



## Program At A Glance

*A more detailed schedule of conference events can be found inside this program.*

### Friday, May 15, 2015

2pm-5pm Pre-Conference Institutes

### Saturday, May 16, 2015

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 8:00-8:45am   | Coffee Reception and Conference Check-In          |
| 8:45-9:00am   | Opening Remarks & Sponsor Recognition             |
| 9:00-9:30am   | Morning Plenary Session                           |
| 9:30-9:45am   | Break (Visit exhibits and transition to workshop) |
| 9:45-10:45am  | Session One Workshops                             |
| 10:45-11:00am | Break (Visit exhibits and transition to workshop) |
| 11:00-Noon    | Session Two Workshops                             |
| 12:00-1:00pm  | Catered Lunch                                     |
| 1:00-1:45pm   | Luncheon Keynote Address                          |
| 1:45-2:00pm   | Break (Visit exhibits and transition to workshop) |
| 2:00-3:00pm   | Session Three Workshops                           |
| 3:00-3:15pm   | Break (Visit exhibits and transition to workshop) |
| 3:15-4:15pm   | Session Four Workshops                            |
| 4:15-4:30pm   | Break   |
| 4:30-5:00pm   | Afternoon Plenary Session                         |
| 5:00-5:15pm   | Closing Remarks                                   |
| 5:15pm        | Conference Adjourns                               |
| 5:15-6:00pm   | Visit Exhibit Tables                              |

[www.contemporaryrelationships.com](http://www.contemporaryrelationships.com)

# The Second Annual Contemporary Relationships Conference 2015



## Creating Healthy Dating, Relationship & Family Experiences Within the LGBTQ Community



Sponsored by Elements Behavioral Health & The Right Step  
Hosted by the Equality Texas Foundation  
Founded by Jeff Lutes, LPC

May 15 -16, 2015

St. David's Bethell Hall • 301 E 8th Street • Austin, Texas 78701





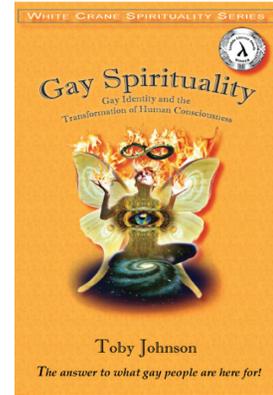
# BUILDING A STATE OF EQUALITY



TOGETHER WE CAN INFLUENCE  
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND  
WIN POSITIVE CHANGE FOR YOU,  
YOUR BUSINESS, YOUR FAMILY  
AND YOUR COMMUNITY.

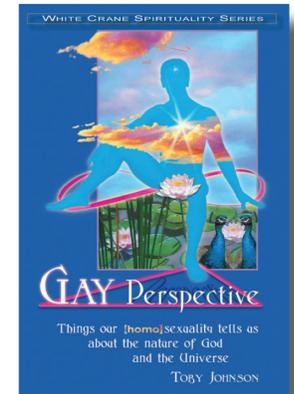
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Toby Johnson's critically acclaimed, Lambda Literary Award-winning *Gay Spirituality: Gay Identity and the Transformation of Human Consciousness* argues that there is a certain kind of enlightenment that goes with being gay. Religion is undergoing a dramatic transformation today. The rise of gay identity is an important part of this evolutionary spiritual development in human consciousness, both demonstrating it and helping to bring it about.

In this companion volume, *Gay Perspective: Things our [homo]sexuality tells us about the nature of God and the Universe*, Johnson further explicates his visionary stance that gay people's nature as outsiders gives them a uniquely powerful perspective on the nature of God and religion. By living outside gender norms, LGBTQ people are more open to seeing across boundaries of gender and so gain access to a less dualistic outlook on the nature of life. Once again, Johnson approaches this potentially controversial subject matter with erudition, empathy and visionary speculation to give meaning to gay consciousness beyond superficial issues of sexual behavior.



A local Austinite, TOBY JOHNSON is author of some ten books including also *Secret Matter*, *Getting Life in Perspective*, *Two Spirits* and *The Myth of the Great Secret: An Appreciation of Joseph Campbell*. These and other titles are available from amazon.com and other internet vendors in print, digital & audiobook formats. See [tobyjohnson.com](http://tobyjohnson.com)

Toby Johnson and Kip Dollar, partners of 30 years, are included in Elisa Rolle's recently released book featuring gay & lesbian couples, *Days of Love: Celebrating LGBT History One Story at a Time*.



## Program Committee



The 2015 Program Committee devoted considerable energy and time to reviewing submitted proposals and selecting the presenters featured at the conference. Many thanks to these professionals for volunteering their time to help create this year's program:



Sarah Kyle, PhD, LCSW  
Austin, Texas



Jason Sipkowski, LPC  
Austin, Texas



John Edwards, LCSW  
Oakland, California



Melinda Porter, LPC  
Southlake, Texas



Tierra Ortiz-Rodriguez,  
LPC-Intern  
Houston, Texas



Liz Cohen, JD, LCSW  
Austin, Texas

## DON'T FORGET YOUR EVALUATION FORMS!

Thank you for joining us for the 2nd Annual Contemporary Relationships Conference. We hope you found the experience informative, entertaining, and fun. Please take a few moments to fill out an evaluation form and return to our event staff in the lobby outside Bethell Hall. Your feedback will be used to improve next year's conference. If you need a C.E.U. certificate, you may pick one up when you hand in your evaluation form.



## Welcome!



We are so glad you decided to join us for the 2nd Annual Contemporary Relationships Conference. This is an exciting time for the LGBTQ community and our allies. As our relationships and families win acceptance and gain equality, it is important that we all equip ourselves with reliable information and concrete tools that help us create healthy dating, relationship, and family experiences. That's what the CRC 2015 is all about.

Our presenters come from all over the country and will share a wealth of knowledge from both professional experience and the latest social science research. At the same time, we believe YOU also have an important voice in this conversation and we have designed this conference to be highly collaborative. Our workshops are relatively brief, and most presentations are followed by guided dialogue among attendees in order to generate new ideas that each of us can use to improve our relationships with self and others.

We hope you have fun and build community as you learn. Please take a little time to make some connections with others and exchange contact information. If you need any assistance, please don't hesitate to talk to one of our event volunteers. They will be happy to help you. Thanks again for joining us!

Sincerely,

Jeff Lutes, LPC  
Conference Founder

Chuck Smith, Executive Director  
Equality Texas Foundation

## Acknowledgements

In addition to our Sponsors and Program Committee, the following people made today possible.

*Volunteer Coordinators*  
Karen Umminger, LCSW  
Mark Flores, LMSW

*ASL Interpreter*  
Beth Hasty

*Volunteers*  
Bill Cashion  
Frank Morasco, Jr.  
Candice Towe  
Lindsay Lege  
Heather McPherson, LPC, LMFT  
Tierra Ortiz-Rodrigues, LPC-Intern  
Jenson Reiser  
Gary Stein

*Program Design*  
Blake Gruett

*Assistance with Set Construction*  
Alan Stein



## Schedule



Friday, May 15

2:00pm - 5:00pm

Concurrent Pre-Conference Institutes (choose one of the following)

Amelia Coffman, MA (Crail A)

**Am I Worthy of Your Love?**

**Feeling Worthy of Love in LGBTQ Individuals and Relationships**

Jonathan Benz, MS, CAP, ICADC, CDWF (Crail B)

**Moving from Rejection to Integration:**

**Finding a Place for Religion in LGBTQ Life**

Robert Weiss, LCSW, CSAT-S (Crail C)

**Sex Addiction 101: Understanding the Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment of Sex, Porn and 'Love' Addiction in the Digital Age**

Saturday, May 16

8:00am - 8:45am

*Conference Check-In & Coffee Reception (Bethell Hall Lobby)*

8:45am - 9:00am

Opening Remarks & Sponsor Recognition

Lauren Zurbrugg, Development Manager at Equality Texas (Bethell Hall)

9:00am - 9:30am

Morning Plenary - Jeff Lutes, LPC (Bethell Hall)

