



The Redwood Empire Therapist

OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING

Introduction to Neurofeedback for Therapists Silvia Costales, LMFT

Maybe you've never heard of neurofeedback, or you know someone who's tried it and found relief for anxiety, depression, insomnia, headaches, problems with attention, or something else. This non-invasive method of helping the nervous



system to regulate itself better has relevance for all of us working in mental health.

What we now know about the human brain, our ability to precisely measure the brain's electrical activity, and the demonstrated effect that feedback of that activity has on human health—these all have profound implications for mental health diagnosis and treatment. Perhaps you're looking for a new tool to help those clients who are too dysregulated to stay in their window of tolerance, or engage meaningfully in psychotherapy beyond support. Whether you have clients who are looking for drug-free alternatives to address their symptoms, or you simply want to stay up-to-date on the science behind new interventions in the field. I invite you to come and learn more at my talk, "Introduction to Neurofeedback for Psychotherapists".

September 1, 2017 - RECAMFT Meeting

10:30 – 11:00 social & sign in

11:00 – 1:00 meeting

Introduction to Neurofeedback for Therapists Silvia Costales, LMFT

ODDFELLOWS TEMPLE/MERCER HALL, 545 PACIFIC AVENUE, SANTA ROSA

IF THE PARKING LOT IS FULL, YOU WILL FIND LOCAL LONG TERM PARKING ON THE STREETS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF PACIFIC AVENUE.

October 6, 2017

Working with Clients in Open Relationships Dr. Karin Wandrei, LCSW

SAVE THE DATE!! October 20, 2017 **The Wild Edge of Sorrow: Working with Grief and Loss in Our Everyday Lives with Francis Weller, LMFT**

**1.5 CEUs AVAILABLE – RECAMFT CEU PROVIDER IMIS 57173
MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO ALL ~ NON-MEMBERS FREE (\$15 FOR CEUS)**

Silvia Costales, MFT, BCN is a psychotherapist in private practice in Santa Rosa. In addition to private practice, she spent 8 years working in community agencies including Options Recovery Services in Berkeley and creating and running school counseling programs in East Oakland. Silvia discovered and began training in neurofeedback in 2010. She was board

certified in neurofeedback in 2014, and now sits on the Board of Directors for the International Society for Neurofeedback and Research (ISNR.org).

You can learn more about Silvia at her website, silviacostalesmft.com and you can email her at silviacostales@yahoo.

*What Else Is In Here This Month?
Check It Out*

Page 2 President's Message

Page 4 RECAMFT Team Circle info

Page 4 What You Missed

Page 6 Power in Healing Relationships

Page 6 Stress for Queer Couples

President's Message

L. Reyna Seminara, LMFT



**You Too Can Be Part of
the Spirit, Joy, and
Work of the RECAMFT
BOD**

On July 14, 2017 eight RECAMFT Board Members and Committee Chairs met at a retreat center, Erica Thomas found for us. It was a lovely spot on Joy Ridge Road in Occidental under the redwood trees. The property was planted with natural drought resistant plants and there were shrines everywhere. At the bottom of the property was a 30 foot flower labyrinth for people to walk. There was even a wishing well which most of the group took advantage of by tossing in pennies or pebbles to make a wish for the day, for the year, or for RECAMFT. We had lunch on the decks and rested in hammocks in-between our work.

Needless to say, it was a nurturing day in a lovely environment in which to do our RECAMFT Board of Directors work. After our custom of a silent meditation, we enjoyed a long check-in which we never seem to have time for at our regular meetings. I hope that this becomes a tradition at all our retreats.

We were, as always, reminded of our purpose.

The purpose of RECAMFT is to promote and maintain professional competence and integrity with knowledge, innovation, compassion, humor and respect for human dignity and diversity. We do this by providing opportunities for networking, education and community outreach.

The Board exists as a structure for implementing RECAMFT's mission and vision.

We referred back to our Board purpose as it is laid out in our mission statement at several junctures during the day.

Last year, those of us who attended the retreat did an assessment called Gallup Strengths Finder. Although we shared our strengths as revealed by the assessment last year, the retreat planning committee felt the exercise to be so valuable, we decided to delve deeper into this assessment this year.

We asked these questions:

- * How do my strengths apply to my work on the board?
- * How do my strengths aide or challenge my work on the board?

The Board and Committee members had a lively discussion about how our strengths assist or challenge the Board of Directors.



