", the integrity of the individual, and the completion of unfinished situations (gestalts). Key principles: awareness, contact and boundary, responsibility, contact cycle, and the phenomenological method.

The principles of Tao philosophy (Lao Tzu, "Tao Te Ching"):

Naturalness (ziran),

Non-action,

The unity of opposites (yin-yang),

The flow (Tao).

Similarities:

The emphasis on mindfulness and presence in the moment (here-and-now in Gestalt and mindfulness in Taoism).

The holistic view of the human being (Gestalt) and the unity with the world (Tao) — a holistic approach.

The importance of balance (boundaries in gestalt vs. yin-yang harmony).

Working with polarities — in gestalt, these are the opposites in the client's experience, while in Tao, they are yin and yang.

In my work, I often encounter traumatic client experiences that need to be processed. The themes of safety and trauma are closely related. When I discovered the "Safe Room" technique, I was impressed by it. I currently use it in my practice and see good results that advance the client in the work of their resistance. I also participated in the Moscow Psychological Conference with a similar seminar, and it was very warm welcomed by my colleagues.

Conference Workshop #108 – Theoretically-oriented

Ivana Rosic

Serbia

psychologistivonruss@gmail.com

I am a final-year Gestalt psychotherapy trainee, an Applied Psychology and NLP Master Trainer, and a long-term Vipassana meditation practitioner.

My interest in the dialogue between Eastern and Western approaches to human development emerged through years of living, studying, and working in different cultural environments, particularly in China and Austria. My international academic and professional experiences, together with a long-standing contemplative practice, have led me to explore the ways in which different traditions understand suffering, awarenesss, growth, and human potential.

I am particularly interested in the philosophical foundations of Gestalt therapy and in the integration of Eastern perspectives—especially Taoist, Zen, and contemplative traditions—with contemporary psychotherapy. My current focus lies in organismic self-regulation, identity development, intercultural dialogue, and the ways in which psychological and philosophical traditions can enrich one another in the understanding of human experience.

Neurosis as an Interruption of the Tao: A Taoist and Gestalt Perspective on Human Suffering

Neurosis as an Interruption of the Tao: A Taoist and Gestalt Perspective on Human Suffering

Taoist philosophy and Gestalt therapy emerged in different cultural and historical contexts, yet both place central importance on awareness, spontaneity, and the individual's capacity to participate fully in the unfolding process of life. While Taoism describes human flourishing through concepts such as Tao, Wu Wei, and naturalness, Gestalt therapy approaches psychological health through organismic self-regulation, creative adjustment, and the contact cycle.

This presentation explores neurosis as a disruption of this natural process. Drawing on Taoist philosophy and Gestalt theory, it proposes that neurotic suffering can be understood as a progressive restriction of awareness, flexibility, and contact with one's immediate experience. Gestalt contact disturbances—including introjection, projection, retroflection, confluence, deflection, desensitisation, and egotism—will be examined as different expressions of this interruption.

By bringing Taoist and Gestalt perspectives into dialogue, the presentation aims to illuminate how different cultural traditions have approached the same fundamental question: what happens when human beings lose contact with the natural flow of life, and what conditions support its restoration? Particular attention will be given to the contact cycle as a process model through which both psychological suffering and human growth may be understood.

Conference Workshop #109

Yu Zhi

China

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National Level II Psychological Counsellor; founder of Hunan Daoxin Psychological Studio; visiting teacher in the Psychology Department at Hunan Civil Affairs University. Practises Gestalt-oriented clown creative arts therapy, Gestalt-oriented marriage and family therapy, and narrative-oriented family systems integration.

Complete orienation clown creative art therapy

Grounded in Gestalt, developed through clown comedy performance, framed within Ken Wilber's integral psychology, and incorporating Jungian elements such as midlife crisis, persona and shadow integration, anima/animus integration, and archetypal integration. Offers holistic solutions for midlife populations and for parent-child relationships in adolescent family education.

Conference Workshop #110

Florie Allenet

France

contact@florieallenet.com

I am Florie Allenet, Gestalt-practitioner, Professional coach, Active listening Ambassador and collective intelligence Facilitator.

My purpose is to create spaces for sharing, conversation, presence, and movement to help people and organizations thrive. As a Gestaltpractitioner,

my approach is pragmatic and centred, with a systemic perspective, based on 20 years of professional experience as an engineer

and a finance expert.

I welcome womxn, LGBTQIA+ and neurodiverse people, with an inclusive and situated sociocultural framework. I also welcome people with different intercultural backgrounds and international experiences, having worked in several countries in Europe, as well as China, and with many nationalities (North & Latin America, Asia and Africa)

My values: Listening, Excellence, Structure, and Joy.

Starting our activity as Gestalt-practitioners Sharing experiences and building best practicies

How as Gestalt-practitioners and therapists, are we welcoming “the other” during therapy?

The “Other” can be cultural, social, ethnical, gender, ethnical background. When we meet a new client, we tend to insist on what is shared, to create a therapeutic link, safety between client and therapist so that the therapy can start.

Othering someone can revive exclusion, discrimination within our societies, based on

skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, cultural or ethnic background, body shapes, neurodiversity, etc.

But how do we welcome what is intrinsically different? Not a subject of therapy, but what comes with the client and cannot be changed?

Building from my personal experience, and my experience as a Gestalt-practitionner, I will share insights and build links with Gestalt and psychotherapy frameworks, as well as feminist, queer and intersectional works, to improve understanding and ability to support all clients in Gestalt-therapy.

Target audience

Gestalt-practitioners and therapists sensitive to systemic issues in society

Theoretical / Conceptual Basis

Intersectionality, Queer Gestalt and psychotherapy

Feminist and queer works

My connection to the topic

Being queer, neurodiverse and born a woman, I present myself as a feminist and

intersectional Gestalt-practitioner. Clients come to me with this in mind, although they don't necessarily want or need to speak about their womanhood, queerness or neurodiversity. But that's something mentioned from the beginning of therapy, and I understand they feel safe working with me because I am situating myself as a person and as a therapist, and I am also aware of what therapy can put onto "different" customers in regards to the norms, the standards.

I also have a strong intercultural interest in participating in The Tao of Gestalt workshops. I lived in Wuhan in 2005-2007, I connected at a young age with Chinese culture, which nourished my professional and personal developments.

Conference Workshop #111

Alexandra Yanchenko, Julia Safronova

Russia, Russia

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Alexandra Yanchenko is a Moscow-based psychologist and certified Gestalt practitioner with more than thirteen years of practical experience. She works as a family consultant and museum art therapist, and hosts the "Territory of Art" psychological club at the Migas Institute, where participants engage with works of art as symbolic material. She is the author of the art-therapeutic method "Awakening of Inner Freedom," which supports self-discovery through creative expression. Alexandra combines her clinical training with a deep interest in how art can reveal emotions, memories, and inner conflicts. She is also a wife and mother of two sons, aged 23 and 13.

Julia Safronova began her psychology studies in 2021 and graduated from Lomonosov Moscow State University in 2023 as a Psychological Consultant and Psychodiagnostician. In 2026 she completed advanced Gestalt therapy training at the Moscow Institute of Gestalt Analysis and Supervision, specializing in family and group work. She has spoken at international conferences, completed studies in Museum Art Therapy, and runs the "Territory of Art" psychological club. With five years of psychotherapeutic practice, Julia also spent a decade working in finance, including at Russia's Ministry of Finance and NOVATEK, holding a Master of Finance and Investment from Queen Mary University of London.

Symbolic material in famous works of art

This workshop will focus on working with symbolic material in different works of art, where people will be able to touch there feelings by experiencing the opportunity to share there views, thoughts, conditions and emotions to each other and than will create their own peace of art as an emotional response to what they have seen and experienced. We will show techniques how to work with museum artefacts, as a symbolic material, which can be wildly used for different psychological request.

In our work with a piece of art, we will consider a painting not as an object for "correct" interpretation, but as an opportunity for living awareness. The focus is not on the painting itself, but on what we will feel, notice, and experience when we encounter it.

When interacting with a work of art, it is important to explore the first impressions, bodily reactions, emotions, and associations. A painting may evoke memories, internal conflicts, tension, or a sense of calm. Through these responses, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of their own needs and perceptions.

The work of the "here and now" is of particular importance. Instead of analysing from the position of an

external expert, we will engage in a dialogue with the image: consider it, describe it, respond to it, and at the end of the master class, we will even offer to finish it and share our emotional response. This process helps to make the inner experience clearer and more accessible to awareness.

In the Gestalt approach, art becomes a space for self-discovery. Working with paintings helps to develop awareness, better understand one's feelings, and find new ways to express emotions

Conference Workshop #112

Arman Khazaei

Iran

akhazaei99@yahoo.com

I work as a mental health expert at the Ministry of Health and am also actively involved in research. I am currently translating specialized Gestalt therapy books into Persian in Iran and maintain professional connections with Gestalt therapists and trainers in Europe and the United States.

The Body in Times of War: A Phenomenological Exploration of Fear, Insecurity, and Resilience through Gestalt and Tao

In a world of constant notifications, endless information streams, and increasing digital demands, many individuals experience a growing sense of exhaustion, fragmentation, and disconnection from themselves and others. While technology offers unprecedented opportunities for connection, it can also contribute to chronic distraction, diminished awareness, relational fatigue, and a reduced capacity for presence.

This experiential workshop is grounded in Relational Gestalt Therapy, Phenomenology, Field Theory, and embodied awareness practices. It explores how digital environments shape attention, contact, and self-experience, and how individuals can cultivate greater awareness and presence in their daily lives.

The target audience includes Gestalt therapists, counsellors, coaches, educators, mental health professionals, students, and anyone interested in understanding the psychological and relational impact of digital culture.

My connection to this topic arises from observing how digital technologies increasingly influence human attention, relationships, and embodied experience. As both professionals and individuals navigate an increasingly connected world, questions emerge about how to remain present, maintain authentic contact, and care for ourselves without withdrawing from modern life.

Participants will engage in awareness exercises, phenomenological inquiry, body-centred experiments, and relational dialogue to explore their relationship with technology and discover pathways toward greater presence, balance, and meaningful connection.

Conference Workshop #113

Eduardo Salvador

España

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Eduardo Salvador Acevedo is Gestalt Psychotherapist, General Health Psychologist and European Supervisor accredited by the EAGT. Specialised in psychotrauma and Gestalt Therapy, he has extensive international experience. He has researched group dynamics and Gestalt psychodrama in different countries and applied it to contexts of vulnerability and conflict zones, having collaborated with the Kiev Association of Gestalt Therapy and Psychodrama. He combines his private clinical practice with psychological accompaniment to organisations, training in ethics and human rights at the Gestalt school of Tbilisi, and support for refugees. He collaborates with students from the Dutch Gestalt school and recently wrote a chapter in the book https://www.routledge.com/Gestalt-Therapy-in-Times-of-War-New-Clinical-Tools-and-Political-Consciousness/SpagnuoloLobb-Cavaleri-Romano-Bisonti/p/book/9781041198376

Staging the Internal System: Dialogue Among Parties and Integrative Social Theatre

Theater applied to psychology, through the methodology of psychodrama, has a unique capacity to activate, unblock, and regulate emotional processes. Unlike film or conventional theater—where physical distance limits the impact—psychodrama places the individual, the actor, and the audience face-to-face with a living reality. Seeing emotions embodied visually and aurally automatically triggers a sense of identification with one's own story.