**Choose to Love: Deconstructing Heterosexism and Embracing Self, Others, and Community**

9:30am - 9:45am

*Break, visit exhibits, transition to the workshop of your choice*

9:45am - 10:45am

*Concurrent Workshops - Session One (choose one of the following):*

Beck Gee, MA, LCDC (Bethell Hall)

**I'm Sober, Now What?**

**How to Create and Maintain Relationships in Recovery**

Micki Grimland, LCSW-ACP (Choir Room)

**Coming Out in Midlife**

Mary Wilson, MDiv and Rebekkah Falk-Jones, MDiv, MS (Crail A)

**Forgiveness - What is it?**



## Speaker Bios



**Suzanne Bryant**

*Austin, Texas*

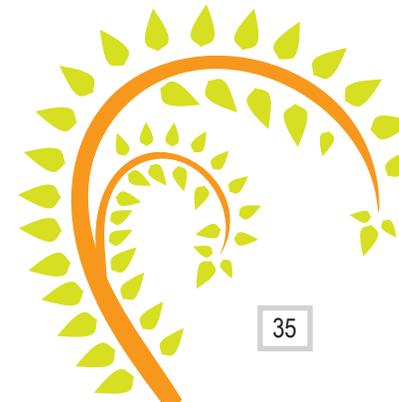
Suzanne Bryant is an Austin adoption attorney who specializes in building secure families for LGBT clients. Currently, her work focuses on providing these families with second-parent adoptions. After graduating from Duke Law School in 1986, Suzanne was a founding board member and co-chair of the National LGBT Bar Association. She has received awards from various organizations, including the Texas Human Rights Foundation, the Human Rights Campaign and the State Bar of Texas. She and her partner Sarah Goodfriend are currently the only couple to have been legally married in Texas, but hope that will change soon and marriage will be available to everyone. Suzanne and Sarah have been together for more than 30 years and are raising two daughters who were adopted in China.



**Sarah Goodfriend, PhD**

*Austin, Texas*

Sarah has had the opportunity to interweave a professional career with LGBTQ activism. Appointed in 1992 by Governor Ann Richards to the Texas Public Utility Commission, she was both applauded (and condemned) as a high profile, "out" lesbian, receiving a "Recognizing Our Own" award from the Victory Fund and the Allan Caulkin Award from the Equality Texas Foundation. Leaving government service she ran a successful economic consulting firm and helped Suzanne raise two adopted daughters from China, Dawn and Ting. As their daughters matured, and President Obama stood up for LGBTQ citizens, Sarah's need for political activism reappeared. After a stint of grass roots organizing in New Mexico for Obama, she returned home to join Battleground Texas in hopes of speeding Texas' return to political sanity. Her history of Democratic political engagement was recognized most recently by the Travis County Democratic Party as a 2014 Trio of Stars Honoree.





## Speaker Bios



**Andrew Reichert, PhD**  
San Antonio, TX

Andrew is a licensed psychologist and ordained United Methodist minister. He currently works at Southwestern University's Student Counseling Center in Georgetown, TX, while also maintaining private practice offices in Georgetown and San Antonio (his hometown). Dr. Reichert's clinical interests focus on addiction and recovery work, LGBTQ concerns, and spirituality questions and discernment. He received his training from Texas A&M University, Duke University, and the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation. In his free time, Dr. Reichert enjoys Bikram yoga, long-distance cycling events, and spending time on the beach at Port Aransas, TX.



**Natalie Love, LPC-I, LMFT-A**  
Austin, TX

Natalie studied Psychology in college based on her fascination with the human experience, but it was not until the perspective & growth gained through her own therapy that she decided to pursue psychotherapy as a career. She holds an M.A in Counseling from St. Edward's University in Austin, TX and a B.A in Psychology from Westmont College in Santa Barbara, CA.

Natalie strives to create an authentic, welcoming atmosphere for individuals and couples to explore their lives in a new way, mostly working with women and men in their 20's & 30's, LGBTQ individuals & couples. She has experience helping clients with anxiety, depression, life transitions, relationship and communication issues, and self-compassion.



**Denise Braken, MSW**  
San Francisco, CA

Denise received her Master's in Social Work from the University of California-Berkeley. She is a social worker in San Francisco in the medical and mental health fields with a focus on working with older adults and their support systems. Denise initially developed an interest in supporting contemporary relationships while obtaining a Master's in the Humanities at the University of Chicago, where she studied film/literature through the lens of psychoanalytic and trauma theory. Denise is still new to the field of counseling/psychology and is enjoying exploring the topic of building healthy relationships in addition to her social justice work.



## Schedule



### Saturday, May 16

9:45am - 10:45am

Loren Olson, MD (Crail B)  
**How to Keep Your Heart On:  
Male Sexual Functioning Across the Life Span**

Andy Miller, MHSE, MCHES, and Sally Bennett, LCSW (Crail C)  
**Are You Ready to Become a Parent?**

10:45am - 11:00am

*Break, visit exhibits, transition to the workshop of your choice*

11:00am - 12:00pm

*Concurrent Workshops - Session Two (choose one of the following):*

Derek Leighton, LMFT, LPC (Bethell Hall)  
**Sex without Shame:  
When You Know There's Trouble and Your Relationship  
Needs Help**

Joanna Ricco, MS, MFTI, and Denise Braken, MSW (Crail A)  
**Just Like Me: Attachment Through Mirroring, Idealizing, and  
Twinship in Romantic Relationships**

Brad Kennington, LMFT, LPC (Crail B)  
**The Drive to be Some-body:  
The Influence of Body Image in Gay Culture**

Andrew Reichert, PhD (Crail C)  
**When Is Enough, Enough? To Stay With or Leave an Addict**

12:00pm - 1:00pm

*Catered Lunch (Bethell Hall)*

1:00pm - 1:45pm

Luncheon Keynote - Robert Weiss, LCSW, CSAT-S (Bethell Hall)  
**From "gay marriage??" to "Gay Marriage!!"  
One Clinicians' Insight Into Our 180-Degree Cultural Reversal**

1:45pm - 2:00pm

*Break, visit exhibits, transition to the workshop of your choice*



Saturday, May 16

2:00pm - 3:00pm

Concurrent Workshops – Session Three (choose one of the following):

Joni Ogle, LCSW, CSAT (Bethell Hall)

**Love, Sex, and Attachment Among the LGBT Young Adult Population**

Melinda Porter, LPC (Choir Room)

**Parents. Transgender Children. Family.**

Christy Tashjian, CPM, LM, MSN, WHNP and Jenni Huntly, Canadian RM (Crail A)

**Becoming Parents: Queer People Having Babies**

Antoinette Gomez, MA, LSW, CACH, MSW (Crail B)

**Reducing Stress in Your Significant Relationship**

Rebekka Ouer, LCSW (Crail C)

**Solution-Focused Brief Therapy With Trans and Gender Variant Couples**

3:00pm - 3:15pm

Break, visit exhibits, transition to the workshop of your choice

3:15pm - 4:15pm

Concurrent Workshops – Session Four (choose one of the following):

Dominic Carbone, PhD (Bethell Hall)

**Social Media and Relationships: Considerations for Treating Gay Men**

Amy Ford, Natalie Love, LPC-Intern, LMFT-A, and Savannah Stoute, LPC-Intern (Choir Room)

**A Financial Love Map: Communicating About Money in LGBTQ Relationships**

Traci Medieros-Bagan, MA, MFTI, RYT & Skye Bigari, BA (Crail A)

**Queering Consent: Navigating Relationships Outside of the Hetero AND Homo Normative**

continued...