Erica Thompson, Pres. Elect; Laura Strom, Webmaster; Kristin Mills, Conference Co-Chair; Doreen Van Leeuwen, Crisis Response; Reyna Seminara, Pres.; and Tara D’Orazio, Membership Chair.

After a delicious and nutritious lunch and lots of snacks, we returned to our mission statement. The exercise was called Mission and Visioning.

- * What is the true meaning of our mission statement?
- * Where are we as a board with regard to achieving this mission?
- * Where would we like to be?
- * What long term vision do we all collectively hold for RECAMFT?

We took our time with each of these questions, using a process called “Visioning” which is similar to a guided imagery exercise. Some of us got images, some heard words, some messages were very personal. Others saw visions for RECAMFT. We shared our visions, in a non-judgmental way and deepened our understanding of each other and of RECAMFT.

At the end of the day we closed with a check-out and by attending to Board of Directors business and passed some board motions. We also inducted a new Director at Large, Kristin Mills, Conference Committee Co-Chair, to fill in a vacancy on the Board until the end of the year. Kristin is so wonderful to have on the Board. She offers a positive voice and outlook at all times.



Erica Thompson, Reyna Seminara & Bob Dalzell, Past President

One exciting idea that emerged is that each board member or committee member is going to ask one RECAMFT member to join us at the October 27th Board of Directors meeting at the SAY Dream Center on Summerfield Road, Santa Rosa.

The Board meeting will be held at SAY Dream Center and not at the home of Judith Peletz. After 12 years of hosting ten monthly Board meetings and the occasional holiday party, Judith, who is retiring from that role says, “It’s been a joy to have you in my house.” Judith has asked us to find another place for the meetings. She is stepping down from hosting the meetings because her daughter is moving in with her to have her baby. Judith has gone above and beyond in her dedication to RECAMFT and her support of our Board of Directors. We thank her for her service and commitment which has been so crucial for our success.

I hope some of you will join us for the October 27th meeting at SAY on Summerfield Road in Santa Rosa so you can experience for yourself what a warm and nurturing environment RECAMFT Board of Directors meeting can be.

Reyna Seminara, LMFT
RECAMFT 2017 President

Reyna has a private practice in Santa Rosa. It is best to reach her by email. LRS-MFT@att.net

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What You Missed By Doug Silberstein

At the June 2017 RECAMFT meeting, Felicia Matto-Shepard, MFT, gave a very powerful presentation on working with erotic transference. Through experiential and didactic methods she revealed how therapists can therapeutically welcome the presence Eros, the God of Love, into the therapy room by viewing it as a manifestation of the client’s longing for deep relational healing, rather than as something taboo.

Felicia defined the erotic as a dynamic energy that draws two people together in curiosity and desire. In this way, “erotic” is not synonymous with “sexual” – it is about the felt presence of “we-ness”; sexual desire is just one of the expressions of this kind of dynamic encounter. With this understanding, therapists can conceive of most any experience in which the client and therapist are talking about their relationship as being within the “erotic field”.

In describing transference as the re-direction of often unconscious feelings onto another in order to “resolve some-thing that is unfinished,” Felicia emphasized the importance of therapists seeing the presence of erotic transference



as an expression of the drive for that resolution. Rather than simply react to client expressions of desire for greater intimacy with the therapist with just boundaries, the therapist can ask him/herself, “What is the client longing for: what is this desire about?”

One thing it is not about is the therapist: the erotic transference is symbolic, and from Felicia’s perspective it often represents and is a manifestation of a longing for wholeness; to reclaim lost parts of the self and to integrate them into a coherent, individuated sense of self. Reactively shutting down the transference risks reinforcing the exclusion and potential shaming of parts of the self that are seeking embodiment and transformation. Though boundaries and containment are certainly crucial, so is allowing “breathing room” for the transference: in doing so, the therapist not only nurtures fuller embodiment and potential for integration but helps the client experience the essential co-existence of deepening connection with boundaries.



Felicia’s presentation generated some deep thinking among attendees.

Two main ways the existence of the excluded parts can manifest in the transference are rage and lust. Felicia referred to these as the “two defenses” against Eros: lust is the desire to possess the other, rather than join with the other, and rage is the compulsion to annihilate the other as a defense against the anxiety of being consumed in the erotic dynamic. Both of the defenses, though arising out of a deep longing for intimate, erotic connection, in fact, interfere with authentic connection. With empathy and clarity the therapist can help the client work through the defenses to get to the truth of longing and loss, which allows the client and therapist to be in an authentic healing connection.

