

Emotion-Focused Therapy Clinic

York University

Empathy and Empathic Attunement in Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT)

Norcross & Wampold (2011), after a comprehensive review of the research on specific elements of the psychotherapy, concluded that empathy is demonstrably effective in promoting change in psychotherapy. Therapists' empathy is recognized as a trans theoretical construct that contributes to positive outcomes across different therapeutic approaches. This workshop will provide participants with a solid grounding in the skills required to be maximally empathic and attuned to their clients, in order to work more effectively in emotion focused psychotherapy, and develop productive therapeutic alliances.

Participants will be trained in the skills of moment-by-moment attunement to clients' emotional experience in the session to facilitate their cognitive-affective processing in emotion-focused psychotherapy. Skills training will include a combination of brief lectures, video demonstrations, case example and supervised practice in experiential exercises. The workshop will begin with an overview of empathic resonance drawing on developments in neuropsychological research and ways of enhancing clinicians' responsiveness will be discussed. Subsequently, empathic expression including the behavioural components of empathy, along with different response modes and markers for how to intervene differentially will be identified and demonstrated. Finally, the role of empathic attunement in the processing of overwhelming emotion, self-criticism, and emotional injuries from the past will be presented.

This training will provide therapists from a variety of clinical backgrounds with an opportunity to enhance their skills of empathic attunement in emotion-focused psychotherapy.

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Educational Objectives:

- Participants will gain a differentiated understanding of empathy
- Participants will identify ways to enhance their empathic resonance
- Participants will learn to intervene differentially using empathic markers
- Participants will learn to use different empathic response modes in EFT
- Participants will learn how to use empathy to help clients process overwhelming emotion, self-criticism, and emotional injuries from the past

Trainer: Jeanne Watson, Ph.D., C.Psych.

Dr. Watson is one of the founders of the International Society for Emotion Focused Psychotherapy (isEFT), along with Drs. Leslie Greenberg, Rhonda Goldman and Robert Elliott. Professor Watson teaches in the Clinical and Counselling Psychology in the Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development, at the Ontario Institute of Education at the University of Toronto, Canada.

As a major exponent of humanistic-experiential psychotherapy, Prof. Watson has made important contributions to the development of Emotion Focused Psychotherapy through her contributions to theory, research and practice. Dr. Watson conducts research on the process and outcome of Emotion Focused Psychotherapy, with a landmark study that compared emotion focused psychotherapy with cognitive behavioural psychotherapy in the treatment of depression. She has co-authored and co-edited a total of 8 books and over 70 articles and chapters on the theory and practice of Emotion Focused Psychotherapy, with special emphasis on the role of the therapeutic relationship conditions, the alliance, therapist empathy, emotional expression in depression and generalized anxiety disorder. Her most recent book is entitled Emotion Focused Psychotherapy for GAD (2017) co-authored with Dr. Leslie Greenberg.

Jeanne received the Outstanding Early Career Achievement Award from the International Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR) in 2002 in recognition of her contributions to research and was a member of the SPR executive committee from 2012 -2016 serving as



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President of the Society from 2014-2015. She is a Fellow of the American Psychology Association.

Prof. Watson teaches workshops in EFT in Europe, North America, Australia, and Singapore and has been nominated by her students for supervision and teaching awards. Her workshops are consistently met with high praise, particularly for her warm and engaging style of teaching.

Training Agenda

Day One – Empathic Resonance

- Overview of empathy, empathic resonance, in vivo exercises

Day Two – Empathic expression and systematic evocative unfolding

- Empathic responses, markers, evocative empathy, in vivo exercises

Day Three – Empathy and processing emotional injuries and self-criticism

- Conjecture and doubling – empty chair work dialogues, empathy and two chair dialogues, in vivo exercises