A Gestalt Approach to the Phenomenal World of Addiction and Recovery

Saturday, January 25, 2014, 10 am – 4:30 pm, 553 College Hall

Addiction is a common focus of our culture and its treatment has become an industry. The person who is situated in the field in an addictive process is often understood and “treated” through the lens of a disease with little appreciation of their experience of living from this stance. Additionally, our meanings of the addictive process influence our therapeutic relationship and form the possibilities of therapy and recovery. From a Gestalt therapy perspective, addiction is a “creative adjustment” to our environmental context. In this workshop we will explore the experience of addiction by moving into the phenomenal world of the addict, looking to develop our fuller resonance and appreciation of the meaning of this experience. We will also explore the relational and somatic contexts of recovery and therapeutic options based in a developmental process model of addiction and recovery.

Michael Craig Clemmens PhD is a licensed psychologist with a private practice in Pittsburgh, PA working with individuals and couples. He earned his MA at Duquesne and his Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh. He is a lead faculty member at the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland. He travels extensively in the US and internationally teaching and offering experiential learning opportunities as well as consulting with Gestalt training teams and faculties. Michael is the author of Getting Beyond Sobriety: Clinical Approaches to Long Term Recovery, other articles on Gestalt Therapy, and co-author with Arie Bursztyn of “The Embodied Field: Culture and Body” published in The Bridge: Dialogues Across Culture. His newest publication is “The Interactive Field: Gestalt Therapy as an Embodied Relational Dialogue” included in the textbook by Routledge. Gestalt Therapy: Advances in Theory and Practice. A workshop leader and work scholar leader at Esalen for over ten years, Michael's main interest is in the interaction between physical processes, relational dynamics and the larger contextual field.