



Dialogue Therapy: Helping Couples Move from Disillusionment to Intimacy

Dialogue Therapy (DT) is a time-limited couples therapy that may be done by co-therapists (two therapists with the couple) or a single therapist. It was designed to help couples – especially those who are committed to stay together – who find themselves stuck in repetitive, sometimes troubling or aggressive, difficulties in negotiating conflicts and keeping intimacy alive. Originally developed by Polly Young-Eisendrath and Ed Epstein in 1982, DT has been practiced, taught, and supervised by Polly since the mid-1980's and she has published two books about it: **Hags and Heroes** (1984) and **You're Not What I Expected** (1993). Currently, she is writing an updated book about relationship as psycho-spiritual development, **True Love Ways** (to be published by Shambhala in 2018).

After the initial romance is over, all couples enter into disillusionment and power struggles in which they play out painful emotional dynamics that are unconsciously generated from their original family life. The confusions – “Is this me or is this you? Can I trust you ever again?” – can be painful. You may even see your partner as an “intimate enemy” who hurts and misunderstands you in ways that seem intensely troubling and destructive. Disillusionment opens a door to new self-understanding and the possibility of developing skills of mindfulness, insights, and curiosity if it is transformed into greater maturity and growth. If it is not transformed, disillusionment leads to repetitive power struggles, breaks in trust, and potentially the death of intimacy, even love.

In just seven (co-therapist model) or thirteen (single therapist) meetings, Dialogue Therapy offers both deep insight into the roots of suffering – opening the possibility of new acceptance of partner and self – and skills of dialogue and mindfulness. After the emotional landscape of harmful patterns is clarified, the couple is taught skills for recognizing and avoiding re-wounding while encouraging renewed intimacy. Combining psychoanalytic methods with aspects of psychodrama and mindfulness, Dialogue Therapy is a unique approach to healing chronic relationship problems and not simply papering over them.

Couples therapy is notorious for failing because the members of the couple depend too much on the therapist. They deal with their conflicts only in the presence of the therapist. Dialogue Therapy, even from the first session, requires a couple to speak with each other and develop skills that do not depend on the therapist. In the co-therapist model of DT, while more expensive, there is a special opportunity for each member of the couple to develop as an individual, alongside the development of the couple.

Dialogue Therapy with a Single Therapist

Each numbered session below is 50 minutes, usually held weekly depending on the availability of the therapist. Sessions may be combined into two hours, scheduled weekly, or bi-weekly. Cost per unit: \$200

Session #1 - Evaluation and Introduction to DT: Structured meeting, pencil & paper assessment

Session #2 - Evaluation: Relational History (one partner)

- Session #3 - Evaluation: Relational History (other partner)
- Session #4 - First Session of DT: Working on a Conflict
- Session #5 - Second Session of DT: Working on a Conflict
- Session #6 - Third Session of DT: Practicing Skills
- Session #7 - Fourth Session of DT: Honing Skills
- Session #8 - Building Empathy for Self & Partner (Role Reversal)
- Session #9 - Building Empathy for Self & Partner (Role Reversal)
- Session #10 - Using Empathy & Dialogue Skills to Repair Trust
- Session #11 - Using Empathy & Dialogue Skills to Repair Trust
- Session #12 - Final Session: Refining Your Skills
- Session #13 - Follow-up: Six months Later

Dialogue Therapy with Co-Therapists

Two therapists with couple. First session is three hours, All other sessions are two hours, sessions are monthly.

Cost per session: \$150 per hour, per therapist = \$300 per hour

- Session #1 - Introduction, Evaluation, Relational History (3 hours)
- Session #2 - First Session of Dialogue Therapy: Working on a Conflict (2 hours)
- Session #3 - Second Session of Dialogue Therapy: Practicing Skills (2 hours)
- Session #4 - Building Empathy for Your Partner and Yourself (2 hours)
- Session #5 - Using the Skills of Dialogue Therapy and Empathy to Repair Trust (2 hours)
- Session #6 - Final Session: Refining Your Skills (2 hours)
- Session #7 - Follow-up: Six months later (2 hours)

Dialogue Therapists



Polly Young-Eisendrath, Ph.D. is a Jungian analyst, psychologist, writer, speaker, and Mindfulness teacher who has published 15 books including **The Self-Esteem Trap**, **The Cambridge Companion to Jung**, and **The Present Heart**. She is currently writing **True Love Ways: Relationship as Psycho-Spiritual Development**. She maintains a full-time psychotherapy practice in central Vermont, is Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Vermont, Clinical Supervisor at Norwich University, and on the faculty of the Vermont Institute for the Psychotherapies. www.young-eisendrath.com



Jean Pieniadz, Ph.D. is a psychologist, psychoanalyst, supervisor, and teacher. She has presented and authored papers on developmental psychology, neuropsychology, and psychology ethics. She also maintains a full-time private practice in Burlington, Vermont, is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Vermont, and is on the faculty of the Vermont Institute for the Psychotherapies.

To inquire or enter into Dialogue Therapy, email: pollye@comcast.net or call: 802-793-7923
www.young-eisendrath.com