**Brad Kennington, LMFT, LPC**  
Austin, TX

Brad is a therapist in private practice specializing in body image issues, eating disorders, relationships, anxiety and sexual orientation issues. Brad is nationally recognized for his work with male eating disorders and has presented internationally on gay male eating disorders. He has been

interviewed by Huff Post Live and has written several articles in Huffington Post. He has also written on relationship and wellness issues. His writings have appeared in Austin Lifestyle, Connexions Magazine and L Style/G Style. Brad is currently a staff writer for Influential Magazine and a regular contributor and mental health editor for Austin MD Magazine. He is a contributing author to “Treatment Issues and Outcomes for Males with Eating Disorders” in Current Findings on Males with Eating Disorders (Eds. Leigh Cohn & Raymond Lemberg), and the lead author of “Gay Men and Eating Disorders”, published in the journal Perspectives. Brad is an associate faculty and clinical supervisor at the Austin Family Institute and a clinical fellow of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Brad is also on the board of directors of the National Association for Males with Eating Disorders and is the president of Austin Eating Disorders Specialists. He is an LMFT and LPC board approved supervisor. Previously, Brad served as the executive director of two eating disorder treatment centers and worked for six years as the chief of staff and legislative director for a state representative. He stays involved in politics by advocating for mental health public policy at the state level.



**Amy Ford**  
Austin, TX

Amy is an author, adoption advocate, lesbian mother, and organizer of money through her work at New York Life. She is dedicated to supporting LGBTQ families as they plan for bright futures and protect what matters most. For Amy, what matters most is the family she painstakingly created through adoption with her partner of 15 years. Working with families of every kind to design customized road maps for the future, Amy has a soft spot for gay couples. She regularly provides financial seminars to supporters of Equality Texas around the state on topics relating to the LGBTQ community. Amy lives in a suburb of Austin with her partner, Kim, and their 3 daughters.



## Speaker Bios



**Andy Miller, MHSE, MCHES**  
*Austin, TX*

Andy is President and CEO of Austin-based Any Baby Can, a non-profit that improves the lives of children by strengthening families through education, therapy and family support services. In addition, Miller is the Co-Founder and partner at Miller-Stephens & Associates, a strategic consulting practice for non-profit organizations. In 2013, together with his partner Brian, Andy also co-founded The Handsome Father to foster a community of support to connect, equip and inspire gay fathers and fathers-to-be. Previously, he has served as Executive Vice President of Operations for the LIVESTRONG Foundation. He has also held positions with Texas Medical Association and the University of Florida (UF). A graduate of Southwestern University, Andy also has a Master's degree in Health Science Education from UF and is a Master Certified Health Education Specialist. He is an award-winning non-profit professional, frequently requested speaker and serves on multiple national and local boards and committees committed to health and social causes, particularly those serving the LGBT community. Andy and Brian reside in Austin, TX with their son, Clark.



**Joni Ogle, LCSW, CSAT**  
*Los Angeles, CA*

Joni has more than 25 years of clinical experience working with children, adolescents, adults and the LGBTQ population. Specializing in addiction, trauma and co-occurring mental health disorders in both a treatment center environment as well as in private practice. She is a licensed clinical social worker and a certified Sex Addiction Therapist with a Master's degree in social work from the University of Houston. She has additional training in Post Induction Therapy along with The Daring Way Shame Curriculum. She is currently operating as the Executive Director of Promises Treatment Centers Young Adult Program, an Elements Behavioral Health Facility.



**Joanna Ricco, MS, MFTI**  
*San Francisco, CA*

Joanna is an MFTI working and living in San Francisco. She holds a Masters of Science, Clinical Psychology from Notre Dame de Namur University. With a keen eye to psychodynamic principles as applied to gender and sexuality, Ms. Ricco actively works to synthesize these concepts with the cultural stimuli of today. Her work integrates how social networking and selfies play an active role in personal identification, as well as relational identification.



## Schedule



### Saturday, May 16

3:15pm - 4:15pm

Marsha McDonough, PhD (Crail B)  
**Contemporary Healthcare Relationships: Toward More Effective Collaboration with Non-Heteronormative Persons and Families**

Catherine Ford, PhD (Crail C)  
**Relationships between Sexual Abuse, Sexual Identity/Orientation, and Sexual Expression**

4:15pm - 4:30pm

*Break*

4:30pm - 5:00pm

*Afternoon Plenary* - Suzanne Bryant & Sarah Goodfriend (Bethell Hall)  
**Texas Trailblazers: Wisdom from the State's First Same-Sex Couple to Receive a Marriage License**

5:00pm - 5:15pm

*Closing Remarks*

5:15pm

*Conference Adjourns*

5:15pm - 6:00pm

*Visit Exhibit Tables*





# DESTINATION *Imago* AUSTIN

Improving communication in a longterm committed relationship is challenging, and at times painful.

Nearly all relationships struggle at times, or with specific topics. What starts out as a simple difference can escalate into conflict before we know what happened. It may be hopeful for you to learn that just a few basic skills are all that is needed to profoundly change your communication.

Would that be worth a weekend of your time? Join us for a workshop or a series of private sessions to learn a new way to see your relationships and to gain the tools to get you there.

**Michelle Miller Bohls, LMFT Certified Imago Therapist**  
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## Speaker Bios



**Traci Medeiros-Bagan, MA, MFTI, RYT**  
*Anaheim, CA*

Traci is a queer vegan femme-inist of color. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Critical Gender Studies with a focus in Sexuality and a Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology. Ze offers individuals, couples and family therapy, mind-body integration healing, gender and sexual identity consultations and trainings and workshops on affirming care for the LGBTQ community through hir private practice, COM|PASSionate REVOLT Healing in Orange County, CA. They are a fan of feminist, egalitarian and collaborative therapy, universal access to self-healing, tarot, safe space, gender play, sexual exploration, consent and neutral pronouns. Traci moonlights once a week as a yoga guide during Skye's live acoustic shows.



**Skye Bigari, BA**  
*Anaheim, CA*

Skye is an advocate and organizer, musician and expression aficionado with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology. As a trans person and self proclaimed "girly man," Skye has focused on maintaining balance of inner and outer expectations in terms of disclosure, medical care, self care and relationships in order to reconcile active participation in a rigidly gendered world. Trying to learn more about polyamory, kink, living in community, and living with himself - Skye is one who tries to appreciate the ever changing world we live in and find passion in trying to keep up. Skye also plays background music for Traci's Yoga Class.



**Savannah Stoute, LPC-I**  
*Austin, TX*

Savannah is a graduate of Sam Houston State University with a Bachelors of Science in Psychology and St. Edwards University with a Masters of Arts in Counseling. Having previously worked with adolescents and teens with the Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline as well as Austin's homeless population through the Trinity Center, Savannah now counsels individuals and families in the LGBT community. As an Ally, she supports clients and their families during the difficult process of coming out and helps to navigate the struggles often experienced in the process.



## Speaker Bios



**Jonathan Benz, MS, CAP, CADC, CDWF**  
*Fort Lauderdale, FL*

Jonathan is Director of Three Strands, the Christian program at The Recovery Place in Fort Lauderdale, FL, part of Elements Behavioral Health. An ordained minister, he is also a Certified Addictions Professional, Certified Daring Way™ Facilitator, and a founding reformer with The Reformation Project, which exists to train Christians to support and affirm

LGBTQ people. He is the author of *Live A Legacy: Spiritual Principles for Strategic Living*. Jonathan is an eloquent public speaker, known for his wit, wisdom, pragmatic approach and ability to persuade diverse populations to achieve specific goals. He has carried his message of strategic, spiritual living to 40 nations.



**Catherine Ford, PhD**  
*Austin, TX*

Catherine is licensed as a Psychologist in Texas. She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin in August 1994, and her B.A. in Psychology from Rice University in 1984. She has been in private practice since 2003, offering individual, relationship, and group

psychotherapy to adults of all ages. She specializes in gay/lesbian/bisexual issues, and is committed to supporting her community in this way (and although she has some training and expertise in gender issues, she is not a specialist in trans concerns). She has a long-standing interest in issues related to sexual trauma. She has experience with young-adult issues from seven years of training and working in university counseling centers (at St. Edward's University, UT-Austin, and University of Houston), and with elder-adult issues from working with Medicare patients both outpatient and within nursing homes through Vericare. Her therapy training included two years at Waterloo Counseling Center which specializes in services for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and HIV-affected individuals and couples. She has been teaching courses for the St. Edward's University Master of Arts in Counseling program since 2002. Her work history also includes two years at the University of Texas at Austin as a sexual health and rape prevention educator, and six years with SEU's Community Mentor Program doing program evaluation and student training.



