

DISTINCTIVES & PRINCIPLES

governing our equipping and support programs

It is our intent that our Internship and Facilitator Training programs reflect the following distinctives and principles. It is our desire that the individuals we accept into these programs hold these same values.

1. De-emphasis on skill acquisition

Our primary objective should NOT be to learn what to do but rather how to see, NOT to acquire skill but rather to glean insight. Likewise in helping others, our primary objective should not be to teach people what to do with their children but how to see their children. Our primary instrument of influence, therefore, should not be through offering strategies but removing blindness.

One of the most significant distinctives of this approach is its de-emphasis on the learning of skills: parenting skills, teaching skills, leadership skills, presenting skills, coaching skills, therapeutic skills. Essential to the developmental approach is the idea that social competence is naturally derived from adaptive (walking the maze) and integrative functioning (inner dissonance). To short-circuit this development by the learning of social skills is to interfere with the natural processes of maturation and to camouflage one's true immaturity. If we are unable to take context or others into consideration, are unable to benefit from the feedback provided in a situation, or we do not seem to learn from our mistakes and correction, the root problem is immaturity, not inadequate skill.

It is our belief that the learning of skills can even be somewhat dangerous in matters of leadership, love, caring, teaching, parenting, and helping, primarily because it conceals what truly exists in the person. It is much better to be genuine and clumsy than to be smooth and deceitful. Polish will come with experience, but one's expression should always be rooted in what truly exists within. To act as if one cares when one really doesn't care is to make a travesty of caring itself.

In keeping with this philosophy, the emphasis will NOT be on skill acquisition but rather on the growth of ourselves as helpers, on the process of becoming rather than the process of learning.

2. Rejection of the 'demand & supply' principle of service delivery

Contemporary training programs and approaches are primarily consumer

driven, giving parents and teachers exactly what they are asking for. Just as with children, it is important to distinguish between what is asked for and what is needed. What is asked for is advice; what is needed is insight. What is demanded is a quick fix; what is required is perspective. The training program and its graduates will need to be strongly grounded in its philosophy to resist the pull of current demands.

3. De-emphasis on the professional degree as a prerequisite for helping parents raise their children

Our universities are not providing the kind of expert that parents require these days. Too often the helping professionals abandon both culture and intuition, divorcing their heads from their hearts, and children from their parents. Our mission is to exercise the most ancient art of match-making - endearing parents to their children, and children to their parents - while standing on a science that is sound.

4. Personal integration of the material

A deep and personalized understanding of this material is a prerequisite to making sense of the children in our care. Effective application of this material is therefore an outgrowth of personal integration. It is our desire in our equipping and support programs to foster and encourage this process.

5. Building on the experiences of others

For reasons of efficiency and economy, every effort should be made to make individual learning experiences available to the other participants. This must be done, of course, with utmost respect for the issues of privacy and confidentiality. Every learning experience (presentation, consultation, project, course, personal session, master class, reading assignment, discussion etc) should be viewed from the perspective of enabling others to benefit as well.

6. Parent education as a natural lead-in to parent consulting

There are two reasons that parent education should take the lead in creating opportunities for parent consulting. One reason is to introduce the paradigm and principles that will govern one's counsel. The second is to provide a natural opportunity to win the respect and confidence of potential clients. When you are able to make sense of their children, handle questions in ways that show wisdom and convey respect, demonstrate a compassion for both the children and their parents, the invitations for involvement will come. Getting involved in the intimate relationships of people should only come from a place of trust and confidence. Parent education creates the venue that provides that opportunity.

7. Presenters need to be well-grounded in the practice of the paradigm

Teaching the paradigm must not only come from a place of personal integration but also from experience with children in general and from practice in making sense of individual children to their parents or teachers. In keeping with this, the primary practicum experience for all interns and facilitator training students is the case analysis.

8. Collegial connection and support

A large part of the success of our training programs will be in creating connections between individuals who are committed to this paradigm. It is only in joining the sparks that a fire will emerge. We believe our greatest investment will ultimately be, not in the individuals we are able to touch, but rather in the community of like-minded individuals that we can facilitate. We believe that the synergy created will render the whole much greater than the sum of our individual efforts and capabilities.

9. The use of technology to facilitate our objectives

Every effort will be made to capitalize on what opportunities current technology affords, as this is not only the most viable option economically, but also the learning venue of the future. This will require computer access and internet capability on the part of the interns and directed study students and a willingness to master the technology required. Priority should be given to procure the assistance and consultation required to realize a state of the art that is commensurate to the state of the science this material represents.

10. Emphasis on personal transparency and written expression

High value will be placed on these dispositions as they are facilitative of so many of the objectives in our training programs. Because the time together is short and because of the virtual nature of our program, individuals are encouraged to express themselves in writing through journals, assignments and forum interaction. This will enable participants to be seen and known, to benefit from the experiences of others, to cultivate a context of connection, to integrate the material personally, to generate feedback for others, and ultimately to improve one's insight.