Therapeutic depth: It allows people to delve into emotional knots, internal polarizations, and, in some cases, childhood wounds within a controlled environment.

A space for exploration, visualization, and reconciliation

The true integrative power of Gestalt psychodrama lies in its ability to open a space for exploration and external visualization of neurosis. The mechanisms that interrupt contact—such as projection, introjection, or retroflection—which typically operate automatically and unconsciously to protect us from pain, are physically embodied on stage through characters or symbolic objects.

By seeing these blocks and the emotional polarizations they generate (for example, impulsive behavior versus internal suffering) represented externally, the client can observe their relational dynamics from a safe distance. This externalization breaks the cycle of self-criticism and paves the way toward acceptance: the client comes to understand the protective function that mechanism served in the past.

Finally, psychodrama allows clients to rehearse new dialogues and bodily responses. The transition from internal struggle to reconciliation occurs when the client, guided by the therapist, is able to consciously integrate those exiled or rigid parts of themselves, transforming disruption into fluidity and giving a fully unified meaning to their lived experience.

Conference Workshop #317

Liudmyla Schiemann

Germany

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I am 42 years old, born in Ukraine, and have been living in Germany for the past 17 years.

I am a cofounder of a large company in Germany.

I hold a Master's degree in Pedagogy and Psychology, and since 2023 I have been working as a teacher in a German school with children who are forced migrants.

I also hold a Master's degree in Biology.

I am a Gestalt therapist and completed the 1st and 2nd levels of training at the Kyiv Gestalt Institute (KIGIP).

I have been practising body-oriented approaches since 2000 and am the founder and owner of a yoga studio (since 2020) —Yoga Studio in Essen: www.pranayogastudio.de

At the moment, I am writing my doctoral dissertation on the topic of forced migration at the University of Munich, Bavaria.

Starting in 2025, I have been admitted to the program: Post Graduate Advanced Training Program - The Now for Next in Gestalt Therapy Development and Psychopathology in a Field Perspective Program director, founder and author of the concept:Sofia Verulashvili Program director, supervisor and leader: Margherita Spagnuolo Lobb

The Animal Side of Body Language

The Language of the Body in Psychiatry

This unique and engaging workshop (conducted in English) invites participants to explore how body language, posture, and non-verbal expression reflect and shape mental states. With elements of theatre and play, we will embody emotions physically and express them through movement and gesture. Participants will discover new forms of communication and gain deeper insight into how the non-verbal dimension influences the psyche and therapeutic interaction.

Learning and experiential outcomes: Participants will learn to recognise bodily manifestations of emotional states such as anxiety, depression, and anger. They will acquire practical skills for integrating body awareness into psychiatric and psychotherapeutic practice, particularly with patients who struggle to verbalise their emotions. By the end of the workshop, participants will have specific techniques for perceiving and responding to non-verbal cues in clinical encounters.

Theoretical or conceptual basis: The workshop is grounded in principles of body-oriented psychotherapy, psychodrama, and psychosomatic medicine, emphasising the integration of embodied experience with psychiatric assessment and treatment. It highlights the dynamic interaction between mind and body as understood in contemporary neuroscience and clinical practice.

Target audience: Psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, and other mental health professionals interested in expanding their repertoire of experiential and body-oriented methods.

Presenter's connection to the topic: The presenter is the owner of a yoga studio in Germany, with more than 20 years of experience in yoga as well as extensive practice in bodywork, and is also a trained psychotherapist. Their professional path combines clinical expertise with deep knowledge of somatic methods, demonstrating how body-based techniques can complement medication, cognitive, and verbal approaches in psychiatry.

This workshop combines theoretical framing with direct experience, offering participants both intellectual insight and embodied learning that can be applied immediately in clinical practice.

Conference Workshop #335

Debbie Howes

South Africa

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Debbie is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Johannesburg South Africa. She qualified from Potchefstroom University in 1986, doing her thesis on a movement therapy. She subsequently completed the phase 3 modules in Medical Hypnoanalysis, Eriksonian and Ego State therapy. She also qualified in level 2 of EMDR, and the advanced level of EMI.

She incorporates the principles of hypnotherapy and Gestalt with a unique therapeutic model, which includes a projective drawing and storytelling technique.

Debbie has presented papers both nationally and internationally and has appeared on TV and as a host on radio stations in South Africa and Vancouver

Debbie is the author of two books which describe the model and therapeutic process and runs training workshops for professionals in the technique.

Debbie also hosts movement, sound and energy healing workshops and teaches Tai chi.

Truth vs Illusion ? A hypnotherapeutic and Gestalt investigation into the nature of the unconscious mind

The logic of the unconscious mind is that of a child. A child is unable to fully discern the difference between truth and illusion and assumes that the whole world is good. A model is presented which illustrates the repercussions of this logic on the phenomenological interpretation of how an individual perceives their reality, and correspondingly their ability able to navigate challenges and problems in the present moment.

Gestalt principles are incorporated with a projective story telling technique which serves to both outline and reprocess these emotional patterns and belief systems which are adopted in early childhood according to how an individual has learnt to be loved and how to survive. By desensitizing and reprocessing these repetitive cycles towards embodying and balancing the principles of the mother / father /child states of being within, the individual can authentically align with more depth into the present moment with more conscious awareness and presence. The ability to discern truth from illusion on an unconscious level is a catalyst which allows for enhanced creativity, joy and alignment with one's true purpose. The individual can ground somatically into alignment and coherence between the mind and the body and fully expand into their true potential.

An experiential demonstration of the process and technique will further serve to illustrate these concepts. The first phase of the 6-phases of the processing will also be demonstrated.

Online workshop #90 – Open communication session

Naama Baram

Switzerland

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I am a gestalt therapist graduated from NGI (Oslo) and also a cape code model OD therapist.

Between Wu Wei and Fertile Void

In Taoist philosophy, the concept of the Void, or Wuji (無極), represents the primordial, undifferentiated state of the universe that precedes all form and duality. Far from being a state of nihilistic "nothingness," the Void is understood as an infinite field of boundless potential - the "undivided origin" from which the Taiji (Supreme Ultimate) and the subsequent interplay of Yin and Yang emerge. This metaphysical emptiness acts as the generative source of all things, functioning like a "mother" that nourishes existence without being exhausted by it. In practical application, as famously illustrated in the Tao Te Ching, the utility of a vessel depends entirely on its empty space; similarly, human cultivation centres on achieving an internal state receptivity and stillness.

This state finds a striking modern parallel in the work of philosopher Salomo Friedlaender, whose concept of "Creative Indifference" (Schöpferische Indifferenz) became a foundational pillar of Gestalt therapy. Friedlaender argued that true power lies in finding the "zero point - a dynamic centre of balance between opposing poles. In Gestalt practice, this is often referred to as the "Fertile Void," a weighty world of nothingness from which infinite and surprising differentiations can emerge. By resting in this "zero point," the therapist or individual maintains an attitude of unbiased awareness, neither preferring nor resisting any particular outcome.

This radical openness allows for the manifestation of Wu Wei (無爲), or "effortless action". Rather than acting through forceful striving or ego driven intention, one becomes a spontaneous responder to the "here-and-now". In this state, the individual's actions are as inevitable as natural processes, allowing for a "creative adjustment" to the environment where one "does nothing, yet leaves nothing undone". Ultimately, the Void, the zero point, and Creative Indifference all point toward a single truth: that by emptying ourselves of rigid expectations, we access the source of all transformation and flow.

Online workshop #95 – Theoretically-oriented

Nicola Falzon

Malta

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Nicola Falzon is a registered Gestalt psychotherapist and sex educator with over twelve years of experience across mental health, sexual health, and community services. Nicola holds a Master's degree in Gestalt Psychotherapy (EAPTI – GPTIM), a Professional Certificate in Psychosexual Therapy (CICS), and is a licensed Relationship and Sex Education Teacher (ACET, UK). Nicola is currently furthering her studies in Couple Work by sitting for a Professional Certificate in Couples Therapy (Institute of Couples Therapy).

Their clinical practice offers a compassionate, inclusive, and non-judgemental space for individuals, couples, and multiple-partnered persons. Nicola supports clients with various themes, including relationships, trauma, anxiety, stress management, emotional regulation, sexual issues, gender and sexual diversity, and consensual non-monogamy & polyamory.

Nicola is the founder of the Therapeutic Book Rewind Club, a self-development initiative for both the general public and allied professionals. Her work is grounded in a strong belief in community-based practice, self-awareness and development, and the transformative potential of holistic mental and sexual health.

An application of Gestalt Therapy to working with issues of sexual function and other psychosexual presentations

Sexual function problems are commonly approached through medicalised and performance-oriented frameworks that prioritise symptom management and normative sexual functioning. While such models offer important diagnostic and physiological insights, they often overlook the experiential, relational, and embodied dimensions of sexuality. Gestalt psychotherapy offers an alternative perspective, understanding sexual difficulties as meaningful expressions of the individual's ongoing process of self-regulation within the organism–environment field. Central to this approach is the concept of creative adjustment, which conceptualises symptoms as adaptive responses developed to maintain contact, safety, or coherence in relation to environmental demands.

This presentation explores the application of Gestalt theory to sexual function problems, with particular emphasis on creative adjustment, and situates this clinical perspective in dialogue with Taoist philosophy, aligning with the conference theme of Gestalt and Tao. Both Gestalt and Taoist traditions emphasise process, flow, balance, and responsiveness to what is, rather than striving for control or fixed outcomes. Sexual function problems are examined as disruptions in the natural flow of energy, contact, and awareness, often arising when adaptive strategies become rigid or disconnected from present-

moment conditions.

Drawing on Gestalt principles of awareness, embodiment, and here-and-now engagement, the presentation reframes sexual problems as signals of imbalance within the relational and embodied field, inviting curiosity rather than correction. Therapeutic work is conceptualised as supporting a return to fluidity, spontaneity, and self-support, rather than imposing performance goals or normative expectations.

By integrating Gestalt theory with existing psychosexual models, this presentation offers a holistic and ethically grounded framework for understanding and working with sexual function problems and psychosexual presentations. It proposes a shift from symptom eradication to cultivating awareness, flexibility, and alignment with the organism's natural processes, contributing to a deeper, process-oriented understanding of sexual wellbeing within psychotherapeutic practice.