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Creating a Healthy LGBT Community

## Exclusively serving the LGBT Community

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### Am I Worthy of Your Love? Feeling Worthy of Love in LGBTQ Individuals and Relationships

Feeling worthy of the love that comes our way is crucial to an individual's well-being, and this may be increasingly true in the LGBTQ community. In our research, we found that many students did not have high feelings of love worthiness, and this was especially true when they did not have someone supportive in their family who displayed unconditional love, be it a parent or other supportive family member. Support from family over one's sexual identity may be one crucial way that unconditional love is shown in the LGBTQ community, and may lead to increased feelings of love worthiness in this community. Navigating low feelings of love worthiness can be difficult, as individuals may doubt the love that others show to them. This can create stress in the relationship, and all partners may feel tense and helpless. We will discuss the impact of feelings of love worthiness from the perspective of the family of origin, the individual, and the relationship, and we will develop skills for feeling more worthy of love.

- Learn what love worthiness looks and feels like in LGBTQ individuals and relationships, and how support from family can affect your feelings of love worthiness
- Learn how to identify how worthy of love you feel
- Learn what you can do to increase personal feelings of love worthiness, and how partners can foster feelings of love worthiness to improve the relationship

### Moving from Rejection to Integration: Finding a Place for Religion in LGBTQ Life

For the most part, religious organizations have a poor history of relationship with the LGBTQ community. Individuals have been condemned to eternal damnation by groups who claim to speak for God. Religion—as a subcomponent of culture—is foundational to American life and often unavoidable, even if one is not religious. How do you recover healthy spirituality when sexually shamed and alienated? How do you heal from toxic religious experiences? How do you engage non-affirming, religious friends and family while still maintaining your own spiritual and psychological wellbeing? This presentation will explore these topics and offer holistic, integrated strategies for personal wellness and recovery for the LGBTQ individual.

- Heal from toxic religious experiences
- Own and tell their story shame-free to people of faith
- Know when to engage with non-affirming, religious friends and family and when to walk away



**Micki Grimland, LCSW-ACP**  
*Houston, TX*

Micki is a psychotherapist specializing in individual, couple, and family therapy and has been in practice for more than 30 years. She is also trained in psychodrama and group therapy. She has presented clinical material nationally and to international groups as well. She is a full member of American Group Psychotherapy Association and Southwestern Group Psychotherapy Society, and is a member of the Mental Health Association and the National Association of Social Workers. She has chaired many professional committees and has sat on state and national task forces. She is also a certified mediator of disputes. Micki is a therapist supervisor and a frequent public speaker. She is a regular presenter on Great Day Houston TV show with host, Debra Duncan, a mental health consultant with Channel 11, Channel 13 and Channel 2, and has appeared twice on Oprah. She has published articles in More Magazine and has a chapter in the book titled: Dear John, I Love Jane by Candace Walsh. Micki lives in Houston. She has three daughters. She loves rock climbing, the arts, having conversations, and enjoys exploring the intersection of spirituality and psychotherapy. Her life will be summed on her epitaph by this quote: "She sucked the marrow out of life."



**Sally Bennett, LCSW**  
*Austin, TX*

Sally provides individual, couples, group and family counseling at Waterloo Counseling Center in Austin, Texas. She has 13 years of experience in supporting families and youth, including eight years in a clinical setting. Ms. Bennett has an expertise in working with families of children with fetal alcohol syndrome, oppositional defiant disorder, ADHD, autism spectrum, and anxiety disorders. She uses Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy to help clients find new ways to respond to anxiety and depression. Ms. Bennett holds a Master of Social Work degree from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Women's Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Waterloo Counseling Center offers individual, couples, group and family therapy to Central Texans and has an expertise in serving the LGBTQIA community, people living with HIV/AIDS and their loved ones, and people experiencing trauma.



**Jenni Huntly, RM**  
*Austin, TX*

Jenni is a dedicated midwife who is committed to professional excellence and to continuous learning as the foundation of her practice. Her focus on clinical practice and outreach assists her in supporting normal birth in all settings and in providing caring and accessible midwifery care. Originally trained and certified in Ontario, Canada, she is now working with MotherBloom Midwifery in Austin, Texas. Jenni has been also working with Maternity Neighborhood, a electronic records start-up, providing client technical support for the EHR Private Practice. Her interest in providing care in low-resource settings has taken her to the Institute for Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium for a certificate program for nurses and midwives, to fill short-term replacement duties in a birth centre in Puvirnituk (Nunavik), and as a volunteer midwife and instructor in Hinche, Haiti. She continues to be an active member of the Association of Ontario Midwives Clinical Practice Guidelines Subcommittee, where she was a contributing author to recent guidelines on VBAC and GBS, among others. Jenni has taught in the Queer Prenatal Course in Toronto, Canada, and organized and co-facilitated a 6-week course for prospective parents in the queer community in Austin.



**Derek Leighton, LMFT, LPC**  
*Austin, TX*

Derek is a psychotherapist in private practice for the past nine years with a focus on sex therapy, LGBT relationships, and trauma resolution. He works with individuals, couples, and relationships of more than two people, and provides supervision and private practice consultation to other therapists. He specializes in helping people have great relationships and healthy sexuality, in self-defined ways. Derek completed his graduate training internship at Waterloo Counseling Center in Austin, where he also co-led a weekly HIV+ Support Group. He's a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, a Licensed Professional Counselor, a Certified Group Psychotherapist, a Certified EMDR Therapist and Approved Consultant, and a Certified Sex Therapist. Prior to becoming a therapist, Derek spent more than 20 years working with corporate systems, both inside as a high-tech manager and from the outside as a leadership coach. He holds a Master of Arts in Professional Counseling from Texas State University, and has a Finance degree from The University of Texas at Austin. Quite often, when he stops to consider the work he gets to do being in the business of hope and change, he believes he's one of the luckiest people around!



**Sex Addiction 101: Understanding the Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment of Sex, Porn and 'Love' Addiction in the Digital Age**

This clinically driven education session will offer an overview into the history and clinical debate surrounding the treatment and etiology of sex, porn and love/relationship addictions as well as the challenges and treatment issues specific to GLBTQI persons. The speaker, an openly gay clinician, author of multiple books on sex addiction and a 25-year expert in the treatment of Hypersexual Disorders, will provide a general introduction to assessment, treatment and referral of sex and related process addictions along with diagnostic tools and insight into differential diagnosis/co-occurring addictions. The training will make available further training and referral resources for those clients and clinicians motivated to gain knowledge, help and experience in the treatment of sexual addicts in the digital age.

- Attendees will be able to define “problem” sexual behavior patterns from those that are non-pathological, and be able to describe 3 characteristic symptoms of hypersexuality/sex addiction
- Attendees will be able to identify the primary psychological origins of sexual addictive behaviors
- Attendees will discuss how to access multiple basic referral resources and information including: Self-help groups, review of the 12 step programs, online resources, as well as useful articles and books toward further clinical education

**Choose to Love: Deconstructing Heterosexism and Embracing Self, Others, and Community**

Even LGBTQ persons who are out and active in their communities can struggle with pockets of internalized heterosexism and shame that become barriers to loving themselves and others to their fullest potential. Mental health professionals that wish to work effectively and ethically with LGBTQ persons and couples must examine their own heterosexist biases and respond to the pervasive influence of heterosexism within society. In this plenary session, we will:

- Briefly examine the political, religious, and social forms of heterosexual privilege in our culture
- Explore strategies for undoing internalized heterosexism and developing healthy self-respect and relational aptitude
- Review ideas for challenging heterosexism and attitudes that favor gender conformity - both in and out of the therapy office



## Workshops



### I'm Sober, Now What? How to Create and Maintain Relationships in Recovery

This workshop will cover dating in early recovery, how to have relationships sober and sober sex. The spectrum of dating in recovery will be covered. Answers to questions such as "How do I find a date now that I'm sober?", "What is sober sex?", "Can I just hook up now that I'm sober?" and "What if I'm sober and my partner is not?" will be covered throughout the presentation and/or group discussion. The topic of how to have a relationship in recovery is one of the hottest topics whether people are newly sober or in long-term sobriety. Addiction and Sobriety are all about how to have relationships with others. This informational session will give professionals, sober individuals and those who love them an in-depth look at how to construct healthy relationships in recovery.