Felicia Matto-Shepard, MFT, is a Jungian Analyst and has been in private practice, working with individuals in Petaluma since 1993. She also facilitates groups and workshops for couples, and for women exploring sexuality, desire and creativity. She can be reached at 707-765-2518 and online at FeliciaMattoShepard.com.

Doug Silberstein, MFT is in private practice in Santa Rosa and San Rafael. He focuses on working with couples, parents and individuals struggling with depression and anxiety. He primarily employs existential-humanistic, experiential and attachment-based approaches in working with his clients and can be reached at 707-583-2353 and at dougsilbersteinmft.com.



Announcements at the meeting by Annette Seibel about the October 20th conference with Francis Weller, Bob Engel about Community Outreach at the Santa Rosa Market, and Gail Van Buuren about a Model Mugging Class which has now been postponed until October.



Come join us for warm community time together.

POWER IN HEALING RELATIONSHIPS

Don Scully, M.Div., M.A.
Marriage and Family Therapist

Power is what brings about effect, change or the speed of change. Healing is to snatch others from serious peril, to keep alive a spark of life, to benefit the well-being of another and to preserve the inner being and nature of humans. The Greek root also implies growth.

Power functions in human relationships as an attribute or orientation human beings give to and/or take from one another. Those who give their power to others hope that in return they will be taken care of since they feel “powerless” and “mortal” and thus will be secured in Life. Those who take power from others hope that by taking care of others they in return will seem “omnipotent” and “immortal” and thus be secured in Life. Both hopes are illusions which a wise therapist will recognize and counter by returning to the patient her/his own power, thus giving the patient access to Life from within (leading to effectiveness.)

This task is not easy, in that the effectiveness of the therapist is continually dealing with threat and reward in such a way that the best we can be is “wounded healers” and hope to be minimally harmful in our relations with patients. It is our “sitz im leben” (situation in life) as persons beyond our role as therapists which give us our best availability to own shadow side, namely relationships of eros such as committed partnerships, children (especially) and intimate friends. The healing therapist is one who is aware of and uses his/her power to balance the therapeutic relationship so the client may grow to balance within the self.

Giggenbuhl-Craig’s Power in the Helping Professions is worth reading. He states, “Just as the physician is forced into the role of charlatan by his patients and the clergyman into that of false prophet by his congregation, the analyst is repeatedly pushed into these unconscious roles by his analysands.” To encounter a person creatively means to weave fantasies around him, to circle around his potential. So many patients have never felt seen or known by anyone. We need someone to see the good that is in all of us. By focusing on the client’s potential qualities, the therapist maintains the balance of power in the therapeutic relationship.

One of the tragedies of orphanage children is that no one weaves such fantasies around them. Children like our patients, need the “scaffolding” of images or imaginings

coming from the parents. So, for example, I coach fathers to give their children “blessing,” which they don’t understand until I explain it. Children and partners need the father to look inside them and point out the qualities, their developmental tendrils that they see in them that will carry them well into life. If we don’t see these qualities in them how can they see them in themselves? Father might notice how one of the children did something commendable with another sibling and then point it out. Too many fathers focus on family order and become the director rather than the nurturer.

Concluding with Guggenbuhl-Craig, “There are genuine ‘wounded healers’ among analysts... they are, so to speak, themselves constantly being analyzed and illumined by their patients... He remains forever a patient as well as a healer... The psychoanalyst must be challenged by something which cannot be either mastered or fended off by his analytical weapons and techniques.”

Sources:

Guggenbuhl-Craig, A., Power in the Helping Professions, Switzerland, Spring Publications, 1976.

Harris, S., Stress, Power and Ministry, Washington, D.C.: St. Alban Institute, 1979.

Nouwen, H., Wounded Healer, New York, Image Books, 1979.

How Lack of the “Straight Safety Net” Creates Stress for Queer Couples

In this article I will explore two strands of the “straight safety net”—heteronormative assumptions and heterosexual privilege—and how these create often unacknowledged stress for queer couples. Following are three different scenarios from my sessions with queer couples that exemplify some of these common stressors.

