

Positive Psychology, Psychotherapy & Cognitive Behavioral Sciences

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Positive psychology in training mental health professionals working with gender, sexuality and relationship diversity

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This presentation will examine contemporary sex, positive and critical sexological perspectives to preparing all mental health professionals to work with the wide range of people who may present for help and whose values, relationships and lifestyles inhabit out with the dominant heteronormative hegemony. Establishing rapport and making psychological contact with people who consistently experience a variety of explicit traumas and more covert micro-aggressions based on their gender variance, diverse non-heterosexual identities and practices and whose relationships lie outside the traditional socially approved dyad is crucial if one is to make an impact as a positive psychologist on the help-seekers experience and to enable them to live more fully in the world. Few if any professional or para-professional mental health workers have more than a few hours on at best 'LGBT mental health issues' and this will exclude many people across a diverse array of other gender, sexuality and relational identities. We have pioneered sex positive, humanistically focussed training courses which adopt critical sexology perspectives to enhance resilience and which seek to depathologise and focus on sexual and relational health for various populations who have traditionally been the subject of mental health treatment. Our goal is to recognise individuals in their social context and enable helping professionals orient their practice towards building rapport, empowerment and self-actualisation. We will present ideas for curriculum development for inclusion into the training of mental health workers from a range of different disciplines. We will take a sex positive approach to viewing issues like BDSM, 'Sex and Porn Addiction' asexuality and lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-identities and offer a unique framework to equip staff with greater knowledge and confidence.

Biography

Dominic Davies is a Psychotherapist and Clinical Sexologist with over 35 years of experience, working with people from diverse genders, sexualities and relationships and in training others to do this work. He is the Founder of Pink Therapy which has pioneered training in this area and which now runs the only Post Graduate Diploma in Gender, Sexuality and Relationship Diversity (delivered predominantly online). He is a member of World Association Sexual Health, World Professional Association for Transgender Health and a Fellow of the National Counselling Society (UK) and Senior Accredited Psychotherapist by the National Council of Psychotherapists (UK).

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