- Understanding what it means to have a relationship in sobriety and learning how to date in recovery
- Having dialogue around healthy sober sex
- Establishing healthy boundaries and relationships when one partner is sober and one is not

### Coming out in Midlife

According to studies by JoAnn Loulan, 60% of lesbians come out in midlife. Many men, as well, come out in the mid-phase of life . . . when the Universe knocks on your door and says "Who are you REALLY?" The presenter came out after 24 years of marriage with three daughters, now 27, 25 and 20. She will start the session with a clip from her appearance on Oprah and will then hold a discussion/process group for attendees to discuss their own coming out process midlife:

- Participants will begin to move more deeply into their identities
- Attendees will find cohesion of experience with other participants
- Group members will be able to share and support those who are still in their coming out processes

### Forgiveness - What is it?

We are relational beings, and since we are human, we are not perfect beings. Consequently, conflicts arise. The role of forgiveness in a religious context has been used in some settings as a "must" or "should". This is rarely, if ever, a helpful approach. The approach for this workshop is to identify what forgiveness is, what outcomes we expect from the forgiveness process, and how this process informs our relationships. Given that harm occurs in relationship, it is also true that forgiveness takes place in relationships. And as soon as forgiveness enters the equation, we will recognize the need to discuss what is "fair" or "just". Last, but not least, as we consider the just

*continued...*



## Speaker Bios



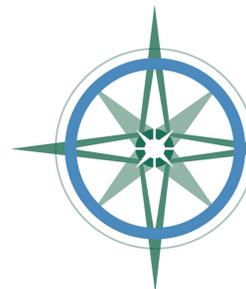
**Beck Gee, MA, LADC**  
*Minneapolis, MN*

Beck is originally from Los Angeles, CA. Beck completed undergraduate work in the field of Sociology from Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana. Their undergraduate thesis was a study on addiction in LGBT rural communities. Beck's master's degree is in Addiction Studies from Hazelden. Beck received an Excellence in Writing Award from Hazelden graduate program; the paper focused on training addiction counselors to give better treatment to LGBT clients. Beck is the Assistant Director of Clinical Services at the PRIDE Institute in Minneapolis, MN. Their counseling styles include existential, solution-focused, and twelve step facilitation and they have a passion for working with the LGBT population and recovery. Beck is also passionate about the Transgender community and the effects of addiction and stigma within the Trans\*/LGB populations. They believe that everyone deserves a chance at sobriety and works hard to help those who are willing and want to live a life of recovery.



**Christy Tashjian, CPM, LM, MSN, WHNP**  
*Austin, TX*

Christy has been a homebirth midwife in the Austin community for 15 years. For the past 2 years she has been counseling queer couples about fertility and ways to conceive a pregnancy, including vaginal insemination at home and IUI in home or office. In December, 2013, Christy graduated with a Women's Health Nurse Practitioner Master's degree. She is passionate about human rights in pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum and supports families in realizing these rights. Christy is a strong advocate for vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC). She and her wife Jenni Huntly practice together at MotherBloom Midwifery and Holistic Health, providing personalized midwifery and well-person/primary care. Christy sees her role as a midwife and nurse practitioner as a partner with the people she helps, always working together to create sustainable health with her clients.



**LAKEVIEW**  
**HEALTH**

Find Your True North



**Rebekah Falk-Jones, MDiv, MS**  
*Austin, Texas*

Rebekah is currently serving as the associate pastor at Church of the Savior. She has also served in a similar capacity at University Baptist Church and prior to these positions, Rebekah has served as a Chaplain at Lakeland Regional Medical Center in Florida. In December, 2013, Rebekah

finished a Spiritual Direction Certification from Perkin's School of Theology at SMU. Rebekah's interest include not only building healthy relationships, but how our spirituality can contribute to that process.



**Marsha McDonough, PhD**  
*Austin, Texas*

Marsha has worked in Austin for over 25 years as a psychologist, family therapist, and consultant. She is a member of the American Psychological Association and a Clinical Fellow of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy. In addition to her work as a therapist, she supervises

pre-professional psychologists and family therapists for licensure in Texas. Dr. McDonough has taught psychology and counseling courses at the University of Texas, has published research in scholarly journals, and has co-authored chapters in edited books on psychotherapy practices. She has been a well-received presenter at numerous local and national meetings. As an LGBTQ ally she serves as a member of the Forum on the Military Chaplaincy, has participated in actions with Soulforce, and has consulted with Jeff Lutes on the organization, design, and implementation of several conferences focused on LGBTQ issues.



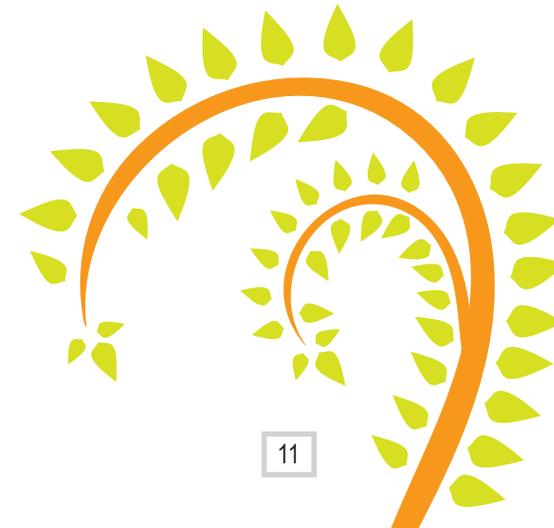
outcome of forgiveness, and as we consider the relationality of forgiveness, we inevitably see the ripple effects on the communities in which we are engaged.

- Removing the "shoulds" from the forgiveness process based on previous religious expectations
- A working definition of forgiveness that allows for multiple outcomes
- Recognizing that our understanding of forgiveness is connected to our notions of justice and community

### How to Keep Your Heart On: Male Sexual Functioning Across the Life Span

Men believe that they must always get it up, keep it up and get it off - society's definition of being a man. At the first sign of difficulty men become anxious about their sexual "dysfunction" instead of accepting that they are experiencing a natural evolution in their sexual functioning. Most men do not understand their own sexual functioning. What creates desire? Why do we choose whom we choose? Why is it so hard to remain faithful? Can an open relationship improve a committed relationship? Are internet chat rooms helpful or harmful? Why does hook up sex leave us sexually satisfied but emotionally empty? How can we learn to make love in slow time? Masters and Johnson in the 1980's found that 80% of male sexual dysfunction could be treated by focusing on mutually satisfying pleasure. Now, a desire for instantaneous solutions leads to a search for cheap sources of Viagra and Cialis and a dread of getting older. The speaker will present information on normal male sexual functioning and challenge the myths of what it means to be a fully functioning sexual man.

- Understand the normal physiologic evolution of male sexual functioning across the life span.
- Learn how men can enjoy sexual satisfaction well into late life.
- Know that sex is not about "performance" but about sharing physical and emotional intimacy.





**Are You Ready to Become a Parent?**

When it comes to LGBT couples and individuals, one thing is for certain: all of us have to make a conscious decision about whether to become a parent. For some it's not a question—we've always dreamed of being a parent and see ourselves as someone's mom or dad. Others go back and forth for years, or struggle with heterosexist messages we receive about what a parent should be. Others just never get the call, or our partner feels one way while we feel another. Regardless of where you fall on the spectrum—whether you're having trouble deciding, or are just wondering if you're ready—this session will help you make sense of the noise and get closer to answering the question, "Do I want to be a parent?"

- Take your "grown-up inventory," identifying and listing the outward markers that indicate your life is ready to welcome a child into it
- Anticipate the changes that will occur in your support network and the emotional impact that will have on you and your personal relationships
- Understand you'll have to "come out" in a number of everyday situations

**Sex without Shame: When You Know There's Trouble and Your Relationship Needs Help**

"Sex Addiction. Porn Addiction. Sexual Compulsivity. Out-of-Control Sexual Behavior." Even the labels we often use contain bias and judgment or preconceived ideas about what the problems are. Others will say the problem doesn't exist. And very often, being identified as gay or queer provides a base of shame associated with sexuality that we bring into our adult relationships. Through a sex-positive, sex therapy lens, we'll explore more about therapy that provides help for LGBT relationships in distress after broken sexual agreements, and ways to begin to remove the judgment and shame that are all too often associated with the partner who has broken promises, both spoken and unspoken.

