



Please join us IN-PERSON for:

***Working with Complex Childhood Trauma in Couple Therapy:
From Dissociative Collusion to Shared Responsibility and Connection***



Saturday, March 4, 2023

9:00 am – 4:30 pm

Simmons University, Boston MA
300 The Fenway
Linda K. Paresky Conference Center
Main College Building, 3rd Floor

Presenter: Ron Nasim, Ph.D.

“The patient awaking from a nightmare has reached the limits of his capacity for dreaming on his own. He needs the mind of another person – ‘one acquainted with the night’ – to help him dream the yet to be dreamt aspect of his nightmare”

– Ogden, 2007

Couples in which one partner suffers from the impact of complex childhood trauma often encounter unique difficulties with physical contact, intimacy, sexuality, communication, and trust. Their relationship dynamic may be marked by reenactments of past traumatic relational patterns. This workshop will present a clinical practice that is founded on the assumption that establishing the witnessing lacked during the events in childhood can break the traumatic reenactments in adulthood, and spur recovery. When this process is achieved during couple therapy, the trauma survivor may no longer be forced to relive their private nightmare, and the couple gain an opportunity to live a shared dream marked by an enhanced sense of connection and responsibility.

The workshop will introduce Scheinkman & Fishbanes’ model of the Vulnerability Cycle (VC) as providing a perspective to working with these couples. VC conceptualizes couples’ presenting problems as embedded in a reciprocal interactional/emotional pattern that contributes to the couples’ derailment. The couples’ entrapment in such a pattern is due to the activation of vulnerabilities and survival strategies from their past traumas. These are embedded intrapsychically, and complicate the couple’s existing modes of relating. The workshop will explore the concept of “dissociative collusion” as a helpful theoretical and clinical tool, and describe specific clinical practices that establish a context for witnessing within the couple therapy sessions.

Dr. Nasim will use case presentations to demonstrate the techniques and illustrate how this approach is widely applicable to couples dealing with complex childhood trauma and its effects. Additionally, a clinician from a training institute, the Psychotherapy Institute of Back Bay will offer a relevant case presentation from their ongoing work with a couple.

Ron Nasim, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist and certified couple and family therapist from Israel. He is a former coordinator and supervisor for the couple and family therapy program at LOTEM clinic for sexual abuse survivors at Sourasky Medical Center in Tel Aviv. Ron lectures and supervises at the Academic College of Tel Aviv-Yaffo at Tel-Aviv University and at the Barcai Institute, as well as at the Ackerman Institute for the Family and Adelphi University couple therapy program. His main focus of interest and research is the impact of trauma on couples and psychotherapy integration.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this program the participants will be able to:

1. Describe the unique difficulties and challenges that couples with trauma histories often encounter.
2. Name four traumatic reenactment patterns that these couples may display.
3. Describe the core assumptions of the Vulnerability Cycle model.
4. Explain how the couple’s traumatic entrapment reflects the activation of vulnerabilities and survival strategies from their past.
5. Explain the importance of the “lack of witness” at the time of childhood trauma, and its effect on the reenactments in the couple’s adult life.
6. Explain how establishing the witnessing lacked during the traumatic events in childhood can break the traumatic reenactments in adulthood.
7. Articulate the concept of “dissociative collusion” as a helpful theoretical and clinical tool in working with these couples.
8. Describe an integrative intervention that facilitates the context for witnessing within the couple therapy sessions.

REFERENCES:

- Davies, J. M. & Frawley, M. (1994). *Treating the adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse*. New York: Basic Press.
- Kleiner-Paz, I. I. & Nasim, R. (2021). Dissociative collusion: Reconnecting clients with histories of trauma in couple therapy. *Family Process*, 60(1), 32-41.
- MacIntosh, H. B. (2013). Dissociative identity disorder and the process of couple therapy. *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 14(1), 84-96.
- Nasim, R., & Nadan, Y. (2013). Couples therapy with childhood sexual abuse survivors (CSA) and their partners: Establishing a context for witnessing. *Family Process*, 52(3), 368–377. <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12026>
- Ogden, T. H. (2007). *This art of psychoanalysis: Dreaming undreamt dreams and interrupted cries*. Routledge.
- Ringstrom, P. A. (2018.) Relational Psychoanalytic Perspective on Couples Psychotherapy. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 38, 399-408.
- Scheinkman, M. (2019). Intimacies: An integrative multicultural framework for couple therapy. *Family Process*, 58(3), 550-558.

