

AND **NAROPA UNIVERSITY**



**Liberation through Wisdom and Love:**

**Humanistic Psychology, Social Justice, and Contemplative Practice**

**11th Annual Conference for the Society for Humanistic Psychology**

**Naropa University, Boulder CO**

**March 22-25, 2018**

**Sunday March 25, 2018 SHP Presenters and Presentations**

**7:30-7:50 Meditation with Ian Wickramasekera**

**Sunday 8:00-9:00 (9235)**

**Holosynthesis: A Powerful New Model for Transforming Fear into Freedom and Fulfillment**

Todd Pressman, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist, author and international presenter. A graduate

from the University of Pennsylvania and Saybrook Institute, he has won an award for his work

on Transpersonal Breathwork and "A Course in Miracles". His books "Radical Joy: Awakening

Your Potential For True Fulfillment" and "The Bicycle Repair Shop: A True Story Of Recovery

From Multiple Personality Disorder" have also received high acclaim. He has integrated a wide-

ranging background--including grooming by a father whose teachers were taught by Freud, an

internship under Stanislav Grof, training with a Zen master, a Jain family, a Zoroastrian high

priest and a Sri Lankan rewalker-- into a new model for psychospiritual development called

"Holosynthesis". His aim is to "release the statue from the stone" (Michelangelo), the authentic

Self from the overlays of imposed identity, into the discovery of freedom, joy and fulfillment.

With the introduction of Eastern psychologies (especially Mindfulness) and the proliferation of

evidence-based research in Western psychology, we are being given a new opportunity to

discover what works best in each. Still, we need a comprehensive model that integrates the

two for the most effective approach possible. “Holosynthesis” provides this integration. It's

aim is not only to transform emotional pain but also, in doing so, to open a path to deep

fulfillment. Built on the understanding that fear (anxiety) is at the root of all suffering and is

the ultimate obstacle to Liberation, it pinpoints the exact mechanisms by which fear takes root

and alters our perception, creating a world of distorted and painful experience. It lays out an

entirely new understanding of the origin of anxiety, describing the “core fear” (our

first exposure to threat and our anxious interpretation of it) and the “chief defense” (our primary

way of protecting ourselves from the core fear). This reveals remarkable and fresh insight into

how we build a personality, based on these two dynamics, in a way that locks in our suffering.

New techniques have been developed for dismantling the chief defense and resolving the core

fear according to this model, opening the way to profound, often life-changing release and the

discovery of high purpose and fulfillment. Clinical experience and a research project in process are demonstrating its efficacy. Participants will undergo the actual techniques being

presented, making for a rich and highly experiential presentation. Come prepared for an

exciting adventure into the deepest regions of the unconscious, where the hidden fears at the

source of our difficulties live, making them available for rapid and lasting transformation.

**Sunday 8:00-9:00 (9240)**

**Existential Health Psychology: What it Promises (and what it does not promise)**

Patrick Whitehead, PhD. is assistant professor of psychology at Albany State University. He is the author of Psychologizing: A personal, practice-based approach to psychology (Rowman & Little

Field: 2016), and Expanding the category "human": Posthumanism, nonhumanism, and humanistic

psychology (Lexington Books: 2017). He has published in The Humanistic Psychologist, The

Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, and the Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology (among others).

This presentation builds on an invited symposium presentation for the American Congress of

Rehabilitation Medicine. The field of rehabilitation medicine is keen on the insights of an

existential approach to patient-care, a quality that can be extended to medicine at large. Kurt

Goldstein, supplier of the term "self-actualization," and his philosophy of organism provides the

foundation for an existential health psychology. Existential health psychology, once

differentiated from the practice of medicine (which focuses on the body's biology and nervous

system), focuses on the person and her relationship to the world. Described by analogy to the

many crises of growth in Erik Erikson's existential developmental psychology, existential health

psychology is directed at the facilitation of a person adapting to her new world (post-injury) or

the possibility of a new world. Rehabilitation strategies can be suggested by specialists, but

the patient must choose to participate. Surgeons, nutritionists, cardiologists, and other internal

medicine providers play an important part in treating the body of a person However, with

chronic, life-style related diseases (such as type-II diabetes, obesity, many cancers, and cardiac

disease), if the medical treatment is not followed by a change in one’s lifestyle, the problems

persist. In these examples, the body is treated, but the person is not. Existential health

psychology focuses not on the disease a person has, but the person prior to her disease.

