

A Training in Menswork Group Facilitation.

Introduction.

There is a problem with men: taught over centuries to cut off from that which is known as 'the feminine' and define ourselves by what we are not, sometimes we seem to live a half-life. Our emotional range is typically undeveloped and our relationship skills are usually immature. Violence, withdrawal or cynicism are some of the all too frequent reactions to experiencing vulnerability or the challenges of love.

Many of us grow up with inadequate fathering which affects our sense of our own masculinity, building in distance and a fear of opening up. Others, growing up in a world reconfigured by feminism and the necessary deconstruction of masculinity, struggle to find healthy or attractive models of maleness and find themselves stranded in guilt, shame, doubt or unconscious rage or grandiosity. Some retreat to defensive male armour and unwitting misogyny; others naively open their chests to the slings and arrows of female anger.

How do we heal from these things and find a healthy male evolutionary path?



It is really hard to 'do it' alone. Men's path to maturity and wisdom seems to be different to women's, and the one-to-one encounter is not the ideal male channel. Working in therapeutic men's groups is often much more effective for men than individual therapy. Since men learn defensive masculinity in groups of men, they can best unlearn it in groups, as a step towards maturity.

What men missed in their own fathers they may find in other men in order to 're-programme' their internal lack. Exploring identity issues and practising being emotionally present – learning to 'open the heart' – in groups promotes better family and work relationships. Equally, learning ways of assertion in a nurturing group of men can help find again the root of tenderness, of passion

and of a thrusting directionality that some men seem to lack.

Supported by deep therapeutic menswork, men can both challenge the patterns of dominant but defensive masculinity and free themselves from subservience to an idealised

feminine principle. Now they can become a force for social change in their own communities and healthy anchors for future generations.

Why this training?

Inspired first by feminism, men's groups first took off in the late 1970s and 1980's. Animated subsequently by the discovery of indigenous gender initiation processes, large men's gatherings were a feature of the late 80's and early 90s. Self-facilitated men's groups have often continued for many years and have been supportive to their members. But if a men's group is to use its full potential it must become a *transformative* space.

Such a matrix means that a creative mix of support, challenge, practice and teaching is called for. This cannot be self-led and therefore requires facilitation. This is best done – as in the past – by 'elders', who have walked the path themselves. It is not enough simply to have enthusiasm and right intention: working with any group requires skill, which takes time to learn.

Format of the training

This training offers a fourfold elemental structure: an introduction to Menswork, a basic training in group-dynamics, a foundation in Gender Psychology, and a practicum support to participants' own projects or apprenticeships. The successful candidate may then be beady to take a step into the centre to facilitate his own menswork group.

- The training will consist of four weekend group modules plus individual and small group activities between the modules. (The current proposal is to have three non-residential meetings in London and one residential outside London.)
- The weekends will be a combination of theory and practice and there will be handouts provided post-weekend on didactic material.
- Between the modules there will be small group mentoring/ tutorial spaces organised either digitally or in London (or other populous venues) for those able to make them.
- Each candidate will also have his own personal mentor (from one of the team members) for individual consultations during the training process.
- Attendance and CPD certificates will be issued, and those attending 90% or more of the training may update their certificate to a Diploma in Therapeutic Menswork by submitting a written summary of their individual report enriched by material learned on the training and going through a self/ peer/ trainer assessment process.

- The training will be staffed by affiliates of the Centre for Gender Psychology Menswork Staff Team.
- Venue, cost and dates and staffing on application and to be confirmed.

The Modules

The format and timing of the modules is as follows:

Saturday

- 9.30 – 10.00 Arrival and registration
- 10.00 – 13.15 Seminar 1
- 13.15 – 14.30 Lunch
- 14.30 – 17.30 Seminar 2

Sunday

- 10.00 – 13.15 Seminar 3
- 13.15 – 14.30 Lunch
- 14.30 – 17.30 Seminar 4
- 17.30 – 18.00 Departure and clean-up

The content of the modules is as follows:

M1

- Seminar 1 An Introduction to Menswork and the forgetful heart
- Seminar 2 Gender Psychology 1: Identity, difference and distance
- Seminar 3 Facilitated Group Process
- Seminar 4 Gender Psychology 2: The Male Line

M2

- Seminar 1 Menswork and the search for the father's heart
- Seminar 2 Gender Psychology 3: Sexuality and Ground
- Seminar 3 Facilitated Group Process
- Seminar 4 Gender Psychology 4: The Ideal and Real Sexual Sources

M3

- Seminar 1 An Introduction to group dynamics
- Seminar 2 The group as matrix
- Seminar 3 Facilitated Group Process
- Seminar 4 Developing group work as praxis.

M4

- Seminar 1 Menswork as a transformative tool
- Seminar 2 Gender Psychology 5: The Five Shields
- Seminar 3 Facilitated Group Process

Seminar 4 Stepping into the centre: the Elder Shield