Online workshop #302

Gabriela Montserrat Melendez Ferreira

México

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Clinical psychologist with more than 8 years of experience in therapeutic care and academic coordination in clinical and educational contexts. Specialist in diagnostic evaluation, psychological intervention and clinical supervision. Experience in leading multidisciplinary teams, in curricular design and in institutional processes. Active member of the Mexican College of Psychology Professionals (COMEPPsi) and the College of Postgraduate Psychotherapists.

Gestalt psychotherapy in people with psychiatric diagnosis

In recent years, the increase in psychiatric diagnoses has raised the need for intervention models that integrate medical care with humanistic psychotherapeutic approaches. Gestalt psychotherapy, with its phenomenological and existential focus, offers tools to work beyond the diagnostic label, prioritising authentic contact, awareness, and responsibility. In this theoretical-clinical essay, primary and

secondary sources published between 1951 and 2023 were reviewed, selected for their theoretical-

clinical relevance to Gestalt applied to the psychiatric population. Clinical considerations are described, and case descriptions illustrating its implementation are presented. Furthermore, the scope, limitations, and necessary precautions in professional practice are discussed. These designs open the discussion on a topic not without controversy within the model, on which the authors assert that further research can still be conducted. This concern allows for the creation of an integrative work proposal on a possible approach to the psychiatric process in this psychotherapy. This work aims to systematise what is known about the topic, also delving into different areas of inquiry that can enrich the Gestalt model.

Online workshop #303

Troy Love

USA

troy@findingpeaceconsulting.com

Troy L Love, LCSW is a psychotherapist, TEDx speaker, and 4x Amazon best-selling author with over 25 years of experience helping individuals and couples heal from trauma, shame, and attachment wounds. He is the founder of Finding Peace Consulting and creator of the Finding Peace Model—a practical, trauma-informed framework that helps people move from emotional reactivity to clarity, connection, and lasting inner peace.

Troy is known for translating complex psychological concepts into simple, actionable tools audiences can use immediately. Blending neuroscience, attachment theory, and powerful storytelling, he helps people understand the root of their patterns, break cycles of disconnection, and build secure, meaningful relationships.

He has spoken on international stages and through his TEDx talk, where he reframes shame as a survival strategy rather than a personal flaw. Troy is also the host of the Finding Peace Podcast, sharing practical tools for everyday resilience. His mission is to help people feel fully alive, deeply connected, and at peace with themselves and others.

The Tao of Emotional Balance: Moving Between Activation and Presence

This experiential workshop integrates principles of Gestalt therapy with the Finding Peace Model to explore how attachment wounds and shame-based patterns interrupt present-moment contact. The work is conceptually grounded in Jungian psychology—particularly the role of shadow and the adaptive self—and attachment theory, understanding emotional reactivity as a protective response to unmet relational needs. These perspectives are integrated with Gestalt's emphasis on awareness, contact, and creative adjustment. In alignment with the conference theme, elements of Taoist philosophy—non-forcing, balance, and flow—are woven throughout to support an organic process of healing.

Participants will engage in present-centred experiential practices to identify how reactivity emerges in real time through sensation, emotion, and meaning-making. Through guided exercises, dyadic work, and Gestalt dialogue, participants will explore the polarity between protective adaptations (e.g., shame-based responses) and authentic connection, learning how awareness restores choice and contact.

This workshop is designed for Gestalt practitioners, psychotherapists, counsellors, coaches, and students interested in integrating depth psychology and attachment-based perspectives into experiential practice.

Online workshop #304 – Theoretically-oriented

Dr. Angela Brownemiller

USA

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Spiritual guide, clinician, psychotherapist, expert in consciousness, the mind-brain, and the human spirit, Dr. Angela Brownemiller has developed key theories regarding, and innovative techniques in, Gestalt therapy and other psychotherapeutic practices. She teaches her work online in international trainings, and has worked with people from over twenty nations. Trained by several of the greats in this field, at an early age she studied for several years with Gregory Bateson, co-developer of double-bind theory. Brownemiller's seminal book on Gestalt Therapy and addiction is receiving international attention: GESTALTING ADDICTION: SPEAKING TRUTH TO ADDICTION: ITS POWER, DEFINITION, THEORY, THERAPY, AND TREATMENT, as is her innovative book, SEEING THE HIDDEN FACE OF ADDICTION: DETECTING AND CONFRONTING THIS INVASIVE PRESENCE. Her book series include her NAVIGATING LIFE'S STUFF books and her HOW TO DIE AND SURVIVE LIFE'S CHALLENGES AND TRANSITIONS books. Angela Brownemiller earned her two PhDs and two master's degrees at U.C. Berkeley and served as a U.S. National Institute of Mental Health Postdoctoral Fellow. For more information, see DrAngela dot com.

Essential Keys to Transcending Paradox in Gestalt Therapy

Concept: Essential Keys to Transcending Paradox in Gestalt Therapy are presented. These Keys can serve to bring about shifts in perception, experience, emotion, and behavior. In their energetic, philosophical, and actual workings, these keys are core to the Tao of Gestalt.

Theoretical Basis: This theoretically-oriented presentation looks deeply at the profound impact of double-bind situations and perceptions, and at how these can be transcended in theory and in practice. This transcendence can be worked through in Gestalt processes, to bring new experience of what may be a limiting or even trapping double bind situation.

Practical Application: The more we know about the double-bind, its emotional, cognitive, and even biological elements, the more we can work with the persons experiencing double-bind-like situations. And, once we begin to sensitize ourselves and our clients-patients to the interpersonal, familial, social double-binds all around us, the more there is the opportunity for moving through, for transcending these binds.

Presenter Connection To This Topic: I have been teaching gestalt concepts and conducting gestalt therapy for many years. At an early age I studied for several years with Gregory Bateson, co-developer of double-bind theory. Gregory Bateson was instrumental in my developing a deep and life-long appreciation of the nature of, symptoms of, and movement through, the double-bind. Bateson also

taught in depth the matter of what can take place when caught in an ever more intractable double-bind: a schizophrenogenic double-bind. While this schizophrenogenic double-bind was no longer recognized by the 1970s, as schizoprhenia itself was thankfully understood to have a biological basis, the concept of a deteriorating harmful double-bind situation must continue to be addressed. As we see in individual, familial, community, society, and even global situations, these problematic double-binds must be recognized and addressed for the sake of us all.

Online workshop #305

Karyne Wilner

USA

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Karyne B. Wilner, PsyD, licensed psychologist, has a private practice in Newport, RI. She currently directs the Core Energetics Academy and was formerly Assistant Director of the International Institute for Core Energetics, Senior Director of the Brazilian Institute, and Associate Director in Australia. She has travelled widely giving lectures, workshops, and seminars, and she has written numerous journal articles about somatics and psychology. In addition to her training programs, she taught Master's level Holistic Counseling courses at Salve Regina University in Newport RI from 2010 to 2022.Her joy is in helping people become more authentic and lead richer, fuller lives. She is the author of

Releasing Toxic Anger for Women, currently on Amazon.

Skills to Release Toxic Anger: Transforming Anger into Love

The object of this presentation is to teach skills to facilitate anger awareness so that it can change from high arousal to compassion and caring. Anger, whether expressed or repressed, has the power to wreck homes and relationships. Arguments get physical and loud; couples scream at each other or get completely quiet, shutting down communication for days. Even fetuses feel the effect of anger. When parents-to-be argue and fight, the disparate sounds cause small bodies to contract in the womb. In fact, research ties physical and mental health issues that occur later in life to prenatal stress.

By changing the way energy flows in your body, you will transform your anger and use it purposefully and creatively to achieve and support your accomplishments. Anger changes from a negative force linked with chaos, revenge, judgement, and destruction to a positive energy flow that stimulates confidence, self-worth, productive thinking, honest communications, and loving relationships. In this open-hearted state, you will view other people realistically and accept their differences without judgement. This presentation helps you utilise all aspects of yourself -- mind, body, spirit, emotion – to reformat anger, release tension in the body, and enable the heart to open. The exercises, emphasising improved health, are designed to tap into the body's knowledge, release past hurts, judgements, and expectations, achieve forgiveness, and communicate authentically.

Author of Releasing Toxic Anger for Women: Somatic Practices and CBT Skills to Transform Negative Thoughts, Soothe Stress, & Stay True to Yourself

Online workshop #306

Niela Miller

USA

artsfem2003@yahoo.com

Niela Miller has been a Gestalt therapist since 1967. She specializes in creative approaches to Gestalt work using arts processes. She has trained hundreds of therapists in U.S. and abroad and has been teaching in a virtual world called Second Life for the past 20 years. She wrote the first book for counsellors working with transgenders (Counseling in Genderland) and received a Lifetime Achievement award for her many years of work in that community. Her life's work combining humanistic psychology, many arts processes and education has been documented in a monograph/book called The Symbolic Bridge and is in the M.I.T. library and also at Antioch College, her alma mater. Fritz Perls gave his last full training workshop at her home in Lexington,Ma. shortly before he died. Niela continues to employ Gestalt in current teaching projects and as a guide for living a balanced life.

Symbolic Modeling: A Gestalt Creative Process

"In an environment often dominated by code, data, and explicit knowledge, Miller's lifelong exploration of the tacit, the intuitive, the symbolic, and the pre-verbal offers a critical and complementary paradigm for innovation".

JB Labrune, author of THE SYMBOLIC BRIDGE: The Creative Work Life of Niela Miller

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Therapists, educators, artists, lifelong learners, will all benefit from this introduction to non-linear creative expression with Gestalt applications. One can generate meaning and insight from this experiential process that would not be possible simply by thinking or field knowledge. I I developed SymMod when I became a resident of a virtual world online called Second Life. I brought in my lifelong practices as a Gestalt therapist, educator and multi-artist to create a ubiquitous tool for people professionals and specialists in any field who would benefit from an experiential learning process with any subject matter including self-exploration.

Online workshop #307

Dr. Angela Brownemiller

USA

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Spiritual guide, clinician, psychotherapist, expert in consciousness, the mind-brain, and the human spirit, Dr. Angela Brownemiller has developed key theories regarding, and innovative techniques in, Gestalt therapy and other psychotherapeutic practices. She teaches her work online in international trainings, and has worked with people from over twenty nations. Trained by several of the greats in this field, at an early age she studied for several years with Gregory Bateson, co-developer of double-bind theory. Brownemiller's seminal book on Gestalt Therapy and addiction is receiving international attention: GESTALTING ADDICTION: SPEAKING TRUTH TO ADDICTION: ITS POWER, DEFINITION, THEORY, THERAPY, AND TREATMENT, as is her innovative book, SEEING THE HIDDEN FACE OF ADDICTION: DETECTING AND CONFRONTING THIS INVASIVE PRESENCE. Her book series include her NAVIGATING LIFE'S STUFF books and her HOW TO DIE AND SURVIVE LIFE'S CHALLENGES AND TRANSITIONS books. Angela Brownemiller earned her two PhDs and two master's degrees at U.C. Berkeley and served as a U.S. National Institute of Mental Health Postdoctoral Fellow. For more information, see DrAngela dot com.