**Sunday 8:00-9:00 (9246)**

**Living in Front: Finding Your Archetype for a Spacious Mind**

Annabelle Nelson PhD in psychology, professor, author, researcher, dynamic speaker, Nelson is

now a professor at Fielding Graduate University, formerly at Prescott College. She's traveled

the world giving presentations and visiting sacred sites in Japan, India, U.K, Cuba and Mexico.

She's taught preschool, elementary school, undergraduate and graduate levels and created

dynamic storytelling curriculum. Her yoga and Zen meditation practice has been wedded with

her expertise in consciousness studies, expressed in publications including Archetypal

imagery and the spirit self: techniques for coaches and therapists, 2014, published by Jessica

Kingsley Publishers, and the article The spacious mind: using archetypes for transformation

towards wisdom, 2007, in The Humanistic Psychologist. Her commitment to child advocacy

has led her to create a nonprofit, the WHEEL Council (Wholistic, Health, Education and

Empowerment for Life), and she publishes research on storytelling and health education, as in

Storytelling for empowerment for Latino teens: Increasing HIV Prevention Knowledge and

Attitudes (2015) in the Journal of Adolescent Research.

For leaders, coaches, counselors, parents, family members, humans.

Learn tools to be more effective in all settings.

Experience a profound change in your consciousness.

-Visualize a recent emotional trigger in the mind-body.

-Find and claim the archetype you’ve been living in front of.

-Visualize the archetype and use its characteristic to transform the inner world to clear

emotional reactive patterns and create mental space.

The transformed mind becomes softer, warmer, kinder, and more joyful. The spacious mind

gives the spiritual self voice. The sense of interconnections allows paradox, solves problems

and nests your actions in your values.

**Sunday 9:00-9:50 Yoga in the yoga room 9176 with Shawn Rybecki**

**Sunday 9:00-10:00 (9235)**

**Finding Inspiration Again: Enriching Therapy with Buddhist Psychology**

Karen Kissel Wegela, Ph.D., has been a professor at Naropa University since 1980 where she

teaches in the Contemplative Psychotherapy and Buddhist Psychology program. As a licensed

psychologist, she maintains a small private practice. Her most recent book is Contemplative

Psychotherapy Essentials: Enriching Your Practice with Buddhist Psychology (W. W. Norton).

In the midst of the many demands we face as therapists, it can be helpful, and sometimes a

big relief, to tap back into what originally inspired us to become therapists. In Buddhist

thought there is the idea of “bodhichitta,” the awakened heart. This innate sympathetic

kindness toward both ourselves and others is often what drew us to become healers, and yet it

is easy for us to lose track of it, especially with challenging clients. In this largely experiential workshop, we will draw on a number of traditional and nontraditional practices to find our way back home to our hearts. Participants will also have the opportunity to make use of the exercise, “Through the Empty Mirror,” to explore one relationship in their clinical work --or personal lives-- in which it feels especially difficult to stay present and connected.

**Sunday 9:00-10:00 (9240)**

**Concepts of Happiness in Psychological Theory**

Constance A. Kellogg, PhD is a recent graduate of The Pacifica Graduate Institute. Her

internships worked with patients of all ages through BHC Alhambra Hospital in Alhambra, CA.

Her interests is in the impact of psychological states of mind on the current patient diagnosis.

Dr. Kellogg has participated in several conference presentations and continues to write.

This presentation will focus on the concept of happiness from the perspectives of Positive

Psychology and Transpersonal Psychology using the work of Paul TP Wong, Lilian Wong, and

Louis Hoffman, among others. The aspects of faith, hope, and spirituality in connection to the

pursuit of happiness allows for a complete kind of happiness (Watts, 1940). This kind of

happiness persists through joy and sorrow. True happiness has a spiritual undertone resulting

from the positive and whole-hearted acceptance of the many facets of life. True happiness

comes when a person’s inner being and inner soul is in connection to their higher power.