1) Yvonne & Angela: How homophobia ruined our romantic vacation

After I asked a lesbian couple why they hadn’t taken a vacation together in five years, this is what they told me: **Yvonne:** I took her on what was advertised as a “gay-friendly destination” but as it turned out, we were the only queer couple in sight! Consequently she was really paranoid in public and wouldn’t hold my hand on the beach or become really uncomfortable if I suggested a

restaurant that looked slightly romantic. She's a butch woman, so people were staring at her anyway because they couldn't quite place her on the gender spectrum. It pretty much killed the romance factor out in public, and unfortunately it translated into the bedroom as well. She just couldn't make that transition when we were alone. It was as if she didn't take a breath until we got home. Needless to say, we haven't been on an overseas vacation since!

Angela: I think on some level I just didn't feel safe. I didn't speak the language or know the people. They stared at me all the time. I think they couldn't figure out if I was a guy or a girl. It might sound ridiculous, but I was expecting to be attacked at any moment. Consequently, my guard was up at all times.

This couple had to deal with a whole set of stressors that a heterosexual couple would probably never need to consider when planning their holiday (like having to find a "heterosexually-friendly destination".) So much of the travel industry is geared towards the romantic getaway, but those getaways are mostly aimed at heterosexual couples. This omission of queer couples is part of what is termed "**heteronormative assumptions.**"

[Heteronormative assumptions] refer to automatic unconscious beliefs and expectations that reinforce heterosexuality and heterosexual relationship as the ideal norm. **Thus, heteronormative assumptions create a society where only heterosexual relationships are visible** (McGeorge and Carlson, 2011).*

Although the travel industry has become savvy to a whole previously untapped market and there are now ads for gay-friendly destinations on every queer travel site, the truth is that this can also be a marketing ploy. As Yvonne and her girlfriend found when they got to their "gay-friendly" destination, the locals hadn't been informed!

2) Gloria & Maria: A pregnant lesbian couple's first birthing class together

Gloria: I was so uncomfortable that we were the only queer couple in the room! On top of that the trainer had us do an experiential where she asked the fathers to go on one side and the mothers on the other. She at least corrected herself when she saw me standing there awkward and alone. I felt so humiliated!

The rest of this session was spent processing Maria's feelings about the class and her ambivalence toward attending more classes. Although Gloria was sympathetic

to Maria's dilemma, she was also clear that she wanted Maria's support at the birth and needed to know that Maria had the knowledge to provide it. In the end, despite the stress the first class had caused, they did go back for another class and found to their delight that there was a new trainer who was much more GLBTQ savvy and aware. What a relief!

Again, these are not stressors a heterosexual couple would ever have to deal with. Being part of mainstream culture, it is easy for heterosexuals to take for granted the safety net that is automatically available. This is part of what is coined as "**heterosexual privilege.**" Furthermore the lack of affirmative mirroring that queer couples receive has both subtle and gross implications. **"One of the less visible, but potentially most influential privileges that heterosexual individuals receive is an increased self-worth that comes with being part of the dominant socially sanctioned group"** (Hoffman, 2004; Worthington, Savoy, Dillon & Vernaglia 2002.) When who you are and how you love is not reflected in your world, whether on TV, in films, books or other forms of mainstream media, the effect on self-esteem is persistent and corrosive, once again creating more stressors for queer couples.

3) Disturbing comments from well-meaning family members

Even family members who are normally respectful toward a gay couple can fall prey to heteronormative assumptions. The following occurred during a session with a gay couple, one of whom was unemployed and looking for work. He had been offered a position overseas but had decided to turn it down because it meant being too far away from his partner.

Mike: Can you believe my Dad encouraged me to take that job in Singapore with no regard for how it would affect my partner who has a full practice here? It was as if he saw me as a single man, living with "a good friend," but certainly no one to consider if I was being offered employment overseas. He would never say that to my heterosexual brother and his wife!

Bill: Your dad is always friendly to me when he sees me but hearing that makes me feel invisible.

Mike's father was unintentionally hurtful by omission. The undermining quality that this lack of mirroring creates has a corrosive effect on self-esteem. Mike is left with the message that his relationship is less visible, less valid, and less valuable than his heterosexual brother's.

In summary...

When I hold space for a queer couple in session, I am also considering factors outside the couple dyad, such as the effects of heteronormative assumptions and privilege that can exacerbate existing stressors in the couple. For instance, Gloria and her wife have all the stressors of being pregnant but not the knowledge that they are seen and held in a supportive community. Yvonne and her girlfriend finally find the time and money to take a vacation together only to discover they have to keep their guard up and don't feel safe enough to express their affection and love for one another. Then, there is Mike having to deal with the crushing effects of unemployment on his self-esteem, only to have his father exacerbate this problem by unintentionally disregarding his long-standing partnership.

