

Spiritual Diversity and Social Justice: The Second Annual Canadian Conference on Spirituality and Social Work

June 4-5, 2003
Dalhousie University
Halifax, NS

WORKSHOPS

Group 1: 9:00 - 10:30, Thursday, June 5

Honouring and Restoring Diverse Relationships and First Nations Spirituality: Courageous Dialogue, Concentric Circles and Social Justice.

Until European contact First Nations people lived within healthy, sustainable, cultural societies that integrated spirituality into their daily practices. Under colonization First Nations people endured the imposition of racist institutions on every aspect of their individual and Nation spirits. Their spiritual ways of knowing and being were a key target of the colonial process.

Every day First Nations people experience the past and ongoing colonial impacts that result in cultural, political, economic and spiritual devastation. These impacts resonate on the spirits of First Nations people and continue to manifest in their social, economic and cultural realities. As they move toward self-determination, First Nations people continue to revive their spiritual and cultural practices, restoring balance to themselves and their Nations.

Can the spirituality of First Nations people be made explicit by demonstrating traditional practices in our classrooms? Or does decolonization demand the avoidance of spiritual exoticism? Using circle work, participants and presenters will braid together the impact of colonization, challenge the Master Colonial Story and engage in courageous dialogues that move toward courageous actions. We will look at our relationships, at how we share power, honour cultural and spiritual diversity, reclaim our spirits and ensure social justice and humanity for all.

Michelle Reid, MSW, Assistant Professor
Jane Teed, MSW, Assistant Professor

School of Social Work and Human Service
The University College of the Cariboo,
Box 3010
Kamloops BC V2C 5N3

Breakthrough... a guided imagery ritual

This workshop will involve a guided imagery ritual initially creating an individual and then collective "safe place". From this resource filled environment I will read Spiritual Messages into "that scared space". The centerpiece of this will be the reciting of the "Peace Seeds". The Peace Seeds represent the twelve prayers for peace prayed in Assisi, Italy on the Day of Prayer for World Peace during the U.N. International Year of Peace in 1986. The words of Mahatma Gandhi and other relevant social justice spokespeople will also be featured. The goal will be to bring inner peace personally and collectively, at least momentarily, and then plant the seeds of wisdom to help us move into this next critical millennium. Everything begins with our intention, and so this experience would begin with that in mind: our individual and then our collective intention.

I am a professional Aromatherapist and may create a spiritual aroma blend for the participants using oils like Frankincense, Spikenard, etc. Olfaction has been shown to be our longest lasting memory trigger and certainly almost all spiritual traditions utilize scent as part of their rituals.

Over the past 10 years I have been using visualization along with the healing sounds of Tibetan Singing Bowls to assist people deal with the difficulties in their lives. I am primarily a Grief and Trauma Therapist and have found this method to be invaluable to help many people at the most difficult points of their lives. Spirituality is at the

heart of who I am as an individual, as well as being the guiding force in how I approach my work. Many people report to me a heightened sense of their spirituality and/or a deep sense of Peace after a visualization session.

Ken Osbourne,
Social Worker
Psychotherapy professional
Professional Aromatherapist
Private practice with Breakthrough
www.breakthrough.ns.ca.

Spirituality in Clinical Practice

This workshop is representative of some of the work done by the Editors and two contributors of the recently published book *Spirituality and Social Care: Contributing to Personal and Community Well-being*. Each presenter will speak to the issue of how spirituality is incorporated into his or her clinical or education practice. The workshop begins with an introduction to a traditional Aboriginal ceremony commonly referred to as Smudge or Cleansing Ceremony. The introduction includes the meaning of the various medicines that are used in this ceremony along with the meaning of the ceremony itself. After this each individual presenter, in the spirit of partnership with the others, speaks about the spiritual activities and/or symbols they use in their clinical or educational environment.

Mr. Stewart presents on the role of spirituality in his work at an outpatient psychiatric health clinic. Dr. Wheeler speaks to the use of spirituality in relation to addictions and health as it is delivered in isolated sub-Arctic communities. Mr. Beatch speaks to the use of spirituality in his diverse clinical practice and Dr. Nash models an aspect of her approach to teaching spirituality to university social work students of indigenous, European and other ethnic backgrounds in New Zealand.

Bruce Stewart, MSW, M. Phil,
Clinical Social Worker
Dr. Ross Wheeler,
Addiction Specialist
Romeo Beatch, MC.,
Psychologist
Dr. Mary Nash, Senior Lecturer,
Massey University, New Zealand

Music and Social Work

Paula Foley will present on the role of music and the voicing of our own personal sound as a sacred and radical act of empowerment, personal possession and spirit on the soul's journey toward deeper intimacy with itself and other.

Paula Foley, BSW, RSW

Paula is a musician and has worked as a clinical social worker in the area of palliative care for the past 16 years.

Life Balance with Yoga: I Honour the Light Within You

The most important relationship you will ever have is the relationship with your Self - your Soul. In this seminar we will explore that relationship. We will begin with a brief guided meditation, focussing on the witness consciousness. Then, using the witness, we will explore our being at all levels.

At the physical level seeing and experiencing the body as a temple. At the mental level clarifying your vision and using your attitude and your thoughts as tools to manifest it. At the emotional level you will learn the three part yogic breath and how to use it to influence and integrate your emotions and gain greater awareness. At the spiritual level we will look at how to nourish the Soul through prayer, meditation, nature, music, mantra, serving and sharing. Finally, we will close with a deep guided meditation.

Lone Ericson-Parker BSW, RSW

Lone, a social worker, is a self-development consultant, a counsellor and a yoga-teacher/therapist in Fredericton, NB.