Happiness according to Transpersonal Psychological Theory and Positive Psychology posits

that finding meaning in life, experiencing contentment, inner peace, and harmony, brings about

a positive state of mind and a spiritual attunement that is independent of circumstances

(Clements et al., 2016). This concept of happiness can endure suffering hardships and

problems. This presentation of happiness will integrate Louis Hoffman’s work around Transpersonal

Psychology and its focus on spirituality relating to the human experience as well as Paul TP

Wong’s work around Positive Psychology and mature happiness. Along with this research, this

presentation will include the conceptualization of happiness based on Eastern Traditions to

give a well-rounded view of how the human mind is the main source of fulfillment and

happiness in life. An experiential activity around what happiness means and obtaining

happiness will demonstrate to the class the ideas of mindfulness and compassion towards

self and others. Even in difficult times, happiness can be found through taking in the good and

engaging life’s challenges with positive states of mind, strength, calm, love and gladness

(Hanson, 2013). Happiness is not the absence of difficulty in life, it is the way a person

chooses to manage their circumstances and changing yourself to overcome the barriers

preventing happiness.

**Sunday 9:00-10:00 (9246)**

**MBExist: Mindfulness Based Existential Integrative Therapy**

Dr Mansilla is the founder and director of the Relational Path Institute. An international

organization, based in the United Kingdom, that provides training in Existential Humanistic

Integrative Couple Therapy, and Mindfulness Based Existential Integrative Therapy approaches

to Therapists around the world. Dr Mansilla graduated from Saybrook University where she received the dissertation withdistinction award, and the Rollo May scholarship award for her research on the cross-culturaltraining of therapist in the Existential Humanistic Integrative approach to Couple Therapy, that

she developed, and later named HEART: Humanistic Existential Approach to Relationship

Therapy. Furthermore, Dr. Mansilla's passion for Existential Humanistic Psychology,

Mindfulness and Culture, brought her to develop a revised version of the Mindfulness Based

Stress Reduction MBSR, and Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy MBCT groups. In this

revision she proposed MBExist, an Existential Integrative approach to the widely researched

MBSR and MBCT groups.

This presentation aims to engage participants in the experience of Mindfulness Based Stress

Reduction (MBSR) principles and their roots in Existential Humanistic Psychology. Through

brief theoretical explanations and deep guided experiences, participants will have a taste of

the modified version of the 8 week-mindfulness groups, intended for stress reduction and

expansive living. Developed by Jon Kabat Zinn (1990, 2013), MBSR groups have been

researched over the past 27 years. These groups have demonstrated high effectiveness in life

quality improvement of patients diagnosed with chronic illness (Grossman, Niemann, &

Schmidt, 2004). Following the development of MBSR groups, a mental health revision of these

groups was proposed by Sendel Segal, John Teasdale and Mark Williams, (2012). In this

revision they demonstrated the effectiveness of the Cognitive Behavioral approach to

Mindfulness groups for the treatment of clinical depression and anxiety disorders (Hofmann,

Sawyer, & Wit, 2010). Furthermore, Mindfulness Based Existential Integrative Therapy

(MBExist) is a further proposed revision to MBSR and MBCT groups, were the theory of

Mindfulness and Cognitive Behavioral therapy is integrated within concepts rooted in

Existential Humanistic Psychology. In this presentation, participants will be introduced to the

theory and practice of MBExist groups. Thus, demonstrating how a more in depth experience

of MBSR and MBCT groups can be achieved when discussing principles such as the freedom

and limitations of being human (May,1981) and the experience of awe (Schneider 2004, 2009,

2017). Finally, this presentation will invite participants into questioning the possibility of further

integration of Humanistic principles of psychology, while bringing awareness to the cross

cultural application of MBExist groups (Kirmayer, 2015).

