Workshop #1 – Language as Healing: Transforming Angry Moments in the Therapeutic Encounter

Speaker: Shawn Christopher Shea, M.D. (www.suicideassessment.com)

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Length: 1.5 hours

Intended Audience: Appropriate for counselors, psychologists, psychiatric nurses, psychiatrists, social workers, substance abuse counselors, school counselors, case managers, and all mental health trainees

Description: One of the most difficult challenges facing a clinician occurs when a client suddenly expresses anger towards the clinician or asks the clinician confrontative questions. The handling of such moments can often determine whether a therapeutic alliance will fail or succeed, yet the clinician must respond in mini-seconds. In this workshop Dr. Shea approaches these moments of being “put on-the-spot” as opportunities for enhancing the therapeutic relationship by describing a series of specific interviewing techniques for tapping their potential, that are easily remembered and easily employed. He then deftly uses role-plays to show exactly how to use them.

Objectives: 1) Be able to creatively transform angry encounters into meaningful interactions.
2) Be able to utilize Leston Haven’s “counter-projective” technique for deflecting guardedness and suspiciousness.
3) Be able to utilize the “oppositional continuum” to spot specific types of roadblocks to communication.
4) Be able to use several specific interviewing techniques for transforming these roadblocks including strategic empathy, pulling resistance, and addressing core pains.