Bridging the Secular and the Sacred: Exercises in Experiencing 'now'

"It is not through our beliefs that we bring spirituality to our life. It is 'found' in the present moment of nowness"

This workshop will use a combination of formal meditation and post-meditation practices to explore what mindfulness/awareness can bring to our everyday life. There will be a session meditation practice followed by an exploration of nowness through some simple exercises using clay and paint.

Craig Schneider

Craig is a practicing artist/counsellor/Shambhala Buddhist meditation instructor, who is in private practice in Fredericton.

Group 2: 10:45 - 12:15, Thursday, June 5

TOWARDS SOCIAL JUSTICE: WALKING SPIRITUAL PATHS WITH PRACTICAL FEET

This presentation will reflect on ways of solving problems, resolving conflicts and healing hurts through an open, inclusive and collaborative communication method based on principles of oneness, uniqueness, equality and gift giving, and aiming at reaching consensus with the objective of establishing social justice and creating unity in diversity.

The presentation will elucidate each of the preceding concepts, i.e., social justice, openness, inclusiveness, collaboration, oneness, uniqueness, equality, gift giving and consensus, and will compare this method, founded on spiritual principles and termed "consultation" or, "concertation" -as the French people say-, with the conflict resolution method of "negotiation" based on mercantile world views.

It will argue that the method of "concertation", albeit seemingly taking more time to reach the cherished goal of social justice, is a safer, more effective and certain way of establishing sustainable social justice than the more competitive and compromising negotiation approach. It will also demonstrate its feasibility in social work clinical and community practices, particularly in multicultural milieu.

It will conclude by visually demonstrating its connection to the ancient Asiatic, as well as American Native, concept of "mandala" which represents unity in diversity.

Margot Loïselle-Léonard, MSW
Doctoral Candidate, Joint PhD Program
Université de Montreal/McGill University

Walking the Talk-Embracing one's own spirituality in the workplace

An acknowledgement of the relationship between their own spiritual beliefs and ethical behaviour towards peers and clients could assist social workers to better handle cultural diversity and social justice issues within the work place. Spirituality is a higher state of consciousness that enables individuals to be more compassionate, empathetic, caring and connected with the diversity of others. It is part of a person's intelligence, associated with his/her heart. More ever, ethics is a set of moral principles or values. Currently, there is a renaissance of interest in paths of the heart and spirit and this resurgence of spirituality crosses racial, ethnic, political, cultural and class lines. Although moral philosophers agree there is no ethical cook book that provides easy answers to complicated dilemmas, they tend to agree that a fully informed spiritual/ethical consciousness always contains themes of caring. Becoming more spiritually attuned means viewing social justice and counselling through a fresh lens, by breaking through legalistic armour with more empathetic, caring models of practising social work. In my workshop, I will attempt to demonstrate the relationship between one's spirituality and ethical behaviour, in the context of how social workers can walk their talk and talk their walk.

Nancy Doetzel, BA, HBSW, HBA, MA, PhD Candidate
University of Calgary

Group 3: 1:15 - 2:45, Thursday, June 5

The Gifts of Justice and Transformation From The Spirit World: Healing From Child Sexual Abuse

This is the story of a woman who showed the world a strong exterior – a woman who appeared to have it together; after all, she was a social worker. It was illusion. In her hidden moments she railed against sensations of overwhelming anxiety, wept for her broken spirit and begged the unseen helpers for relief. This is the story of me. This workshop will open with a sage ceremony. I will share my story of spiritual intervention which released me from the anguish of sexual abuse. The participants will share experiences of mysterious intervention that helped them grow and develop as human beings. We will explore how this information can inform our practice as social workers.

Joan Sanderson, Associate Professor
Saskatchewan Indian Federated College
Saskatoon Campus
Saskatoon, SK
S7K 0P8

Group 4: 3:00-4:30, Thursday, June 5

Buddhist Practices That Increase Our Effectiveness as Helpers, Colleagues, and Advocates for Social Justice

Presented from a Zen Buddhist perspective, this workshop offers participants instruction and an opportunity to try out some key Buddhist practices that can increase one's groundedness, openness, compassion and resilience as we work to increase social justice at a number of levels. Practices will include meditation (zazen), mindfulness, metta (loving-kindness), and equanimity. The relevance of these practices and the dilemmas that we face as social workers will also be presented.

The presenter has degrees in both comparative religion and social work, and has been practising Zen Buddhism since the 1970's.

Schoel Shuster, MA, MSW, RSW
Social Worker
Department of Family and Community Medicine
St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto

Healing the Bruised Heart- The Effects of Bullying on our Spirit

Bullying is a common phenomenon, usually associated with young people attending school. Its various forms include physical, verbal, emotional, and provocative bullying. Its effects are far-reaching and can have a long-lasting impact that continues well into our adult years. Bullying takes into account several social issues including dating violence, domestic abuse, eating disorders, and even suicide.

It is the purpose of this 90 minute workshop to provide specific, useful strategies to deal with the issue of Bullying, whether one is a victim, a bully or a bystander. This workshop will discuss the effects to our physical, emotional, and spiritual selves, and offer suggestions on how to re-claim these areas of our lives using anti-oppressive, multidisciplinary approaches that focus on healing the bruised hearts created by Bullying. Examples include relaxation, stress relievers, the creation of safe areas, restitution, and societal changes to our perception of the issue.

Vicki Coy, BSW, RSW
Executive Assistant, NBASW
Fredericton, NB
and Creator/Presenter "Bullying First Aid"