

## **Workshop #4 – When Communication Fails: Transforming Shut-Down, Wandering, and Rehearsed Interviews**

**Speaker:** Shawn Christopher Shea, M.D. ([www.suicideassessment.com](http://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:** The initial interview is the single cornerstone of all therapeutic success, for if engagement fails in the initial interview, there is seldom a second interview. No therapy works without a client in the office. Some of the most frustrating breakdowns occur when the communication style of the client poses inherent difficulties such as an overly loquacious or wandering client or a client who presents in a shut-down fashion as with an adolescent who responds with the classic, “I don’t know” response. With wit, grace, and a keen sense of what works and what does not work in such situations, Dr. Shea shares a wealth of interviewing techniques and strategies for transforming such clinical gremlins. He also shares a practical theoretical framework - the Degree of Openness Continuum - for understanding how to use which interviewing technique when, a skill he then deftly illustrates with role-plays.

**Objectives:**

- 1) Be able to recognize and describe the following three problematic interview styles and the contributions made by both the client and the clinician to their development: wandering interviews, shut-down interviews, and rehearsed interviews.
- 2) Be able to describe the role played in the development and transformation of these resistances by the following interview techniques: statements of inquiry, gentle commands, swing questions, qualitative questions, and empathic “cut-offs”.
- 3) Be able to flexibly combine the above interview techniques into sophisticated strategies for transforming the above problematic styles.