Seeing The Truth: Balancing Imbalances in Navigating (Drug and Non-Drug) Addiction In Gestalt Therapy

Presenter Approach and Context: Addictions, their emotions, behaviours, states of mind, are all around and within us. Problem Addiction, whether it be substance (such as drug and alcohol) or non-drug (such as out-of-control gambling, gaming, spending, shopping, overworking, or other activities) affects all of us (either directly or indirectly or both). None of us exist in isolation.

Workshop Raison d'etre: By recognising, and consciously navigating the forces and factors calling for identification and balance, we can take our understanding of and work with clients-patients experiencing addiction to new levels with greater effectiveness. This workshop therefore presents the specialised application to addiction of the Tao of Gestalt.

Relevance to the Tao, and Great Potential of This Relevance: Seeking and experiencing balance through awareness is central in this work Dr. Angela Brownemiller has developed, over years of working with persons experiencing problematic, frequently dangerous addictions. A present time experience is essential in this work, as the realisations made are not only conceptual, these are actual real-time experiences during which a new level of understanding of the addiction pattern is reached.

What Dr. Brownemiller guides in her Gestalt Therapy when working with persons experiencing problem addiction is movement into what she calls "the flow of realisation," which can be guided to be experienced in what she tells clients is "the real time now, where this experience can be most powerful

and life-changing."

Workshop Content:

Dr. Brownemiller provides examples drawn from her years of Gestalt work with Addictions. These examples demonstrate building from identified or presenting problem to far deeper issues and frameworks that can be recognised, addressed, reframed, released. Sample dialogs and interactions and moments of realisation will be shared, along with Brownemiller's theoretical treatments and interpretations of these.

Online workshop #308 – Theoretically-oriented

Herb Stevenson

USA

herb@clevelandconsultinggroup.com

Herb Stevenson is CEO/Founder of the Cleveland Consulting Group, Inc. He has 35+ years of experience in gestalt-based global consulting and coaching. He has published numerous peer based articles and recently published on Amazon "Bare Attention: Coaching at the Point of Contact" and "Bare Awareness: Being a Healing Presence"

Bare attention in Coaching

This workshop will convey the underlying necessity of presence in coaching, therapy, etc.. In this context presence is not just physical, but the essence of the person at the point of contact.

This workshop will support, coaches, therapists, counsellors and others from the healing arts.

The content is based on 40 years of gestalt practice

Online workshop #309

Jack Zwissig

USA

jackzwissig@aol.com

I have been a trainer and transformational coach for more than 40 years. During this time, I have worked with individuals, teams, and large organizations. I have designed, written, and presented dozens of workshops, seminars and experiential trainings. In addition, I have written a book which is a compilation of notes. although I have received considerable praise, and even some awards for my work, the most important aspect of transformational coaching is the positive change it produces in peoples careers, relationships and self-worth. It truly makes a lasting difference. My educational background is an MBA and marketing and management from Santa Clara University with honors my transformational coaching and training experience has been in more than 20 countries. I am considered to be a master trainer and coach.

Transformational Coaching The subject of transformational coaching

The subject of transformational coaching fits perfectly with the entire platform of the TAO of Gestalt because both focus on the sources of thinking, attitudes and ways of being. this workshop is designed for people that want to inspire others and assist in true change. Beginners will gain tools to deepen their coaching abilities, while experts can add to their repertoire of breakthrough methodology.

Online workshop #310

Steve Vinay Gunther

Australia

order@depth.net.au • Wechat: nowshiva

I am director of Gestalt Therapy International and founder of www.learngestalt.com - the largest source of Gestalt resources online.

My interest and study of psychotherapy began in 1972.

My background includes organic farming, clowning, street theatre and community activism. I have run businesses including a vegetarian cafe, a sign writing business, and a food coop.

I founded the Northern Rivers Gestalt Institute in Australia and was director for 17 years. I developed a program called Career Decision Coaching.

I have taught Gestalt in the Americas, Korea, Japan, Egypt, Finland and South Africa. In China I run a full professional training. A core interest is in psychotherapy and spirituality and I was professor of Spiritual Psychology at Ryokan College for 10 years; I have been meditating for more than 50 years.

I am the author of a best selling book for men called 'The Woman In Your Life', published also in Spanish and Chinese.

I have 5 grown children and 5 grandchildren. I am fascinated by systems theory and cybernetics, and my Phd is on the interpersonal dynamics of power.

Humility, injury, non-defensiveness and the Dao. A Gestalt discovery and exploration.

Capitalism is oriented toward growth: higher living standards, expanding goods and services, successful enterprises, efficient markets. At its best it produces productivity, innovation wealth.

Spirituality points in another direction. Rather than pursuing accumulation and achievement, it encourages letting go of attachment, valuing presence over endless striving.

Psychotherapy is growth-oriented, promising greater wholeness, confidence, and relational capacity. Perls criticised this tendency as the "self-improvement racket."

Gestalt therapy is rooted in the I–Thou encounter, the relational construction of reality, and Daoist influence, it values awareness for its own sake, not merely for utility or productivity.

In the 1960s, Gestalt became associated with Perls' brash, confrontational style, expressing a distinctly Western sense of self: assertive, boundary-conscious, and able to meet difference directly.

Contemporary Gestalt has taken a relational turn, paying greater attention to “the between” and to how self and reality are co-created.

Yet something may still be missing. The Dao offers a clue. This workshop explores how humility and yielding, in therapy and life, can interrupt cycles of shame, defensiveness, and conflict. Non-defensiveness can reduce escalation and soften destructive patterns that often remain outside awareness.

The Tao Te Qing speaks of a process of emptying out, in poetic, almost mystical terms.

We naturally defend against criticism and shame, yet facing pain can cultivate humility. Life is not about avoiding hurt, but understanding why it wounds us and recognizing others’ suffering within their behaviour. Drawing on an understanding of the Dao, we can explore a steadier, less defensive humility in therapy, relationships, and everyday life together.

--Thirty spokes meet at a hollowed-out hub / the wheel won't work without its hole / A vessel is moulded from solid clay / its inner emptiness makes it useful / To make a room, you have to cut doors and windows /without openings, a place isn't livable --

Online workshop #311

Albert Wong

USA

ajwwong@gmail.com • Wechat: step1breathe

Albert Wong, PhD (黃君威), is a licensed clinical psychologist in San Rafael, California, with over twenty years of experience in somatic, Gestalt-adjacent, and relational approaches to psychotherapy. He trained in physics at Princeton, philosophy at Oxford as a Marshall Scholar, and Gestalt at the Esalen Institute. He previously served as Director of Somatic Psychology at JFK University. He is the author of The Healing Trauma Workbook and writes for Psychology Today.

His clinical interests include trauma, embodied presence, and the cultivation of authentic contact in therapeutic relationship. He is the founder of Heartfulness Counseling and Somatopia, a continuing education platform in somatic psychology. He has developed frameworks for therapist-in-the-loop AI integration in clinical care.

His current work explores the intersection of somatic psychotherapy, contemplative practice, and contemporary group practices iincluding authentic relating and embodied interbeing — examining how these traditions deepen the Gestalt understanding of contact, field, and presence.

Embodied Interbeing: The Tao of Mutual Arising in Group Contact

Gestalt has always insisted that contact is not something one person does to another, but a phenomenon that arises between. This relational understanding finds deep resonance in Taoist thought, where the Daodejing teaches that being and non-being give birth to each other, and in the Buddhist notion of interbeing articulated by Thich Nhat Hanh — that no self exists apart from the field of relations that constitutes it.

Contemporary embodied group practices, including Authentic Relating, Circling, and Boulder-lineage T-groups, have developed sophisticated experiential technologies for sensing into this mutual arising, yet have rarely been brought into explicit dialogue with the broader Gestalt world.

This experiential workshop is offered from the lineage of Gestalt Practice as developed by Dick Price at Esalen Institute — a contemplative awareness discipline that emerged from Price's integration of Perls's Gestalt with Buddhist meditation and bodywork, and which has always sat closer to spiritual practice than to clinical therapy. The workshop weaves three streams: Gestalt Practice in the Esalen lineage; Taoist and Buddhist understandings of mutual arising and interbeing; and contemporary embodied group practice.

Participants will move through a layered sequence — solo embodied awareness, dyadic presencing, small-group "we-space" sensing, and whole-group field attention — practising the Taoist principle of wu

wei as an orientation that lets contact unfold rather than producing it.

This workshop is intended for clinicians, group facilitators, and contemplative practitioners interested in embodied group work. The presenter trained in Gestalt Practice at Esalen Institute and has spent two decades integrating somatic, contemplative, and relational traditions in his clinical and teaching work, including ongoing engagement with the authentic relating community.

Online workshop #312

Maria Dolenc

Australia

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I am a qualified Gestalt Therapist, Family Constellation Facilitator and Addictions Counsellor working with individuals, couples, families and groups. I have been a lecturer in Holistic Counselling at Nature Care College, and have worked in various capacities at South Pacific Private, Sydney, over a period of eleven years, iincluding Clinical Supervisor. I was also co-director at Gestalt Therapy Sydney and now devote my time mainly to what I love doing, Gestalt and Systemic Constellation work. My focus has been on workshop facilitation, teaching and training along with providing supervision for other therapists and students.

I am a clinical member of GANZ, PACFA, ISCA as well as an accredited PACFA Supervisor.

Paradoxical Theory Of Change

Gestalt Therapy is powerful, direct and creative, while at the same time respectful of the individual's process, their inner world and what is right for them. At the centre of Gestalt Therapy lies the concept of "awareness". People are encouraged to become aware of their own feelings and behaviours, and their effect upon their environment through enquiry. The way in which an individual interrupts or seeks to avoid contact with their environment is considered to be a substantive factor. By focusing on awareness of themselves as part of reality, new insights and self-healing can occur.

Gestalt Therapy may not help you adjust to society, but instead will show you how to adjust to YOURSELF, to discover your own reality, your own humanness and truth and be more comfortable with it.

Paradoxical Theory Of Change Is all about having the awareness to accept ourselves as we are not how we/others think we should be. This was one of the biggest shifts for me and has become a passion and truth in my life.

Online workshop #313 – Research

Forrest James

Australia

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My professional life has focused on easing suffering and promoting human wellbeing. Following studies in somatic psychotherapy in the early 1980s in London, I completed undergraduate degrees in health, and postgraduate studies in sociology and psychotherapy. I worked in human service organisations for thirty years in direct practice, leadership, and clinical supervisory roles, and have maintained a private practice as a psychotherapist and clinical supervisor for twenty-five years. I was previously co-director and senior trainer at psychotherapy institutes in Brisbane and Sydney Australia. I have also worked extensively with organisations in the areas of leadership coaching and organisational development.

