



**The Vermont
Psychological Association
Presents:**

**The Interpersonal Nature of
Shame:
Nervous System Development,
Personal Story
and
Spiritual Potentials**

Presenter:

Alexis Johnson, PhD

Co-founder:

*The Center for Intentional Living
Six (6)*

Continuing Education Credits

Who Should Attend: Psychologists, mental health counselors, social workers, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, marriage/family therapists, and other mental health professionals.

Friday, April 9, 2010

9:00 – 4:00

Registration: 8:30 A.M.

**Capitol Plaza Hotel
Montpelier, Vermont**

Directions to Capitol Plaza: I-89 to Exit 8. At 3rd light, turn left (over bridge). Pass VT Transit, turn right into back parking lot of the Capitol Plaza. Complimentary parking permits are issued at the registration table.

Course Description:

The experience of shame is extremely negative, characterized by feelings of self-hate, inferiority and a strong desire to withdraw and disappear from the eyes of others.

We have each experienced shame to some degree. At the extreme, shame prone people experience themselves as truly defective at the core of their being.

This seminar will focus on the interpersonal nature of shame, how it can form at the very beginning of life, or appear in the second year of life as the mother becomes a socializing mother rather than a nurturing/regulating mother, and how we see the consequences of early shame development manifesting in adult life.

Using both psychoanalytic and research frameworks, we will discuss infant and early childhood development, limbic brain development and the polyvagal system.

Since the roots of shame are interpersonal, the healing process also needs to be interpersonal. Research shows that creating of an empathic therapeutic bond is the most critical factor in transforming psychopathology. Thus, how to attune and sustain presence for the shame prone client is an essential therapeutic skill for the psychotherapist.

The day's format will be both informational and experiential through imaginal exercises and dialogue.

Learning Goals and Objectives:

Participants will:

1. Understand how attachment and emotions drive our behavior and create our personal sense of meaning and mattering
2. Be able to notice shame in the body and read it in the face
3. Experience how the mother's face is a major factor in the developing self, both for self-esteem and self-hate
4. Be introduced to Porges' Polyvagal theory and its importance to the shame response of freeze and hide
5. Discern when the root issue is shame rather than guilt
6. Know the importance of positive shame and existential guilt
7. Learn how to track moments of shame in the therapeutic relationship and initiate repair
8. Develop tools for transforming shame-based responses into healthy self-esteem

Presenter:

Alexis Johnson, Ph.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist and international workshop leader who focuses on various aspects of psychotherapy as part of a spiritual path.

Co-founder of The Center for Intentional Living (www.intentionalliving.com), she maintains a private practice in Manhattan and South Salem, NY.

Dr., Johnson has published in *The Humanistic Psychologist* on Healing Shame. Inspired by and grateful for Buddhism and Winnicott, her work is about finding that creative spark in each dilemma or story that leads to choice, possibility and freedom.

Continuing Education Credits:

The Vermont Psychological Association is approved by:

The American Psychological Association and

The Vermont Board of Psychological Examiners

to sponsor continuing education for psychologists.

VPA maintains responsibility for this program and its content. CE Certificates for six (6) continuing education credits will be awarded to participants who attend the entire workshop and complete the evaluation form. **Partial credits will not be awarded. Late arrival or early departure will preclude receipt of a certificate.**

Registration/Refund Policy:

Registrations after April 2, 2010 require an additional \$15 fee and are on a space available basis only. No refunds will be offered for this program.

Conference Schedule

8:30 Registration

9:00 Overview of shame as a clinical and research construct focusing on the work of Nathanson, Lewis and Tangney. Discriminating between shame and guilt, positive shame and existential guilt.

10:00 Break

10:15 Lecture on attachment and attunement. Show short DVD of the Still Face and its consequences for the infant. Imaginal experience of an important inner face and discussion.

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Lecture on polyvagal system emphasizing our capacity to freeze when threatened. Contrast with our 'social engagement system' and sense of well being when that is activated. Imaginal exercise to internalize intellectual information. Discussion.

2:30 Break

2:45 Therapeutic tools of **presence**, with emphasis on capacity to repair shame rupture within the therapeutic dyad. Audience will be given time to explore looking at each other's face in various configurations.

4:00 Collection of evaluations and awarding of certificates

Registration Form
April 9, 2010

We do not mail a confirmation of registration.

 Please check if vegetarian
Please apply a \$15 administrative charge to the fees below if you are registering after April 2, 2010.

- VPA Member **\$145**
- Student Member (full-time) **\$105**
- Non-Member **\$165**
- Student Non-Member (full-time) **\$125**

Note: Student attendees must send copy of student ID.

Name: _____

Degree: _____

Profession: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please make check payable to: "VPA".

Mail to: VPA

P.O. Box 1017, Montpelier, VT 05601-1017.