- Consider how the debate about 'sex addiction' gets in the way of LGBT relationships that need help following breaches of sexual trust
- Learn how to identify examples of shame that can masquerade as help when dealing with breaches of sexual trust
- Provide information about therapy that reduces shame and creates room for exploration in LGBT relationships



**Rebekka Ouer, LCSW**  
*Dallas, Texas*

Rebekka is a solution-focused therapist who specializes in work with LGBT couples, individuals and families at Uptown Counseling and Family Therapy, which is located on the corner of Oak Lawn & Lemmon in Uptown, Dallas. She has over 10 years of experience working with clients in the DFW area. Rebekka's work is focused on helping her clients to clearly identify and describe the solutions they seek, so that they can begin moving immediately towards their unique preferred futures.



**Loren Olson, MD**  
*St. Charles, Iowa*

"I'm just your average gay, 71 year old psychiatrist, living with my husband on a farm in rural Iowa," declares Loren A. Olson. Average, he's not. Not only did Olson complete medical school, serve four years as a flight surgeon in the U.S. Navy, and embark upon a successful career as a psychiatrist; he also had a compatible eighteen year marriage and raised two daughters with his attorney wife, Lynn, before facing up to a difficult truth about himself: he is gay. Dr. Olson is author of "Finally Out: Letting Go of Living Straight, a Psychiatrist's Own Story. With professional insight Dr. Olson examines his personal transformation from a "straight" man living in a heterosexual world to a gay man beginning his education anew. He punctuates his story with revealing statistics from his interviews with gay men around the world and established studies on homosexuality, and with surprising historical facts that provide perspective on global cultural norms. Part personal memoir and part psychological treatise, "Finally Out" offers a rigorous look at why some gay men live straight lives and never come to terms with their true sexual orientation; why some men believe they are "too straight to be gay" even while engaging in secret sex with other men – and the challenges faced by those who choose to "come out" after living half a lifetime or more closeted.





**Amelia Coffman, MA**  
*Houston, Texas*

Amelia is in her final year of school as a Ph.D. student in Social Psychology at the University of Houston. She has presented at national conferences including the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, the American Creativity Association, the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, and the Society for Personality Assessment. She also teaches Introduction to Statistics for Psychology and Personality Psychology at the University of Houston. As a Social Psychologist and Psychometrician, she researches many aspects of relationships. She has extensively researched feelings of love worthiness, as well as personality, depression and anxiety, drinking behavior, social norms, creativity across cultures, and giftedness. Amelia and her partner are from Houston, Texas.



**Melinda Porter, LPC**  
*Southlake, Texas*

Melinda has a focus on transgender individuals and their families, before, during, and after their transition. She enjoys working with children, teens, and adults with Gender Dysphoria. Melinda spoke at last year's conference on Transitioning with Transgender Couples. She holds groups for transgender individuals during all stages of their transitioning and supports family with options for educational information.



**Mary Wilson, MDiv**  
*Austin, Texas*

Mary has been the pastor of Church of the Savior in the Austin area since 2002. It is a small, but lively and generous congregation that focuses its energy toward community and social justice concerns. Prior to becoming the pastor at Church of the Savior, Mary was a mathematics professor at Austin Community College and occasionally continues to teach when possible. She is currently working on a Doctor of Ministry degree with a focus in pastoral care and preaching.



### **Just Like Me: Attachment Through Mirroring, Idealizing, and Twinship in Romantic Relationships**

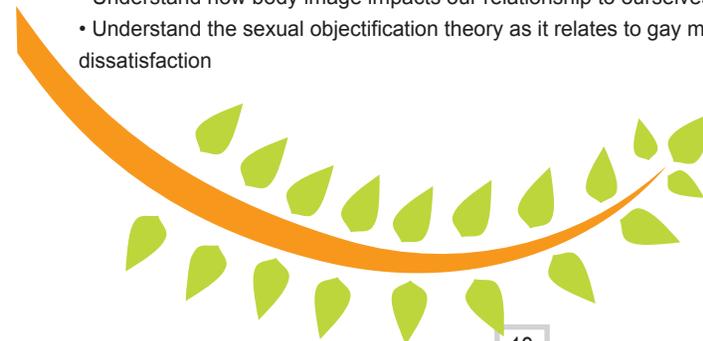
Just Like Me introduces Heinz Kohut's theories of early childhood self object development as critical to adult romantic relationship building, particularly for the "Selfie Generation". In a culture that thrives on celebrating likeness and excusing flaws with a filter, excessive mirroring, idealizing, and twinship behavior in a romantic relationship is often an extension of the individuals' inability to see or accept the partner as anything but an idealized version of themselves. This behavior pattern weakens the ability of the couple to approach hardships with loving empathy. Just Like Me seeks ways to move a couple who is experiencing these relational constructs toward a more multi-dimensional love.

- See a client through investigation of the self object
- Guide a couple through dialogue that gives time for each individual's self to come in to focus
- Provide a holding environment for the couple to live new relational experiences

### **The Drive to be Some-body: The Influence of Body Image in Gay Culture**

The presentation and subsequent group discussion will address the more pervasive body types pursued by gay males and how one's body image and the pursuit of a body type can influence one's relationship to self and to others. Included in the presentation and group discussion will be how body image impacts intimacy, self-esteem and overall relationship functioning. We will also discuss how there is an emphasis in the gay community to be some-body versus some-one and the implications this emphasis has on personal and relationship development. The presenter will also touch on how body image issues can lead to disordered eating behaviors and the function these behaviors serve within a relationship (e.g., the absorption of anxiety, displacement of conflict, barriers to intimacy, etc). Recent research showing that gay males are the highest risk group for the development of eating disorders will also be shared.

- Be able to identify the dynamics that contribute to the development of body image
- Understand how body image impacts our relationship to ourselves and romantic partners
- Understand the sexual objectification theory as it relates to gay males and body image dissatisfaction





### When Is Enough, Enough? To Stay With or Leave an Addict

The National Institutes of Health notes that approximately ten percent of Americans over the age of 12 meet criteria for substance abuse or dependence. Addiction, including behavioral addictions, such as gambling and sex addiction, can take a huge financial, social, and psychological toll. Family members, friends, and lovers of addicts often face emotional pain, as well as physical and sexual trauma, related to common behaviors of addicts. Lies, stealing, financial ruin, incarceration, and adverse health consequences are but a few of the ongoing problems that friends and relatives of addicts often cope with on an ongoing basis, while more “functional” alcoholics and addicts can bring less dire, but still depressive and difficult qualities to a relationship. When is enough, enough? This workshop will help participants consider when to stay with or leave an addict by drawing on brief overviews of:

- neuroscience, to understand the brain disease concept of addiction
- family systems theory, to understand how family dynamics can maintain or upset the balance in a family system
- common 12-step wisdom, such as Al-Anon’s viewpoint that loved ones of alcoholics and addicts “didn’t cause it, can’t control it, and can’t cure it”

The workshop will consider options for those in these difficult relationships, a list of helpful resources, and conclude with a time for discussion when participants may voluntarily share their experience of navigating the difficulties of being in a relationship with an alcoholic or addict.

### From “gay marriage??” to “Gay Marriage!!” One clinicians’ insight into our 180-degree cultural reversal

A mere twenty years or so ago most LGBTQ people considered, talked, and wrote about the institution of marriage as being “an archaic, misogynistic, heterosexual model of human oppression, nothing less than a notion still seeping out from centuries of Judeo-Christian (and earlier) faulty belief systems.” And for those too young to know or too old to remember – in the not so distant past, most gay and lesbian people wanted nothing to do with the concept of marriage. Today, a mere two decades later, on every front (legal, professional, financial, political, sociological etc.) GL and BTQ people are on the front lines fighting to ensure that we can get married . . . just like all those straight people do. So what has happened and why? Is this progress, assimilation, both or neither? This brief talk will take a playful psycho-sociological look at the issue of ‘gay marriage’ from where we were to where we are and where we may be going and along with the potential clinical challenges that accompany our hard won rights.