Altered States, Grounded Selves: Psychedelic Integration Through a Gestalt Lens

As psychedelic-assisted therapies re-emerge in clinical, community, and cultural contexts, increasing attention is being given to the process of integration: how powerful altered-state experiences become grounded, embodied, and meaningful in everyday life. Psychedelic experiences may produce profound shifts in perception, self-understanding, emotional processing, spirituality, and relational awareness. However, without adequate integration, these experiences may remain transient, destabilising, inflated, or disconnected from lived change.

This presentation explores psychedelic integration through a Gestalt Therapy lens. The theoretical basis draws on Gestalt concepts of awareness, field, contact, figure/ground, experiment, dialogue, and self-as-process, alongside contemporary psychedelic science, trauma-informed psychotherapy, metacognition, mentalising, and relational approaches. Particular attention will be given to the movement from temporary "state" experiences toward more enduring "trait" changes: greater awareness, flexibility, relational capacity, emotional regulation, and grounded meaning-making.

The presentation will also consider clinical and ethical risks in psychedelic integration, including spiritual bypassing, ego inflation, avoidance of ordinary life, trauma activation, and the confusion of dissociation with transcendence. A Gestalt approach offers a practical and relational way of working with these experiences by attending to present-moment awareness, embodied experience, the contact boundary, and the client's wider life context.

The target audience includes psychotherapists, counsellors, psychologists, Gestalt practitioners, students, and mental health professionals interested in psychedelic integration, altered states, trauma, spirituality, and experiential psychotherapy.

My connection to this topic arises from my work as a psychotherapist and my longstanding interest in

trauma, consciousness, human development, spirituality, and transformational change. I am particularly interested in how profound experiences — whether psychedelic, spiritual, traumatic, or developmental — can be integrated into grounded psychological growth, relational functioning, and meaningful participation in everyday life.

Online workshop #314

Grant Waldman

Canada

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Grant has been facilitating Men's Circles for over 20 years. In 2016, Grant graduated with an M.A in Counselling Psychology. In the Autumn of 2016, he embarked upon his PhD, studying Applied Ecopsychology at Project Nature Connect, which is affiliated with West Coast University. By late 2016, honoured to be invited to work at the world-renowned Round Lake Treatment Centre (RLTC) in the Okanagan Valley where 'Culture is Treatment' and always eager for our next grand adventure, Grant and his spouse, Annik moved to the Northern Okanagan region. From 2017 to 2021, he served as a Wellness Facilitator/Counsellor in RLTC's Indigenous treatment program. He assisted clients to heal wounds associated with ancestral trauma (i.e., abuse, addiction, grief, loss and shame). He also supported RLTC's Recovery Home for over a year as Clinical Counsellor. In the Fall of 2023, he successfully completed my PhD in Applied Ecopsychology, though he is not registered as a psychologist in Canada.

The Mythopoetic Men's Movement and the Influence of Gestalt

Gestalt methods profoundly shaped the emotional immediacy, accountability, embodiment, and relational practices used in modern men's circles. This will be observed through the historical context of the mythopoetic men's movement, humanistic psychology, and depth psychology.

Humanistic Psychology - Important figures:

- Carl Rogers
- Abraham Maslow
- Fritz Perls

Depth Psychology

- Carl Jung who researched archetypes, shadow,initiation,individuation, and synchronically

Mythopoetic Men's Movement

- Robert Bly author of Iron John
- Michael Meade who mixed story with drumming

Philosophers & Thinkers

- Martin Buber — I/Thou relationship

• Rollo May — courage and meaning

• Joseph Campbell — hero's journey

• James Hillman

Poets/Writers

• Robert Moore & Douglas Gillette, authors of King, Warrior, Magician, Lover

• Sam Keen, author of Fire in the Belly

The target audience is open to anyone who is curious to learn about the men's movement and the utilisation of Gestalt principles in men's circles/groups. I have been participating in men's circles since the fall of 1996 - nearly 30 years. I have organised/participated in men's and boys rites of passages weekends since 2006 - 20 years. As my biography confirms, I was the executive director of a men's wellness non-profit on coastal British Columbia. I have promoted these circles and weekend experiences, helping dozens of men and many boys to move through a healing/awakening journey. Many of the men are still involved as leaders on the weekends.

Online workshop #315

Tammy Nelson

USA

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Tammy Nelson PhD is an internationally recognized psychotherapist, relationship expert, sex therapist, and author. She is the Executive Director of the Integrative Sex Therapy Institute and has worked with individuals and couples for more than 35 years. Dr. Nelson is a Board-Certified Sexologist, an AASECT Certified Sex Therapist and Supervisor, and a leading voice in the fields of relationships, sexuality, trauma recovery, and contemporary partnership.

She is the author of several influential books, iincluding Open Monogamy, The New Monogamy, Integrative Sex & Couples Therapy, Getting the Sex You Want, and When You're the One Who Cheats. Her work has been featured in major media outlets iincluding The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and The New York Times Magazine. She is also the host of the popular podcast The Trouble with Sex.

Known for her innovative integration of attachment theory, trauma-informed practice, Gestalt principles, and sex therapy, Dr. Nelson teaches internationally and is committed to helping people cultivate authenticity, intimacy, embodiment, and meaningful connection in their relationships and lives.

The Process of Healing Shame: Three Phases of Therapeutic Change

Shame is difficult to work with, for clients and for therapists, and is a crucial part of healing the whole person. When left unspoken, shame drives secrecy, defensiveness, and disembodiment. When worked with skilfully, it becomes a pathway to intimacy, erotic aliveness, and emotional truth.

It is a necessary part of healing to build the capacity to stay present with oneself and others and to allow both vulnerability and connection. In Phase One, there is a crisis or unveiling of the narrative of shame. In Phase two, there is insight and grief, and in Phase three, we create a new vision of the whole self and a new future. Healing shame is not optional in therapy—it is the work.

This presentation is grounded in Gestalt principles of awareness, embodiment, relational contact, and the integration of disowned aspects of self. Shame interrupts contact and fragments the personality, often leading clients to disconnect from their emotions, desires, bodies, and relationships.

Drawing from my clinical experience as a psychotherapist, sex therapist, and trauma specialist, I will explore shame as it effects both the individual and relationships as well as the therapeutic field and discuss how it can be transformed.

This workshop is designed for psychotherapists, counsellors, coaches, and mental health professionals interested in deepening their capacity to recognise and work with shame in clinical practice.

My interest in this topic comes from more than thirty-five years of working with trauma survivors, couples, and individuals struggling with secrecy, self-rejection, and disconnection. Again and again, I have found that healing occurs when shame is brought into awareness, met with compassion, and integrated into a more whole and authentic sense of self.

Online workshop #316

Shirley Hughes

Australia

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I live on the North Coast of NSW Australia, I am a wife, mother and great grandmother, with 4 great grandchildren. I attended university at the age of 65, and studied Gestalt starting at the age of, 69, graduating when I was 73. I am vitally interested in helping people live full and healthy lives in mind body and spirit. I am also very interested in hypnotherapy, which I studied as a late age student.

Before I was 65 I have always been involved in natural health, working for a naturopath for over 20 years. In that capacity I developed the desire to help in their mind as well as their physical health. Hypnotherapy gave me the opportunity to develop a foundation in combination with Gestalt for my professional life. Hypnotherapy helped me understand how to work with the unconscious mind, Gestalt with conscious awarenesss.

Similarities and differences between Gestalt and Hypnotherapy

In this workshop, I will explore the core principles, techniques, and therapeutic applications of Gestalt therapy and hypnotherapy. While these two approaches are often seen as distinct—one rooted in experiential, here-and-now awareness and dialogue, the other in trance, suggestion, and unconscious processes—I will highlight both their similarities and their key differences. Participants will learn how each modality addresses client resistance, therapeutic presence, and the use of imagination. I believe both therapies offer significant value in interpersonal and clinical work, and I welcome the opportunity to present them to a wider audience. By the end of this session, attendees will gain a clearer understanding of when and how to integrate insights from each approach into their own practice, without conflating their unique theoretical foundations.

Online workshop #318 – Theoretically-oriented

Manu Bazzano

UK

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Dr Manu Bazzano is an existential psychotherapist, Zen teacher, and Butoh dancer. A visiting lecturer at Cambridge University and Goldsmiths College London, he is the founder of Affect Therapy, and founder/leader of the Wild Ivy Zen Sangha, an international community of Buddhist practitioners. He authored many books, iincluding Nietzsche and Psychotherapy; Difference and Multiplicity; Buddha is Dead; Re-visioning Existential Therapy, and as an editor the forthcoming The Primacy of Affect, a collection of essays from international philosophers and psychotherapists.

Dark-Enigma and Absence in Taoism and Contemporary Psychotherapy and Spirituality

Mainstream culture, including the culture of psychotherapy and contemporary spirituality, arguably favours a positivist approach to psychical exploration. It does so by engaging in a concerted attempt to make the unconscious conscious, to reduce the neutral intensity of Life itself (aka Affect) to subjective emotions, to overvalue Presence over Absence. This form of barbaric subjectivism leaves out of the exploration a host of invaluable areas of investigation that have to do with what both Taoism and Chan call dark-enigma, the sheer unknowability of life and of our own experience of it as humans. It leaves out Absence, the undetermined matrix from which all living things emerge and flourish, and to which all living things return. What would it be like to outline a theory and a praxis -- spiritual, psychotherapeutic, social -- that takes these two notions into account?

The target audience for this presentation: psychotherapists, mental health practitioners, students of philosophy and the humanities, individuals (whether beginners or experienced) interested/involved in some form of contemplative practice.

I have been aware of this topic for many years both as a psychotherapist and as a Zen practitioner, priest and teacher and have recently come across through study and conversations of some novel development that I am eager to share and discuss with others.

Online workshop #319

Michele Cannavo, Jelena Zeleskov Doric

Italy, Australia

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Michele Cannavo is a psychiatrist at the University of Catania and a Gestalt psychotherapist, serving as adjunct professor there in cinema, television, and psychiatric rehabilitation, and collaborating with the University of California in General Psychology. He is an international teacher and supervisor at the H.C. C. Italy Gestalt Psychotherapy Institute, specializing in bodily processes, group work, and the use of images in therapy. A prolific author and lecturer in neuroscience, he holds advanced training in phototherapy, EMDR, and Flash Technique, and a master's degree in neuroaesthetics. He combines his passion for photography with psychotherapeutic practice.

Jelena Zeleskov Doric is a clinical psychologist and Gestalt psychotherapist trained across Europe and Australia. She has held academic posts including Lecturer in Psychology at Charles Darwin University and Discipline Lead in Psychotherapy and Counselling at ACAP Sydney, and is currently Visiting Professor at the American University of Cyprus. She served nine years as Vice President of the European Association for Gestalt Therapy and held leadership roles with PACFA and GANZ. Registered as a clinical psychologist across Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore, she runs her own practice, Gestalt Healthcare, and has authored numerous publications.