**Sunday 9:00-10:00 (9248)**

**The Sanity of Addiction: A Perspective Borne of Wisdom and Compassion**

Lauren A. Ciovacco, MA, operates his private practice, Open Source Counseling, in Boulder,

Colorado. His approach to addictions counseling, which focuses on the inherent wisdom,

sanity, and autonomy of individuals, draws from his study of contemplative psychotherapy and

Buddhist psychology at Naropa University. As co-founder and board member of The Nowak

Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, he works to educate and empower community

members by redefining the current conceptualization of mental health care through consent-

based, anti-oppressive peer-support models.

In 2016, the Surgeon General released a comprehensive report on addiction in America. The

report authoritatively stated the process of addiction is a disease rather than a moral failing.

While this represents a tremendous step forward in de-stigmatizing addiction, it continues a

narrative based in a false dichotomy and over-simplifies a complex human experience. While

these two dominant perspectives of addiction hold certain truths, they fail to present the fullest

understanding of addiction. The moral model presents the insight that for all individuals choice

is always available and the addiction-as-disease model offers compassion by recognizing the

unconscious biological-psychological obstacles involved in overcoming addiction. However,

insight without compassion is harsh and compassion without insight is misguided sympathy.

One without the other invites the potential for greater suffering.

The “Sanity of Addiction” view integrates wisdom by recognizing the choice inherent in all

behavior and compassion by honoring how making this choice will necessitate a journey into

the darkest, most terrifying depths of their soul, a choice few would willingly make. Based on

the Buddhist principles of the four noble truths and the eight worldly dharmas, it will be argued

addiction is a dysfunctional relationship with substances and/or behaviors, developed out of

sane attempts to escape the inevitable and universal truth of our own suffering. From this

orientation, addiction is not an abnormal expression of the human experience, but rather a

natural response all humans can relate with to some degree. Recognizing the sanity of

addiction begins to honor the inherent wisdom, dignity, and autonomy of the individual

struggling with out-of-control behavior. They can rest in knowing they are not broken, they are

not diseased, they are not a problem. An allegiance to sanity of this sort creates a space when

one finds confidence and view their situation as workable.

**Sunday 10:00-12:00 (9235)**

**Awakening Awe in Violent and Troubled Youth: A Conversation between Kirk Schneider and Jim Hernandez**

Kirk Schneider, Ph.D. is a leading voice in existential-humanistic psychology, past president of

the Society for Humanistic Psychology, adjunct faculty at Saybrook University and Teachers

College, Columbia University. president of the Existential-Humanistic Institute and author of 12

books, including his most recent "The Polarized Mind: Why It's Killing Us and What We Can Do

About It" and "The Spirituality of Awe: Challenges to the Robotic Revolution." Kirk is also in

process of applying the "Experiential Democracy Dialogue," which has been featured at the last

couple SHP conferences and is planned as a series at Saybrook University.

.

Jim Hernandez is a California native and has been an outreach worker for 30 years in the San

Francisco Bay Area. As a crisis counselor he has worked for Law Enforcement, School

Districts, Trauma Units and Mental Health Agencies assisting individuals, families and

communities in crisis. Jim received mentoring and training in Existential philosophy and

counseling through consultation with Dr. Rollo May and Kirk J. Schneider Phd. His approach

with turning Existential insight into effective methods to reduce and stop gang violence earned

him a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005.

This conversation hour comprises a dialogue between Kirk Schneider and Jim Hernandez

about the role of awe--humility and wonder, sense of adventure toward living-- in the support

and healing of violent and troubled youths. Jim Hernandez, whom Kirk Schneider interviewed

for his book "Awakening to Awe: Personal Stories of Profound Transformation" will discuss the

role of awe on his own path from gang leader to youth advocate and mediator and Kirk

Schneider will discuss his personal path to awe and the role it plays in his current work with

polarizing personalities. Demonstrations and group exercises will be offered in addition to

ample time for dialogue with the audience.

