

Mary Olson, Ph.D.

What is Open Dialogue?

“Open Dialogue” is a network approach to severe psychiatric crises and conditions first developed at Keropudas Hospital in Tornio, Finland. It combines a particular kind of treatment system with a particular form of therapeutic conversation, or “Dialogic Practice.” Outcome research on Open Dialogue suggest that after five years, eighty percent of people with first-time psychosis were working, studying, or looking for a job. It has garnered international attention for these impressive outcomes.

The Workshop

The first part of the workshop will provide an overview of the principles and practices of Open Dialogue. Clinical vignettes will be included to illustrate this way of working. The research will also be presented. The significance of Open Dialogue for the U.S. will be addressed, along with the current initiative at the University of Massachusetts Medical School to adapt this way of working to a U.S. emergency room setting. The second part will be an introduction to the basic clinical skills of Dialogic Practice with opportunities to practice through experiential exercises and role plays.

Objectives

1. Acquire an overview of the principles and practices of Open Dialogue.
2. Learn the outcomes for first episode psychosis
3. Appreciate the significance of Open Dialogue for US mental health care.

Readings

Olson, M, Seikkula, J. & Ziedonis, D. (2014). The key elements of dialogic practice in Open Dialogue. The University of Massachusetts Medical School. Worcester, MA

Retrieve from: <http://umassmed.edu/psychiatry/globalinitiatives/opendialogue/>

Seikkula, J. & Olson, M. (2003). The open dialogue approach to acute psychosis. Its poetics and micropolitics. *Family Process* 43, 4103-418.

Presenter's Bio:

Mary Olson, Ph.D. LICSW is Assistant Professor in Psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) and a faculty member at the Smith College School for Social Work.

An educator, researcher, and practitioner, Dr. Olson was a Senior Fulbright Scholar (2001-2002) to Finland in the Department of Clinical Psychology at the University of Jyväskylä. Inspired by the humanistic and democratic innovation in Finnish psychiatry called "Open Dialogue," she has initiated the first US adaptation research study of Open Dialogue at UMMS.

She has published key articles in Family Process and other international journals on Open Dialogue, dialogical transformation in therapy, research on larger systems, and communication-based approaches to anorexia.

In 2011, she founded a training facility with Jaakko Seikkula, the Institute for Dialogic Practice, in Haydenville, MA and has specialized in developing new training methods for dialogic practice: a "post-systems" approach.

A member of the American Academy of Family Therapists, she maintains a private practice and treats and consults with individuals, couples, and families on a variety of clinical issues. An honors' graduate of Wellesley and Columbia in English and comparative literature, she has an MSW from Smith and a PhD in communication from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.