A relational aesthetic approach to the treatment of psychosomatic suffering: the use of images, movement and story telling in supporting bodily pain awareness

Nowadays our existence is formed with accumulated stress and fatigue which have altered our breathing processes and brain synapses when relating with our environment. We live with a constant state of alertness where our body is tested by numerous somatisations. The symptom in patients represents the best possible solution to a problem where bodily experience can take the form of psychosomatic disorders. As Gestalt psychotherapists it is important to reflect on increase in psychosomatic disorders, the desensitisation of contact, the lapses in spontaneity and the absence of presence to the senses, all adaptive responses put in place by our self to protect itself from current devastating trauma. Working with our patients is often a support in experiencing the risk of the new, in exploring territories of the self that are fertile and fertile in novelty, depending on the time and the relationship in which one is placed. Growth is not only regulated by the changes that occur in bodies, but above all by the relational experiences that occur between; bodies where perception of oneself is equally important as the perception of the other.

During our workshop we will present how the use of images, movement and “dance steps” model can form basis of an effective clinical intervention for psychosomatic suffering to foster the perception of the environment as safe, to determine a condition of well-being that translates into the ability to know how

to regulate one's psychophysiological state and activate a situational field that favours co-creation. In addition, we aim to share how this can facilitate healthy re-appropriation of interpersonal relationships based on reciprocity and correspondence that has the capacity to create changes in our mind-body structure, even after such a detachment.

Tijana Micovic, Nina Micovic, Ivana Vidakovic

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Tijana Micovic, D.Psych (Gest), MA Clinical Psychologist, is a psychologist and Gestalt psychotherapist with extensive clinical, research, and editorial experience. In private practice since 2016, she works with adolescents and adults across developmental, relational, and psychological issues, and has collaborated with organizations supporting young athletes, artists, and scientists through career transitions. She has authored scientific papers and conference presentations with particular interests in emerging adulthood, contacting styles, trauma, and sports psychology. Since 2019 she has served as Executive Editor of Gestalt Zbornik, contributing to the journal's professionalization, culminating in its official scientific categorization in 2025.

Nina Micovic, D.Psych (Gest), MA Clinical Psychologist, is a clinical psychologist and Gestalt psychotherapist with fifteen years of experience, working mainly with emerging and established adults. Her work bridges clinical practice, developmental theory, and sociocultural context, combining developmental psychology and Gestalt field theory to explore how people negotiate adult roles within their specific sociocultural field. Through the integration of research, practice, and theory, she helps individuals search for who they are and establish authentic contact with themselves and others. She specializes in life transitions, identity, suicidality, and trauma, and has authored several scholarly articles on these topics.

Ivana Vidaković, PhD, is a Clinical Psychologist with an MA and Honorary Doctorate in Gestalt

Returning to the Senses: Embodied Presence and Support in Emerging Adulthood

This study explores support systems of psychotherapists from a Gestalt and phenomenological-field perspective. Research on psychotherapists' support has focused on professional forms of support, such as supervision, peer consultation, collegial exchange, and institutional resources. Although these approaches are important, they tend to overlook the psychotherapist as a person situated within a life field. This study starts from the assumption that psychotherapists are sustained not only by professional structures, but also by personal systems of support across life domains. Support is therefore understood not merely as professional assistance, but as a wider relational ground that enables contact, self-regulation, resilience, and the capacity to meet personal and clinical demands.

The conceptual framework is grounded in Gestalt theory, particularly its understanding of support as a condition for contact and functioning within a field of relationships and life circumstances. The study uses the Support Systems Questionnaire, a multidimensional instrument designed to examine support

and grounding across domains including Body, Cognitions, Emotions, Relationships, Attitude towards the wider society and system, Career, Material Security, and Purpose, Faith, and Hope.

The target audience includes psychotherapists, psychotherapy trainees, supervisors, trainers, and researchers interested in therapist development, wellbeing, and foundations of clinical work. The study may also be relevant to psychotherapy institutes and professional associations concerned with conditions that sustain therapists in practice.

Our connection to this topic is both theoretical and professional. We are interested in support as a Gestalt concept and in the ways it shapes human functioning across life domains. This has led us to examine the lived reality of psychotherapists not only as practitioners, but as human beings whose worlds also require support. In this way, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of support as a Gestalt concept, not only as theoretical knowledge, but as an embodied experience within the psychotherapist's life field.

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Tijana Micovic, D.Psych (Gest), MA Clinical Psychologist, is a psychologist and Gestalt psychotherapist with extensive clinical, research, and editorial experience. In private practice since 2016, she works with adolescents and adults across developmental, relational, and psychological issues, and has collaborated with organizations supporting young athletes, artists, and scientists through career transitions. She has authored scientific papers and conference presentations with particular interests in emerging adulthood, contacting styles, trauma, and sports psychology. Since 2019 she has served as Executive Editor of Gestalt Zbornik, contributing to the journal's professionalization, culminating in its official scientific categorization in 2025.

Ivana Vidaković, PhD, is a Clinical Psychologist with an MA and Honorary Doctorate in Gestalt Psychotherapy from the Gestalt Psychotherapy Training Institute Malta, holding ECP and EAGT certificates in psychotherapy and supervision. She maintains a private practice and, since 2006, has worked as a trainer, lecturer, and supervisor in Gestalt psychotherapy for Studio for Education Belgrade and internationally, with expertise in trauma diagnosis and psychotherapy research. A longstanding member of EAGT's Research Committee and chair of its Professional Competencies Committee, she has authored articles and book chapters on trauma, supervision, and Gestalt work in organizations and communities.

Nina Micovic, D.Psych (Gest), MA Clinical Psychologist, is a clinical psychologist and Gestalt

Personal Support Systems of (Gestalt) Psychotherapists: A Phenomenological-Field Approach

This study explores support systems of psychotherapists from a Gestalt and phenomenological-field perspective. Research on psychotherapists' support has focused on professional forms of support, such as supervision, peer consultation, collegial exchange, and institutional resources. Although these approaches are important, they tend to overlook the psychotherapist as a person situated within a life field. This study starts from the assumption that psychotherapists are sustained not only by professional structures, but also by personal systems of support across life domains. Support is therefore understood not merely as professional assistance, but as a wider relational ground that enables contact, self-regulation, resilience, and the capacity to meet personal and clinical demands.

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Online workshop #322

Julianne Appel-Opper

Germany

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Julianne Appel-Opper, psychologist, integrative gestalt psychotherapist, supervisor and international trainer has worked over 37 years. Based in Berlin, she offers online therapy and supervision. She has developed an approach to Relational Body Work within an Integrative Gestalt and Intersubjective Relational Psychoanalytic frame which she has presented in articles, book chapters, interviews, invited seminars/webinars and lectures internationally. Since 2001 she has worked internationally as a visiting tutor at several psychotherapy institutes.

Julianne is an Editorial Board Member of the European Journal for Qualitative Research in Psychotherapy, a founding member of IG-FEST, International Gestalt Therapy Study Group on Field-Emergent Self and Therapy. She has developed training programs, which she has offered for many years, supporting international colleagues in deepening their attunement to body-to-body-communications through exercises, theory input, live demonstrations/supervisions.

Body-to-Body-communications in an online field : Two living bodies inhaling and impressing, moving each other

Interbodily processes evolve in an online field. Sitting in front of a computer screen miles apart, the two living bodies are still inhaling each other. The breathings of the lungs convey what this person has inhaled from others and what the living body expects from another. Rhythms and melodies of being in the world speak of embodied stories about how this living body has been treated, cared for, handled, looked at, ignored, threatened, and soothed.

Julianne has developed, written about, and presented her approach 'Relational Living Body Psychotherapy', as a Contemporary Gestalt model from a radical field and living body orientation. Using her experience of many years of clinical practice and teaching, Julianne offers a safe and respectful place for short exercises to deepen awareness of own embodiment, the living body as orchestra, body-to-body-communications, and how to develop embodied interventions and experiments.

The webinar will mainly be experiential. Julianne will teach her approach with the same style as she works with clients, dialogical, relational and embodied.

Julianne has developed, written about, and presented her approach 'Relational Living Body Psychotherapy', as a Contemporary Gestalt model, drawing on the embodied field perspective, the understanding of ongoing selfing processes. This way of working includes embodied interventions and experiments with the focus on co-created/body-to-body resonances, how bodies and body parts speak in their rhythms of being-in-the-world. The webinar is suitable for psychotherapists/trainers/supervisors.

My training in Integrative Gestalt Psychotherapist at the German Fritz Perls Institute in the 80's provided me with basic Tao concepts. I have integrated the Taoist practice of polarities into my exercises of finding a 'warm'/'cold' in the body. To me, the gestalt focus on self-regulation/co-regulation is quite comparable to the Tao. The body ageing healthy also fascinates me, to helping the body to become more fluid, especially after trauma.

Online workshop #323 – Research

Vikram Kolmannskog

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Vikram Kolmannskog, Dr. Philos., is a Full Professor of Gestalt Therapy at the Norwegian Gestalt Institute. In addition to his academic post, he has a practice as a therapist, supervisor, and international trainer. His work and research focus on the intersections of Gestalt therapy with mindfulness, ecology, and gender, sex, and relationship diversity (GSRD). A prolific author across academic and creative genres, Vikram is a co-editor of "Queering Gestalt Therapy" and author of several books, iincluding "The Empty Chair: Tales from Gestalt Therapy" and, most recently, "Reflections on Parenting from a Gestalt Therapist-Father".

Grandma Willow: Gestalt Therapy and More-Than-Human Dialogue

What happens when a Gestalt therapist begins speaking to a tree — and the tree speaks back?

Drawing on autoethnographic studies, this presentation weaves together Gestalt therapy, deep ecology, and spirituality to challenge the human-centred assumptions embedded within Western psychotherapy. At the centre of the exploration is the evolving relationship between a Gestalt therapist, his young son, and an old willow tree.

Rooted in the presenter's dual Indian and Norwegian heritage, the inquiry brings Gestalt theory into dialogue with Indian spirituality, Zen Buddhism, and Norse animist traditions. Using a decolonial perspective, the presentation explores how Western therapeutic frameworks have often separated humans from nature, and how life and therapy might be different with relational traditions that understand the world as alive, interconnected, and participatory.

Particular attention is given to Gestalt concepts such as the organism/environment field and dialogue, examining how these may expand beyond exclusively human relationships to include the wider ecological field.

Through personal narrative, ecological reflection, and theoretical exploration, the presentation invites therapists to reconsider what counts as relationship, presence, and reciprocity in a time of ecological crisis.

Online workshop #324 – Theoretically-oriented

Tetiana Yevtushok

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Tetiana Yevtushok is a psychologist, Gestalt therapist, supervisor, and doctoral researcher at the University of Derby (UK), where her research explores the psychological challenges, protective factors, and support needs of parents raising autistic children.

Alongside her professional work, she is also the mother of a non-speaking autistic son, an experience that has profoundly informed her understanding of relational presence, regulation, and communication within the preverbal field.

