

Building Bridges VII
March 1 & 2, 2012
Valhalla Inn, Thunder Bay

Understanding and Facilitating the Change from Addict Self to Recovery Self
Allen Berger, Ph.D.

The goal of this two day seminar is to help counselors and therapists refine their therapeutic skills and extract from the 12 Step oriented approaches to recovery the specific therapeutic or psychological principles of change that are particularly relevant in successfully treating addiction.

Dr. Berger will discuss and demonstrate ways of integrating modern psychotherapeutic approaches in the treatment of addiction. Following is a breakdown of the seminar.

Thursday March 1, 2012

Being Therapeutic: The Humanization of Psychotherapy Technique

9: 00 am to 12:00 pm

Elements of Effective Psychotherapy

In this workshop Dr. Berger explores the components of effective psychotherapy that in his opinion is rooted in the immediate moment. Topics will include, but won't be limited to, the art of confrontation without injuring a client's self-esteem or compromising their personal dignity; becoming aware of what is missing in the therapist-client interaction and how to use this information to identify the client's working point or theme and formulate powerful therapeutic interventions, how to be more creative in sessions, and how to follow the moment to moment unfolding of the process to identify opportunities to intervene and promote awareness.

Learning these therapeutic skills will be facilitated with experiential exercises and by Dr. Berger's narration of recorded sessions of various master therapists.

1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Dealing with the Difficult Client, Resistance and Other Challenging Clinical Situations

The afternoon session will focus how to manage difficult clients and challenging moments during treatment. Therapists will be encouraged to develop a perspective of resistance that will keep them from polarizing with clients. The emphasis here is on thinking out of the box and discovering innovative responses to these situations in an attempt to create new experiences for the client, promote awareness and encourage experimentation. Therapists will also learn how to use their personal reactions to unlock an impasse with a client. Dr. Berger will narrate recordings of sessions with difficult clients to demonstrate these powerful therapeutic techniques.

Friday March 2, 2012

Directions of Change in Recovery

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Integrating Modern Psychotherapy with Addiction Treatment

The focus in this presentation is on the direction of change that takes place in recovery and how the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous facilitate this transformation. Many myths and misperceptions exist about the 12 Steps amongst mental health professionals and addictions counselors. Dr. Berger will shatter these myths by unpacking the powerful psychological processes that create the general and specific therapeutic benefits the Steps.

In this presentation Dr. Berger will show how the relationship amongst the Steps builds a powerful therapeutic force that ultimately results the addict recovering their “lost, true- self.”

The therapeutic interventions based on these principles will be recommend and demonstrated. These interventions are designed to enhance the therapeutic effect of the Steps and/or help a client work through their resistance to working a particular Step.

Dr. Berger will also introduce the “addict-self” and “recovery-self” model and the therapeutic protocol to create a powerful dialogue between these two parts of a client.

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Emotional Sobriety - The Next Step in Recovery

Recovery involves three stages: 1) getting clean and sober, 2) staying clean and sober, and 3) living clean and sober. Staying and living clean and sober are by far the most difficult. One of the major factors in this problem is that we don't know how to attain and sustain our emotional sobriety. Dr. Berger believes the quality of one's life in recovery is contingent on their level of emotional sobriety - maturity.

What interferes with emotional sobriety is emotional dependency or as Bill called it “absolute dependency on people, places and things.” Emotional dependency can be crippling and is an unrecognized cause of relapse and unstable recovery.

Emotional sobriety was first discussed by Bill Wilson in 1958 but as Dr. Berger will demonstrate, the issue has also been discussed in other ways by many famous psychotherapists like Fritz Perls, Karen Horney, Virginia Satir Walter Kempler, Nathaniel Brandon and Murray Bowen.

Dr. Berger will discuss how to help clients unravel their emotional dependencies and establish a more solid emotional foundation for their recovery. He will also show a DVD of a couples therapy session facilitated by Dr. Walter Kempler, a pioneer in the field of family therapy, in which he helps a couple relax their rigid rules and make more room for each other in their relationship. Dr. Berger will narrate and discuss the specific issues involved in this unique approach to couples therapy.