**Sunday 10:00-11:00 (9240)**

**Pain is not Pathology: Re-Visioning Psychology through a Social Justice Lens**

Lisa Vallejos, PhD, LPC is a therapist, educator, activist, and consultant who specializes in

assisting individuals and organizations in creating intentionally inclusive and socially

conscious spaces. Dr. Vallejos serves in leadership for the Society of Humanistic Psychology and was featured in the panel discussion “Becoming an Effective Multicultural Ally: Strategies and tools for

effective advocacy in a diverse world” at the 2017 Annual Conference of the Society for

Humanistic Psychology Division 32 of the American Psychological Association. Dr. Vallejos is also the Founder and President of Gabriel’s Gift, an organization inspired by her son who was born with a congenital heart defect. She is also the co-founder and president of The Humanitarian Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to confronting exploitation and oppression. Dr. Vallejos is a published author, artist, and poet, and she has been featured as a topic expert for major publications.

This presentation is a call to revolution in psychology, where the social and oppressive factors

are no longer side considerations to mental health and wellness in minorities but rather as

primary cause. We evaluate the effects of racism and oppression and how those factors MUST

be considered, treated and approached if mental health systems are to effectively serve people

of color.

**Sunday 10:00-12:00 (9246)**

**Teaching H/E in a Social Justice-Focused Doctoral Program: Challenges and Opportunities**

Dr. Henning is a clinical psychologist and educator who specializes in effective interventions

for traumatic stress, dissociative disorders, chronic and life-threatening illness, death and

dying, bereavement, and loss in psychotherapy. She also provides training in self-care

strategies for people who work extensively with survivors of trauma and loss. She is a

Professor in the Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology at Adler University in Chicago, and the

creator and coordinator of its Traumatic Stress Psychology Emphasis. Dr. Henning earned her

B.A. in Political Science and J.D. in Law at Indiana University, and her M.A. and Psy.D. in Clinical

Psychology at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. She is a Fellow in Thanatology

(Death, Dying and Bereavement), and the President-Elect of the Society for Clinical Hypnosis.

She provides individual therapy in a part-time private practice setting to traditionally

underserved individuals who have experienced severe traumatic life events, chronic or life-

threatening illness, bereavement, or loss.

Damita SunWolf LaRue, Psy.D., LPC, CT, CCISM

Brittany E. Trauthwein, Psy.D., CT

This presentation will utilize a symposium format to focus on the challenges and opportunities

associated with creating and teaching Humanistic-Existential (H/E) courses in doctoral

psychology programs, in the context of increased prioritization of “evidence-based”

approaches to therapy, anti-H/E biases in many academic and training settings, and nationwide

changes in doctoral student recruitment and retention. The presenters will provide examples

from their own recent experience in creating, developing, and revising basic and advanced-level

full semester H/E courses within a doctoral program with historically strong anti-H/E biases.

Challenges will be assessed from a larger systemic lens concerning attitudes towards H/E

theory and practice in the field of psychology as a whole, and the resulting effect this has on

decisions by school administrators, core and adjunct faculty, training department staff, and

students with respect to adding, developing, retaining, or signing up for H/E courses within a

doctoral program’s curriculum. Presenters will share strategies to use in influencing

administrators during curriculum development processes, developing course descriptions and

outlines, selecting specific course resources, in-class exercises, and assignments, as well as

deciding how to order the topics that will be taught for either beginning or advanced-level full-

semester Humanistic-Existential courses. Reflections on the instructors’ and students’

personal experiences with teaching and learning in these pilot courses will be offered. The

increased need for collaboration among Humanistic-Existential professionals in the

field, particularly within academic settings will be discussed; strategies for increasing collaboration

will proposed and explored with attendees of the symposium. Lastly, significant areas of growth for the Humanistic-Existential field, primarily with respect to teaching in doctoral programs and working with students who are navigating internship applications and serving in training sites as Humanistic-Existential providers, will be identified.

**Sunday 10:00-12:00 (9248)**

**Soul Work: A Modified Therapeutic Method For Stewarding Consciousness Expansion (For**

**The Purpose Of Liberation Through Wisdom and Love)**

Mona Shenassa Toubian received her Master’s in Business Administration from Georgetown

University and Masters in Clinical Psychology from Pepperdine University and Doctorate in

Psychology from Saybrook University. Her emphasis in her PhD studies was consciousness,

spirituality and integrative health. She has dual undergraduate degrees and a minor from UC

Berkeley and she is an Oxford Scholar. Mona live in Los Angeles, California with her husband

Michael and four children and works hard to consistently evolve and expand her

consciousness while living as a mystic in the world.