Over the past decade, Tetiana has worked therapeutically with individuals, groups, and therapists in training, integrating Gestalt therapy with phenomenological, relational, and trauma-informed perspectives. She is also the author of "Money Healing: The Hidden Psychology of Wealth", which examines the relational and emotional dimensions of money, responsibility, and identity.

Across her clinical, academic, and writing work, Tetiana is particularly interested in how human beings sustain meaning, presence, and inner coherence within demanding relational and social systems.

Contact Before Words: Gestalt Therapy and the Preverbal Relational Field in Autism and Parenting

This presentation explores preverbal relational experience in autistic children and parenting through the lens of Gestalt therapy, phenomenology, and field theory. The theoretical foundation of the presentation draws on Gestalt concepts of organismic self-regulation, contact boundary processes, embodied awareness, and field-sensitive therapeutic presence, alongside phenomenological and contemporary autism-informed perspectives.

In autism-related caregiving and therapeutic contexts, distress is often expressed through bodily organisation, movement, sensory overload, and affective intensity rather than through narrative articulation. Parents and therapists may become deeply drawn into these preverbal processes, where prolonged exposure to dysregulation can lead to exhaustion, confluence, and erosion of self-support. The presentation considers how Gestalt therapy offers a valuable framework for understanding and supporting relational processes that unfold prior to verbal communication.

Integrating Gestalt psychotherapy, phenomenology, autism research, and lived caregiving experience, the presentation invites reflection on forms of communication and relational encounter that unfold before words. Particular attention is given to therapeutic presence, regulation, and the ethical challenges of remaining relationally available without collapsing into the other's distress.

The presentation may be relevant for Gestalt therapists, counsellors, psychologists, caregivers, autism practitioners, and professionals working within relational and developmental contexts. The topic is informed not only by the presenter's clinical and academic work, but also by her lived experience as the mother of a non-speaking autistic son.

Online workshop #325

Constantina Bascourelou

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Constantina Bascourelou is a psychologist and gestalt psychotherapist in Athens, Greece. She holds a BSc in Psychology and a Master of Arts in Clinical-Counseling Psychology. She is a certified gestalt therapist, having completed her diploma training at the Athens Gestalt Foundation, with a diploma thesis entitled Gestalt Therapy and Tai Chi Chuan: Embracing the One. She is a member of the Association of Greek Psychologists, the Hellenic Association for Gestalt Therapy (H.A.G.T.), and the European Association for Gestalt Therapy (E.A.G.T.).

Her work sits at the intersection of gestalt therapy, embodied practice, and Eastern philosophy. She has spoken at the 2nd Panhellenic Tai Chi Symposium (January 2023), with a presentation entitled Gestalt Psychotherapy and Tai Chi Chuan. A Tai Chi practitioner with a longstanding interest in Eastern thought, she brings direct somatic experience to her engagement with Taoist themes.

She has also spoken at the Scientific Conference of the Hellenic Association for Gestalt Therapy (November 2024), with a presentation entitled Obsessive Compulsive Adaptations: OCD through the Lens of Gestalt Therapy. She occasionally contributes psychology and gestalt-related articles to the Greek press.

The Tao of Motherhood: A Gestalt Journey Through Transformation, Contact, and Surrender

Matrescence — the developmental transition into motherhood — represents one of the most profound reorganizations of self the human organism undergoes. Yet it remains undertheorized within the psychotherapeutic literature and largely invisible in gestalt clinical training. This workshop addresses that gap.

The Tao of Motherhood is a two-hour online experiential workshop for gestalt therapists and trainees. It brings gestalt therapy into dialogue with early Taoist philosophy to explore the phenomenology of the maternal transition: the dissolution and reformation of identity; the asymmetric porosity of the mother–child contact boundary; the surfacing of intergenerational unfinished business; and the somatic intelligence that caregiving demands and deploys.

The Taoist frame is not decorative. Drawing on Ellen Chen's (1969) argument that wu — nothingness — functions as the generative Mother Principle in the Tao Te Ching, the workshop locates the mother not at the margins of Chinese philosophical thought but at its ontological centre. The resonances with gestalt theory are structural: the fertile void, the paradoxical theory of change, the body as primary ground of awareness. Theoretical touchstones include Laura Perls on support as the precondition of contact; Buber

on the mother–infant dyad as the original I–Thou encounter; Ruella Frank's somatic work on how the first year of life is carried forward in the body; the work of Janet Adler and Violet Oaklander on embodiment and the child's inner world; and Lynne Jacobs on engaged surrender.

This workshop is also personal. The facilitator is a gestalt psychotherapist and a mother of a one-year-old, presenting from inside the experience rather than beyond it — from the love, the loss of self, the rawness and the wonder that early motherhood brings.

All participants are welcome — not only those who are mothers. Everyone has a body, a lineage, and an unfinished relationship with being held.

Online workshop #326

David Woolfson

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I am one of the UK's premier specialists in anger management and have run anger education programmes for therapists and other professionals over many years. The most common psychoeducational techniques explore only a small world in a big universe; I have developed and expanded my own therapeutic method, one that has taken me far beyond the conventional boundaries of traditional anger management based on my "Seven Principles" which extend Gestalt concepts into a practical process for life.

I have appeared regularly on the BBC, Sky News and LBC Radio, featured in Woman's Own, Huffington Post, Men's Health and SHE magazines, most recently (2025) interviewed in British GQ. I have contributed to the Guardian, iincluding articles Making Anger Your Friend (May 2019) and 10 Ways to Deal with Your Anger (November 2023). I have appeared as an expert on Channel 4's Embarrassing Bodies. And I have also spoken in depth about celebrity anger on Radio One and on Sky TV. I run a weekend course for individuals causing suffering; "Making Anger My Friend" and I have run anger education in schools.

Working with Anger and Seven Principles for Living

This workshop will help you to understand and work with anger in the therapy room and your workplace. It is specifically for individual therapists, counsellors, nurses, doctors, police, social workers and anyone else faced with anger in the workplace. It is designed to support your understanding of anger and how you address anger in your clients. We have developed unique models such as "The Anger Engine". This original model maps the processes which drive angry outbursts and raises the possibility of interrupting the habitual trigger/behaviour dynamic and adopting healthier behaviours as well as deeper self-awarenesss.

You will learn key techniques to pass on to your clients which will help them manage their behaviour and express anger in a healthy way. You will receive guidance on how to remain calmer and contained when faced with an angry client. You will approach anger in your clients with more confidence and less fear and through your own understanding will be better placed to teach them that it is "OK to Feel Angry" and that anger can be expressed different way.

Anger has a bad reputation – we will define "what anger is" – understanding this can be transformational. We will talk about how anger gives important information and how this can be confused with our history and perceptions.

Through the repeated practice of the Seven Principles Process, grown from Gestalt ideas, you can grow the best version of yourself. Think of them as a way of reducing friction, as a basic process underlying all human action and experience.

The target audience: It is also for those who deal with anger in the therapy room, the workplace or in the world at large. Anger and the anger of others can be a scary place.

Online workshop #327 – Theoretically-oriented

Richard Dennison, Claire Spiller

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Richard Dennison qualified as a Gestalt therapist in 2000 and has maintained a lifelong interest in personal growth, his journey centred on recovery from chronic shame. He sustains active interest in shame and guilt as clinical topics, with clients and other therapists alike. He holds a BSc in Psychology and an MA in Philosophy, his dissertation on shame, and now pursues a PhD at the University of York, researching shame, guilt, and relationships. He speaks internationally on these topics, leading a workshop on shame at the 2024 IAAGT Conference in Mexico, with further work planned in Canada and Germany.

Claire Spiller is a UKCP, GPsyC, and EAGT-accredited Gestalt psychotherapist and UKCP-registered clinical supervisor working with groups and individuals. A graduate of the Centre for Somatic Studies in New York, she is interested in Gestalt as an existential-phenomenological, somatic approach to life, and in leadership as a fluid, emergent function within group process. Beyond clinical practice, she is current Secretary of the New York Institute for Gestalt Therapy, facilitating groups on writing and research, and a Professional Member of the Association for Counsellors and Therapists Online. She lives and works in the UK as a doctoral researcher and clinical trainer.

Aggression in Intersubjectivity: The Vital Nature of Aggression within a Relationship: Towards a Phenomenological Understanding of Shame

Aggression in PHG is viewed as a vital force for existence, yet it has been sidelined by social taboos. This presentation will address the vital nature of aggression as a necessity for life, particularly in engagement with others.

Chronic shame is a profound, devastating mental health issue that, in our view, lacks aggression and exhibits a lack of agency and passivity, particularly in response to others. Therefore, by explaining chronic shame, the impact on the individual within relationships becomes clear.

In this presentation, we will explore aggression as a vital ingredient in outlining the phenomenological process of intersubjectivity, a task Merleau-Ponty saw as difficult. The starting point will be the work of Perls, Hefferline, and Goodman (1951) and their outline of aggression in that work, 'Gestalt Therapy,' where aggression is separated into three parts: annihilation, destruction, and initiative. We will examine each part and its role in engagement with others.

We will outline aspects of D.W. Winnicott's (1971) work, a psychoanalyst, and show how aggression, as an essential life ingredient, can be used effectively, initially in the infant, to find reality and the other as a

concrete entity in the world, primarily in relation to the infant's primary caregiver.

In comparison, we view the passivity that grows within the individual in instances of chronic shame. The passivity, we argue, is an allowance or a disposition to become objectified that Sartre outlines in his depiction of intersubjectivity, and in particular 'the look'. Aggression is the foil of objectification, which we will show.

Given our outline that aggression is at the root of intersubjectivity, we will highlight the necessity of aggression if individuals are to meet equally and solidly without confluence or dominance, resisting the urge to objectify. In this process, a return to agency and recovery from chronic shame becomes possible.

Online workshop #328

Olena Holub, Oksana Leshchenko

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Olena Holub is a Gestalt therapist, supervisor, trainer, and co-founder of MIST, the International Institute of Supervision and Training. A member of the European Association for Gestalt Therapy and the National Association of Gestalt Therapists of Ukraine, she is originally from Ukraine and currently based in Slovakia, developing international educational and psychotherapeutic projects in Gestalt therapy and supervision. Her work centres on building a culture of supervision and therapeutic presence within unstable social fields shaped by war, migration, and collective uncertainty, grounded in existential and field perspectives, with further interests in embodied approaches, bodily phenomenology, and trauma-sensitive practice.

Oksana Leshchenko is an EAGT Gestalt therapist, supervisor with the National Association of Gestalt Therapists of Ukraine, organizational consultant, and co-founder of MIST, the International Institute of Supervision and Training, 4ID, a corporate psychology provider, and SensAI, an AI project in psychological support. Her focus is building a culture of supervision, therapeutic presence, and field approaches in Gestalt therapy, alongside organizational psychology. Through MIST she develops international programs aligned with EAGT standards, while through 4ID she delivers psychological support and wellbeing solutions for Ukrainian businesses and leaders, expanding access to quality support for those who need it.