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**Antoinette Gomez, MA, LSW, CAC II, MSW**  
*Commerce City, Colorado*

Antoinette earned a Master of Social Work (MSW) at The University of Denver and holds a Master of Arts from Clark Atlanta University (Atlanta, GA). In addition, she matriculated at Penn State University (Bachelor of Science with Honors). Antoinette specializes in working with individuals, families and couples in the area of relationship enhancement and early childhood trauma resolution. In addition, she serves as a Certified Addictions Counselor, Child Family Investigator, and Divorce and Family Mediator. She practices from an attachment theory model, which holds that healthy adult relationships are the by-product of secure emotional bonds. She guest lectures at Metropolitan State University, University of Denver, Denver Family Therapy Institute, and Colorado School for Family Therapy. In addition, she consults with clinical teams, independent file audits/quality management, and provides training in cultural competency (in particular working with minority clients).



**Dominic Carbone, PhD**  
*New York, New York*

Dominic earned his Bachelor’s of Science degree in Psychology at Fordham University in New York City. He minored in Philosophy & Bioethics. He also earned a Master’s of Arts degree in Applied Developmental Psychology & Education at the Teacher’s College of Columbia University in New York City. He earned a Master’s of Science in Human Development and Family Studies and a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Clinical Developmental Psychopathology from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. He holds a Post-graduate certificate in Psychotherapy with a specialization in Gender Studies & Sexuality. He is a full time faculty member of the Social Sciences Department at Sussex College in Newton, New Jersey and an adjunct in the Department of Social Sciences at the State University of New York’s Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. He is a practicing, state licensed clinical psychologist in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. He has served on the executive boards of several human service organizations, has published professionally and presented at both national and international conferences regarding a variety of topics in the fields of developmental psychology, clinical psychology, human sexuality, business psychology, diversity and organizational development. He has a fondness for both domestic and international travel and has chronicled his adventures using photography.



**Robert Weiss LCSW, CSAT-S**  
Long Beach, California

Robert is Senior Vice President of Clinical Development with Elements Behavioral Health. He has developed clinical programs for The Ranch outside Nashville, Tennessee, Promises Treatment Centers in Malibu, and The Sexual Recovery Institute in Los Angeles. A licensed UCLA MSW graduate and personal trainee of Dr. Patrick Carnes, he is author of *Cruise Control: Understanding Sex Addiction in Gay Men and Sex Addiction 101: A Basic Guide to Healing from Sex, Porn, and Love Addiction*, and co-author with Dr. Jennifer Schneider of both *Untangling the Web: Sex, Porn, and Fantasy Obsession in the Internet Age* and *Closer Together, Further Apart: The Effect of Technology and the Internet on Parenting, Work, and Relationships*, along with numerous peer-reviewed articles and chapters. An author and subject expert on the relationship between digital technology and human sexuality, Mr. Weiss has served as a media specialist for CNN, The Oprah Winfrey Network, the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, and the Today Show, among many others. He has also provided clinical multi-addiction training and behavioral health program development for the US military and treatment centers throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia.



**Jeff Lutes, LPC**  
Austin, Texas

Jeff is a psychotherapist in private practice with 27 years of experience in helping LGBT individuals, couples, and families. He is the co-author (with Marsha McDonough, PhD) of a chapter in the *Handbook of LGBT-Affirmative Couple and Family Therapy* (Routledge 2012), and the author of *Okin the Panda Bear Finds His Family* - a children's book about family diversity (Creative House Press, 2011). He has contributed posts on LGBT relationships at Bilerico.com and presented at the conferences of the American Association of Marriage & Family Therapy, the American Counseling Association, and the Texas Psychological Association. As the Executive Director of Soulforce (2006-2009), Jeff challenged the anti-gay misinformation of organizations and religious figures such as James Dobson & Focus on the Family, Exodus, NARTH, Joel Osteen and Rick Warren. He has spoken at universities, churches, and rallies around the country, and his social justice efforts have been covered by numerous media outlets, including NPR and CNN. Jeff and his partner of 17 years have three children they adopted as a couple. His partner and two of their children are deaf, so American Sign Language is the primary mode of communication in their home.

- Attendees will learn to address 3 significant challenges faced by male/male and female/female couples that are seeking to create relationship intimacy
- Attendees will list 3 specific insights into how the American socio-cultural history of GLBTQI persons has contributed to interpersonal problems with disordered intimacy
- Attendees will discuss 3 ways that cultural prejudice can lead to individual psychological problems within a minority population

**Love, Sex, and Attachment Among the LGBT Young Adult Population**

In this workshop the presenter will explore the concept of love and sex addiction among the LGBT population, break down the attachment process, and look at the prevalence of love and sex addiction in a social media world. The work of Pia Melody will be used to explain the process of developmental immaturity and where LGBT clients tend to get stuck. The presenter will utilize the research of Dr. Patrick Carnes and Robert Weiss, LCSW, CSAT-S to share the development of love and sex addiction along with the added pressures and connections of social media. Finally, the presenter will utilize the work of Dr. Brene` Brown to help examine what role shame plays in the development of an LGBT client.

- Participant will be able to define sex and love addiction, and identify the role it plays in the young LGBT adult population
- Participant will understand the added shame attached to the additional labels that affect the LGBT community and the difficulty of breaking thru this shame
- Participant will learn ways to reduce the breakdown in the ability to establish intimate connections with self and others within the young LGBT population

**Solution-Focused Brief Therapy with Trans and Gender Variant Couples**

This presentation will cover what SFBT is and how its use with trans and gender variant couples can be beneficial for this population. It will take the audience through a typical SFBT session covering the steps to take and the kinds of questions to ask during such a session. It will cover the specific assumptions an SF therapist has that guide their work with trans and gender variant couples and how those assumptions impact the sessions. We will review:

- The structure of an SFBT session
- The impact of this type of therapy for Trans and Gender Variant couples
- Specific assumptions and questions therapists can use in their work with this population



### Becoming Parents: Queer People Having Babies

This session will cover the variety of ways that queer people can conceive a pregnancy and some of the legal and medical implications involved in the process. We will discuss topics including: who will carry the baby, the use of known donor sperm or unknown donor sperm, the ins and outs of sperm banks and choosing which sperm donor to use, when is the best time to conceive, charting the fertile cycle, intravaginal insemination versus intrauterine insemination, birth choices and pregnancy care provider choices.

- Attendees will understand the fertile cycle and know the optimal time to conceive a pregnancy
- Attendees will learn the legal implications and differences between known donor and unknown donor sperm
- Attendees will know the difference between vaginal insemination and intrauterine insemination and how to choose what might work best for their situation
- Attendees will start to become familiar with the rights they have regarding pregnancy and birth choices

### Reducing Stress in Your Significant Relationship

Today, people speak of being stressed at work, school, at home, and in their relationships. With less time, more technology, and competing interests, relationships can take a back seat to other things happening in life. Statistics about stress in the lives of Americans and particularly American couples is presented. Factors that have historically impacted Americans and current stressors in social interactions will be shared with the audience. This workshop differentiates between stress that motivates and stress that paralyzes us in our relationships with our spouses and partners. In addition, the presenter will outline the psychology and physiology of stress per its impact on the brain. Stress and Trauma will be analyzed for similarities and differences. The plasticity of the brain will be articulated and clear and concise clinical examples will be utilized to outline the impact of PTSD on the veteran/military couple, and the impact of domestic violence, and stresses of child rearing on married couples. Thirdly, this workshop dismantles the myths of how stress should be handled in a marriage and offers some healthy relationship skills and techniques so that people get more passion, love, power, and compassion out of their spouse and themselves. Practical stress reduction techniques including mindfulness, relaxation, breathing techniques, and communication strategies for engagement will be reviewed at the close of the presentation.

