

Review of “Creativity, Improvisation and Trauma Treatment: When there is no Road Map--finding your way home”

presented by Nancy Riemer, LICSW

Reviewed by Tracey A. McHugh, LICSW



On January 9, 2010 NESTTD Members and other attendees had the pleasure of learning from NESTTD member, Nancy Riemer, LICSW. Nancy is an energetic, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and fun presenter who utilized discussion, psycho-education, demonstration, case presentation, and experiential methods in her presentation on utilizing creativity in our practices.

Nancy began her presentation with a brief discussion of the movie, “The Karate Kid” as an example of teaching someone to be in his body. Do you remember “Wax on, wax off?” It seemed as though many of us did, based on the audience reaction. Nancy

discussed using our breathing as well as movement to help us, and our clients, to be more fully and intentionally in our bodies. She asked us to take a moment and think about something we’d like to be able to do, but are afraid we cannot do. She then instructed us to go to that place of fear and ask ourselves, “What is the movement in the body?” She then asked, “What would you do if you knew you couldn’t fail?” Nancy spent the morning encouraging us to think outside the box – something that therapists are sometimes afraid to do - yet when we do, we often help our clients make the changes they want to make.

Nancy discussed improvisation, “invoking proverbs” and feelings of all kinds throughout the day. Her discussion of trauma treatment reflected her own work, as well as Judith Herman’s work in “Trauma and Recovery” in that she reviewed the three stages of healing from trauma. She discussed some traps that trauma therapists can, and often do, fall into, according to James Chu. It’s clear that Nancy utilizes a variety of creative approaches, coupled with more traditional treatments in her work. It was a pleasure to learn from Nancy.♦