Many researchers, and a good portion of Western society does not have a deep understanding

of the role of the spiritual arena and how it applies to a human being’s optimal functioning in

the world. Therefore, many have undervalued and not been taught what the landscape of the

soul entails and how it’s principles and practices can be applied to living a more meaningful life

apart from religion. A study of many different ancient wisdom teachings and principles has

culminated in common themes, which underlie the principles of Soul Work. The structure of

Soul Work revolves around three phases, which can be thought of as three interlocked circles

rather than as a linear progression. Phase one focuses on healing the past; phase two,

becoming present and nurturing it; and phase three, expanding ones inner and outer world.

This modified therapeutic model can be incorporated into traditional therapy and modern

living. Some rudiments which Soul Work is grounded in include principles of spirituality in

energy healing and Kabbalistic understanding of the landscape of the soul, as well as its

importance in functioning optimally in the world. This paper will uncover and understand the

unifying themes used in “soul work,” as utilized by the author and her clients, and attempt to

create a replicable system from these common themes, which individuals, healers and those

seeking spiritual evolution and peak performance can use to progress.

**Sunday 11:00-12:00 (9240)**

**Neuvas Teorias: Seeking Liberation in the Borderlands between Story and Stillness**

Dr. Gina Subia Belton is a thanatologist, educator, a community mentor to young scholars and

arising out of her Mestizaje lineage—an emerging Indigenous scholar, as well as a published

poet. Dr. Belton is passionate about social justice, community, liberation and eco-psychology,

particularly where this concerns Native American mental health and the promotion of wellness

for all, in our end of life relationships. Integrating an eco-psychological approach, her research

and private practice take up the lineages of depth psychology and humanistic existential

psychology in cultivating contemplative and conscious attunement with aging, life limiting

illness, death, loss and grief.

Surviving the oppression of one’s people, and living through a seemingly unending existential

threat in the guise of cultural genocide or forced slavery, leave a biological trace that becomes

a genetic legacy. According to Maxwell, imperial trauma points to a generational pattern, a

cluster of beliefs and affects that started at the point of imperial contact but continue to

influence, even when the traumatic memory is forgotten (Maxwell, 2013). In this experiential

presentation, examples of intergenerational trauma are shared by an APA psychologist and a

professor in Native American Studies, Women’s studies and English. Weaving together their

Mezistaje and Filipina-American narratives of intergenerational trauma and unfolding

liberation, the presenters chart potential avenues for healing by using Briskin’s six stances of

collective wisdom as a theoretical framework: “Collective wisdom begins with a commitment

to recognize that we are more than just the sum of our external parts” (Briskin et al, 2009) in

sharing their lived experiences as Indigenous women navigating ancestral and new territories

simultaneously in academia and dharma communities. Ernest Becker wrote, “It is fateful and

ironic how the lie we need in order to live dooms us to a life that is never really ours.” Through

the dharma and meditative practice, these two narratives and their storytellers undertake their

path to liberation from the projection of a collective vital lie, a path continually revealing itself

through the telling and compassionate reception of personal stories and narratives in the

cultivation of collective wisdom.

Stanley Krippner keynote 12:00-1:00 (NEC)

Stanley Krippner, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Saybrook University, is a Fellow in four APA divisions, and past-president of two divisions (30 and 32). Formerly, he was director of the Kent State University Child Study Center, Kent OH, and the Maimonides Medical Center Dream Research Laboratory, in Brooklyn NY. He is co-author of Extraordinary Dreams (SUNY, 2002), The Mythic Path, 3rd ed. (Energy Psychology Press, 2006), and Haunted by Combat: Understanding PTSD in War Veterans (Greenwood, 2007), and co-editor of Healing Tales (Puente, 2007), Healing Stories(Puente, 2007), The Psychological Impact of War on Civilians: An International Perspective (Greenwood, 2003),Varieties of Anomalous Experience: Examining the Scientific Evidence (APA, 2000), and many other books.

1:00-1:15 Closing remarks