Queer couples simply don't have the safety net that heterosexual couples can take for granted. The society at large does not provide the validation and affirmation that a queer couple could rely on for support during difficult times. The need for this validation and affirmation first has to be acknowledged by the individual or couple and then self-generated. While many queer couples have been very resourceful in generating their own safety nets by building their own communities and support systems, the freefall, in terms of the stigma of being an outsider and the resulting isolation, is ever present for those who do not.

*McGeorge, C. and Carlson, T. S. (2011) Deconstructing Heterosexism: Becoming an LGB Affirmative Heterosexual Couple and Family Therapist. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 37(1), 14-26.

Ondina Nandine Hatvany, MFT



Ondina assists traditional, queer, kink, BDSM, open and poly partners in relationship with an approach that combines the latest discoveries in neuroscience with powerful and effective developments in couples research. She uses an approach called Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) to help her clients get past blame and shame to a place of more understanding, trust and intimacy.

As former Director of the Eating Disorders program at the Community Institute of Psychotherapy Ondina advocates a Health at Every Size (HAES) approach that empowers women to befriend their bodies.

Ondina works with trauma/ abuse survivors using EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing,) hypnosis and somatic (body mindfulness) psychotherapy techniques with a high effectiveness rating.

Finally as a somatically trained psychotherapist and former yoga teacher, one of the ways she can assist you to make lasting changes

is to foster body mindfulness. She uses somatic psychotherapies such as Hakomi and Somatic Experiencing to facilitate transitions and shifts that last.

Feel Free to call for a free initial phone consultation on Ondina's confidential office line [\(415\) 381-1065](tel:4153811065) or e-mail: Ondinah@gmail.com

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THE FOUR AGREEMENTS

Don Miguel Ruiz

Be Impeccable With Your Word

Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean.
Avoid using the word to speak against yourself
or to gossip about others.

Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.

Don't Take Anything Personally

Nothing others do is because of you. What others say and do is a projection of their own reality, their own dream. When you are immune to the opinions and actions of others, you won't be the victim of needless suffering.

Don't Make Assumptions

Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness and drama. With just this one agreement, you can completely transform your life.

Always Do Your Best

Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstance, simply do your best, and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse and regret.

JMK

The Wild Edge of Sorrow: Working with Grief and Loss in Our Everyday Lives with Author Francis Weller, LMFT

- Mary Agatha Furth Center
- 8400 Old Redwood Highway
- Windsor, CA 95492
- Friday, October 20, 2017
- 8:30 AM. to 4:00 PM
- Six (6) CEs for BBS licensees
- Lunch included



“Where there is sorrow, there is holy ground.”

-- Oscar Wilde

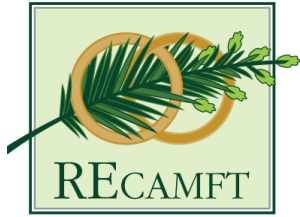
“Grief has always been communal in our long story as a species. Too often in modern times, however, our grief is carried privately, forcing sorrow underground. It is our unexpressed sorrows, the congested stories of loss, that, when left unattended, block our access to soul. We then are pulled by the gravity of loss below the surface of life and into the terrain of death. We must restore the practices and customs of grief in our lives. Each of us must undertake an apprenticeship with sorrow and learn the skill of grieving for our sakes and the welfare of all beings.” Francis Weller

Francis Weller, LMFT: A psychotherapist, writer and soul activist, Francis Weller is a master of synthesizing diverse streams of thought from psychology, anthropology, mythology, alchemy, indigenous cultures and poetic traditions. Author of *The Wild Edge of Sorrow: Rituals of Renewal and the Sacred Work of Grief*, he has introduced the healing work of ritual to thousands of people.

Course Description: This day-long experiential seminar is an invitation to enter the sacred ground of grief and encounter the multiple ways it arrives in our lives. “Sorrow shakes us and breaks us open to depths of soul we could not imagine. In a very real way grief ripens us, pulls up from the depths of our souls what is most authentic in us. In truth, without some familiarity with sorrow, we do not mature as human beings. It is the broken heart, the heart that knows sorrow, that is capable of genuine love.” Francis Weller

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SEPTEMBER ISSUE

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Eighth page - 2" x 3.5" = \$35

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