Embodied Phenomenology and Resonance as a Tool of Psychotherapy

This workshop is intended for practising Gestalt therapists, supervisors, and advanced-level trainees who wish to transform somatic resonance from the realm of “intuition” into a precise clinical instrument.

In contemporary psychotherapy, the body is increasingly understood not merely as a site of symptoms, emotions, or regulation techniques. The embodied-phenomenological approach proposes a radical shift: the body is not an addition to the psyche, but the very process of contact and our primary mode of being in the world.

While the mind during a session searches for words and interpretations, the autonomic nervous systems of therapist and client are already exchanging signals within milliseconds. Bodily responses represent the earliest, pre-verbal, and often most authentic form of dialogue within the therapeutic field.

This workshop is devoted to the development of Embodied Awareness — the capacity to use one’s own bodily experience as a resonator and as an instrument of aesthetic diagnosis within psychotherapy and

supervision.

The workshop combines theoretical reflection, phenomenological inquiry, and experiential micro-experiments in small groups. The focus is not on body-oriented techniques themselves, but on cultivating therapeutic perception and embodied clinical sensitivity.

Rather than relying primarily on cognitive analysis and interpretation, participants will be invited to slow down, notice, and investigate what is already emerging at the contact boundary.

The workshop offers an opportunity to rediscover the body as one of the most precise and immediate instruments within the therapeutic process.

Online workshop #329

Nathalie Nally

Switzerland

I am a Gestalt therapist and adult education trainer with a federal diploma in adult learning and education. I work with healthcare teams and institutions, accompanying professionals in their relational and clinical practice.

My experience in palliative care and nursing homes continues to inform my sensitivity to situations where life, death, grief, and loss are present in the therapeutic and institutional field.

I am interested in what emerges in the relational field in the moment: how contact is formed, interrupted, or transformed; how practitioners become aware of their own sensing, emotions, and movements of meaning while they are in relation with others.

My attention is drawn to how therapists and caregivers stay present to what affects them, and how this affects their capacity to remain in contact in situations of vulnerability, uncertainty, and finitude.

I work with Gestalt therapy and experiential learning processes. My current interest is in supporting practitioners in developing awarenesss in action, iincluding metacognitive awarenesss, as it unfolds in lived contact, especially in intercultural and complex clinical fields.

What happens to therapeutic presence when finitude is part of the personal and therapeutic field?

This workshop explores how awareness of finitude and impermanence shapes therapeutic presence, relational contact, and clinical responsiveness in practice.

Rather than treating finitude as a conceptual topic or offering specific intervention techniques, this inquiry situates it as a fundamental dimension of the therapeutic field, subtly or explicitly influencing how contact is co-created between therapist and client. From a Gestalt field perspective, therapeutic presence is understood as continuously emerging within the dynamic interaction between therapist, client, and context, where personal history, emotional resonances, and implicit assumptions participate in shaping the quality of contact.

Conceptual basis

This workshop is grounded in contemporary Gestalt therapy, particularly field theory, phenomenology, and dialogical practice. It draws on the understanding that therapeutic experience is co-constructed within a relational field rather than located solely within the individual. Finitude is approached here as an ever-present dimension of human experience that informs perception, meaning-making, and

relational responsiveness in clinical work.

Target audience

This workshop is intended for Gestalt therapists, psychotherapists, counsellors, trainees, and mental health professionals interested in deepening their understanding of therapeutic presence and relational process. No specific expertise in end-of-life or grief work is required.

My connection to this topic

My professional and teaching experience has been shaped by long-term engagement with questions of presence in situations where clients encounter profound human vulnerability, including loss, transition, existential uncertainty, as well as work with people at the final stage of life. Over time, I have become increasingly interested in how therapists' own relationship to finitude subtly influences the quality of listening, contact, and therapeutic presence, beyond any specific clinical population or model of intervention.

Philip Brownell

USA

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Philip Brownell is a clinical psychologist licensed in Idaho, USA. He is a trained Gestalt therapist, Certified Professional coach, and a member of the American Psychological Association and the New York Institute for Gestalt Therapy. He has written six books (his latest out soon with Routledge titled A Gestalt Therapist Teaches in Ukraine: Post-Secular Psychotherapy in a Difficult Field. He has also written Christianity and Gestalt Therapy: The Presence of God in Human Relationships. Phil has conducted training on various subjects in diverse parts of the world (Nanjing, Hong Kong, Rome, Belgium, Argentina, Australia, and Ukraine among others). He has been active in helping to establish a research tradition for Gestalt therapy and is a member of the Gestalt Research Association. For many he best known for his work advocating and supporting research in Gestalt therapy. He is married to Linda, and they live on a small ranch with many animals. He has a bench there among the trees where he sits in solitude and contemplates God. And listens silently. And worships with gratitude. That is also a Tao.

A Strategy for Gestalt Therapy Researchers

In Ukraine a war has killed thousands upon thousands. The warriors fight to win; that is their hope. In order to win they must have a strategy. Minor tactical wins on the battlefield do not simply add up to a winning strategy, and it is strategy that wins wars.

I will present a winning strategy for the field of Gestalt therapy research. As if we are in a war for the survival of Gestalt therapy, just as Ukraine is in a war for the survival of that country, I will present, for those participating, the most critical forms of research, the most critical battles we must win to establish Gestalt therapy as an evidence based approach. Following that I will provide further aspects of this strategy by indicating what kinds of research must follow. I will insist that this requires the cooperation across Gestalt training groups in various countries, all working together to establish a profoundly formidable research tradition for Gestalt therapy.

The theoretical foundation is found in the subjects of research design and clinical guidelines in evidence-based practice. What is research design? It is the pattern, the Tao or way, or strategy for accomplishing diverse ends or purposes. What are clinical guidelines? The standards of practice based on research.

The target audience is all Gestalt therapists, whether they be new, in training, or well-established and whether or not they already be engaged in the effort to build a research tradition for Gestalt therapy.

What I my connection to this topic? I have been advocating for research in Gestalt therapy for decades in both the AAGT/IAAGT and EAGT. I have edited two editions of a book on research for Gestalt therapy, and I teach internationally, conducting webinars for the Gestalt Research Association, colleagues in Poland and those in Ukraine.

Online workshop #331 – Theoretically-oriented

Vincent Beja

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Gestalt-therapist for more than 30 years, trainer, supervisor. Organizer of the Third International Conference on Gestalt Therapy Research in Paris 2017, I have been in charge of the Research Committee of the EAGT (European Association for Gestalt Therapy), member of the SPR (Society for Psychotherapy Research) and of the NYIGT (New York Institute for Gestalt Therapy).

Member of the reading committee of the french Revue Gestalt for 10 years, I have written more than forty articles on Gestalt Therapy in various French and English journals and translated many others.

Non-Dualism, and Gestalt Clinical Practice - On Buddhist compassion (Karuna) and Zhuangzi's 'fasting of the heart' (XinZhai)

The central theme of my presentation is non-dualism — not as a metaphysical doctrine but as the very structure of experience itself, and above all, from the perspective of clinical practice, as an ethical requirement of the therapeutic relationship. The aim is to renew the foundations of a clinical field methodology. We shall therefore begin by exploring several traditions: the phenomenology of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, the pragmatism of Dewey, and the neurophenomenology of Varela, Depraz and Vermersch, before turning to the Eastern perspectives of Buddhism and Taoism. We will pay particular attention to the Zhuangzi — and notably to two concepts that can help us develop a clinical field methodology: the fasting of the heart (xinzhai) and knowing without knowing (zhī bù zhī).

I started my Gestalt learning more than 30 years ago, after my apprenticeship in TaiJiQuan (which I consider a deeply Taoist practice).

Drawing on my knowledge of Taoism, I have been working for years to develop a non-dualist Gestalt practice and theory, which I teach at the institute (Institute de development du thérapeute – IDeT-gestalt) that I founded in Paris with Florence Belasco.

Evening lecture #179

Siita Lu

China

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I first encountered my Taoist master 30 years ago, and have been following the practices that she gave me ever since.

I was working as human resource director in multinational companies over a 20 year period, and subsequently became a freelancer management consultant.During this period I encountered psychological frameworks, and have also engaged in the study and application of these realms. In my 20 years volunteer work I also learned about and promote Anthroposophy through translating for German Steiner educators and Biodynamic teachers.

Thirteen years ago I encountered Gestalt, and have been slowly absorbing what that means in my life.

Now, at the age of 54, I find Gestalt helped me integrate all these domains in a coherent framework, where rather than existing as separate, they come together in a synergistic way, forming a larger whole.

The Tao of Gestalt: Act without forcing, strive without competing

Taoism is one of China's oldest and most influential wisdom traditions, yet it is often misunderstood in the West as either a religion, a philosophy of passivity, or a collection of mystical ideas. This presentation offers an accessible introduction to the Taoist worldview and explores its relevance for Gestalt practitioners, therapists, educators and leaders.

Beginning with the question, "What is the Tao?", we will explore the central Taoist insight that life unfolds according to patterns that cannot be fully grasped through concepts, control, or force. Drawing primarily from the Tao Te Ching and the teachings of Lao Zi, the presentation will introduce key Taoist principles including naturalness (Ziran), non-forcing (Wu Wei), paradox, balance, emptiness, and the dynamic interplay of Yin and Yang.

Participants will discover how Taoism invites a different relationship to experience—one based on awareness, responsiveness, humility, and participation rather than certainty, judgment, and control. The presentation will also explore resonances and differences between Taoist thought and Gestalt practice, including presence, field sensitivity, organismic self-regulation, trust in process, and the creative emergence of figure from ground.

Rather than presenting Taoism as a set of beliefs, this lecture offers an experiential introduction to a living tradition that continues to shape Chinese culture and ways of understanding human existence. It provides a foundation for appreciating the conference theme, The Tao of Gestalt, and invites reflection on how ancient Taoist wisdom can enrich contemporary Gestalt theory and practice.

Morning sessions #180

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Taoist exercises: A Deeper Connection

We start the day with an open session of Taoist exercises. These are relevant at any level - experienced practitioners, down to complete beginners.

The integration of Taoist exercises into a Gestalt conference is no coincidence. There is a profound and recognized connection between these two philosophies:

• An Embodied Practice: In the Gestalt approach, the mind and body are not separate. Taoist exercises offer a practical, physical way to explore concepts of energy flow that are central to "embodied relational Gestalt" practice . The morning practice is designed to foster a state of open, focused awareness.

• Starting the Day with Awareness: By starting the conference day at 7:00am with these exercises, we provide a dedicated space for participants to ground themselves, cultivate embodied presence, and align with the conference theme before the day's sessions begin. It's an invitation to "lose your mind and come to your senses," echoing the spirit of Perls' famous sayings .

These sessions blend physical postures, breathwork, and a mindful, present-centered awareness that prepares participants for the experiential and relational learning of the conference.