### *The Whistler*

All of a sudden she began to whistle. By all of a sudden I mean that for more than thirty years she had not whistled. It was thrilling. At first I wondered, who was in the house, what stranger? I was upstairs reading, and she was downstairs. As from the throat of a wild and cheerful bird, not caught but visiting, the sounds warbled and slid and doubled back and larked and soared.

Finally I said, Is that you? Is that you whistling? Yes, she said. I used to whistle, a long time ago. Now I see I can still whistle. And cadence after cadence she strolled through the house, whistling.

I know her so well, I think. I thought. Elbow and ankle. Mood and desire. Anguish and frolic. Anger too. And the devotions. And for all that, do we even begin to know each other? Who is this I've been living with for thirty years?

This clear, dark, lovely whistler?

*Mary Oliver, writing about Molly Cook*

Congratulations to **Contemporary Relationships**, year two! And of course to Jeff and company for a bold, inspiring and informative conference – **thanks**.

**Rich Armington, LCSW, CGP**

Individual & Relationship Counseling

512.440.8910

<https://plus.google.com/+RichArmington/about>



### Texas Trailblazers: Wisdom from the State's First Same-Sex Couple to Receive a Marriage License

On February 19, 2015, Suzanne Bryant and Sarah Goodfriend were issued the first marriage license for a same-sex couple in the state since the 2005 constitutional amendment banning legal recognition of such unions. A Travis County clerk said the marriage license was given to the couple after a court order earlier in the day and the county was not planning to issue more licenses to same-sex couples. "The court order only applies to this one couple," a clerk said. That one couple has been together for 31 years and in this plenary session Suzanne and Sarah will discuss what has made their relationship successful and resilient. In a relaxed and conversational style, Suzanne and Sarah will share their story with the audience, including:

1. What are some of the qualities and routine habits that have made their relationship successful?
2. What kept them together during periods that were stressful and challenging? How have they managed conflict and created intimacy rather than emotional distance and resentment?
3. What role has LGBTQ advocacy and activism played in their lives? How has that work impacted their relationship and family?



### Social Media and Relationships: Considerations for Treating Gay Men

The purpose of this session is to familiarize participants with the rapidly changing landscape of social media and its potential impact on the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of the psychological disorders in gay men that impact their romantic and therapeutic relationships. Social media venues have the potential to dramatically change the clinician's ability to accurately treat psychological conditions that preclude healthy social interactions with peers and the helping community that gay men access to actualize their relationships. Without a model that considers this influence, clinicians treating this population may be missing important sources of symptom maintenance that become barriers to effective evidenced-based treatment. The increasing reliance on social media has bled into the psychotherapy process; starting with the use of social media outlets to cope with the reasons that drive gay men to seek treatment right through to the search for a therapist via social media and the conduction of psychotherapy online. Participants will actively discuss several case presentations that illustrate the importance of employing a model that includes a nuanced consideration of social media and its effect on the development and maintenance of psychological symptoms. Participants will identify new media influences on the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of disorders in their gay male clients, such as depression, anxiety, and attachment disorders and use evidence-based treatment strategies to mitigate the negative effects of new media on their clients.

### A Financial Love Map: Communicating About Money in LGBTQ Relationships

Money. Everybody wants it, not everyone has it, and most of us want more. Like it or not, money is a part of life as well as a deeply personal can of worms. And according to Psychology Today, fighting about money can be hazardous to your relationship. Attendees will explore their core beliefs about money, ultimately creating a Financial Love Map based on the teachings of John Gottman. Participants will learn sound and simple financial principles, feel empowered to create a financial blueprint for the future, and contemplate various planning considerations for same sex couples. The workshop will include a throw back to the Newlywed Game as well as guided group discussions surrounding issues of finance. Find out the answers to the following questions and many more in a humorous and respectful atmosphere with people who really get it:

- Why is money such a hot button issue?
- How can we have productive conversations around money without fighting?
- What decisions do we need to make surrounding money in order to protect our same sex family?



## Workshops



### **Queering Consent: Navigating Relationships Outside of the Hetero AND Homo Normative**

We've come a long way from assuming consent based on the donning of denim and under the cover of marriage—and, yet, reverberations of the beliefs these inequities were steeped in still remain (around us and within us.) Furthermore, with the visibility of kink communities, non-monogamous relationships, asexuality, community produced pornography and acceptance of casual sexual encounters amongst friends on the rise, the rules of engagement have changed. Add in the use of toys, prosthetics, costumes and props, swirl it together with a little bit of light spanking, dirty talk, genderqueer tops/bottoms, tie it up in a lovely Shibari rope demonstration, and place that pretty little package in a dungeon, to challenge our beliefs about gaze and public consumption, and you've got quite the sexuality sundae intersected with contemporary relationships! Consent can get complicated, but it is invaluable to happy, healthy, fulfilling sexual (or asexual) relationships. In this workshop we'll cover the following:

- Getting Down with Your Desires + Under the Covers with your Body Boundaries: Exploring cultural/societal forces on our sexuality, starting a dialogue with our bodies and articulating personal consent
- Sexual Summit: Learning how to speak to and hear your partner(s)' desires, needs and expectations around their body(ies), affirming language and acts and setting the rules of engagement
- Cumming While Consensual: Incorporating (ongoing) consent into play that holds awareness of past challenges, triggers and traumas while also allowing for exploration, new growth and sexual fulfillment

### **Contemporary Healthcare Relationships: Toward More Effective Collaboration with Non-Heteronormative Persons and Families**

This is a facilitated conversation among healthcare professionals and patients about how to provide better psychotherapy and healthcare to ALL patients. The conversational partners include volunteer therapists, nurses, M.D.'s and patients. Together we address a few key questions such as: "As patients, what qualities of therapists and doctors have you most appreciated when it comes to your unique identity?" "What have you found most frustrating and what has left you feeling most misunderstood", and "As therapists/healthcare providers, in what ways have you been confused by or misunderstood about a patient's unique identity?" "What have you found most helpful in working with LGBTQQ persons?" Other topics might include: "How can we best prepare students and supervisees to work in the new non-binary, trans, poly type world of the 21st century?" The facilitator understands that this small group of patients and professionals cannot speak for an entire population of persons, but she believes there is value in small local and public conversations about these topics and that there can be ripple effects of these smaller conversations as they roll into further conversations.

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- Attendees will take away the knowledge of the distinction between cultural diversity training and relationship building
- Attendees will take away ideas about how healthcare providers and patients can talk together about concerns
- Attendees will continue talking about what was talked about in this conversation with others in new conversations

### **Relationships between Sexual Abuse, Sexual Identity/Orientation, and Sexual Expression**

Often, gay and lesbian people in the presenter's psychotherapy practice say something along the lines of "I was molested when I was a child; could this be why I am gay?" The presenter's short answer is "probably not", but the long answer enters into the complexities of how abuse, sexuality, gender expression, and sexual orientation and identity are experienced at different ages, as well as how they are perceived within families and the broader society. There are many misconceptions that are commonly propagated in media and elsewhere, and these misconceptions range from being simple misunderstandings to being virulently homophobic (such as the idea most of us have encountered that children are not safe around gay/lesbian people).

- Explore common assumptions, myths, and facts about the interrelationships between having experienced childhood/adolescent sexual abuse and one's sexual identity/orientation
- Discuss the difference between effects on sexual orientation versus sexual expression
- Discuss the effects of homophobia and a pathology-based view of sexual orientation on how these issues are often discussed or addressed

### **Parents. Transgender Children. Family.**

Families with transgender children have struggles that include different levels of acceptance. They can be confronted with societies' judgments, secondary families' misunderstandings and/or their own confusions about how they view a child/adolescent being transgender. Loving them and respecting that they feel their outside does not match their inside is a hurdle that a family can approach together.

- Honesty between parents about not agreeing, confused feelings, questions about themselves as parents, and what acceptance/willingness, if possible, will look like for them as a couple
- As parents, how will they let go of the child they had and embrace the person their child is growing into? How do couples support each other and care for their transgender child/teen?
- Parents model how to handle adversity when society and others do not understand or have strong feelings about your personal choices