FEE:

For registration information, please scroll down to the registration section of the flyer.

PARTICIPANTS:

This program is open to all PCFINE members, other interested mental health professionals and students. It is intended for those with beginner to advanced levels of knowledge and experience.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

Full refund if notice of cancellation is received by February 24, 2023.

CONTINUING EDUCATION:

Psychologists – The Psychodynamic Couple and Family Institute of New England (PCFINE) is approved by the American Psychological Association (APA) to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. PCFINE maintains responsibility for this program and its content. This workshop fulfills the requirements of 6 hours of CE credit. Participants from states other than Massachusetts will need to file with their respective licensing boards. PCFINE will issue a certificate of attendance to those who complete the workshop, but this issuance does not guarantee CE acceptance by boards other than APA and NASWMA.

Social Workers, Licensed Mental Health Counselors, and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists may call 781-449-8365 or email pcfine1934@gmail.com for CE information.

PCFINE is committed to non-discrimination and will conduct all activities in strict conformity with the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles for Psychologists. If you believe that a violation of ethics has occurred during the program, or have any other complaints or questions, please contact Justin Newmark, Ph.D. at pcfine1934@gmail.com.

There is no commercial support for this program nor are there any relationships between the CE sponsor, presenters, workshop content, research, grants, or other funding that could reasonably be construed as a conflict interest.

DIRECTIONS:

Please see Simmons website (www.simmons.edu) for directions and information about public transportation and parking.

REGISTRATION:

Registration fee includes food in the morning, during afternoon break, as well as a bag lunch with a salad entrée. We will do our best to accommodate your choice of entrée. **On the registration form, please indicate your preference for choice of lunch entrée: grilled chicken, salmon, or Mediterranean quinoa.**

The deadline for registration is March 1, 2023.

	PCFINE Member	Non- Member	Student or Equity Rate*
Early Bird Rate (by 2/4/2023)	\$150	\$175	\$50
Standard Rate (after 2/4/2023)	\$175	\$200	\$50

*The "Equity Rate" is intended for prospective workshop participants who identify as belonging to racial or ethnic groups with historical barriers to access, and/or clinicians who work primarily with low-income individuals or groups who have also endured historical barriers to access by virtue of their race or ethnicity.

COVID PRECAUTIONS FOR THIS IN-PERSON EVENT:

1) Cancel up to March 4, with refund if due to COVID concerns: If you, or any of your close contacts, have any of the COVID symptoms outlined by the CDC, please follow the CDC guidelines for isolation and quarantine. Our deadline for refund of the registration fee will be extended to the day of the workshop (3/4/2023), if your cancellation is due to concern about COVID symptoms, a positive test, or concern about a known exposure to COVID.

2) Self-test: We encourage participants to test themselves using a home test as close to the start of the workshop as possible.

3) Masking: Currently, masking is not required in the Simmons' campus buildings. We strongly encourage attendees at this workshop to wear a well-fitting mask consistent with CDC guidelines, throughout their time in the Linda K. Paresky conference space, when not eating or drinking. We will provide additional masks for anyone who needs one. All of the Simmons staff, will be expected to wear masks when working within the conference space.

4) Social distancing: The conference space is huge (3,520 square ft.) and has air filtration devices placed appropriately. The space can comfortably hold 300 people. We will cap our numbers at a much lower point to permit a limited number at each of the 6-foot banquet tables. Additionally, there will be ample spaces in the lobby, and in the adjoining university center to allow people to take their lunches, and snacks during breaks to spots outside of the main conference room, if they choose.

For Registration, go to www.pcfine.org