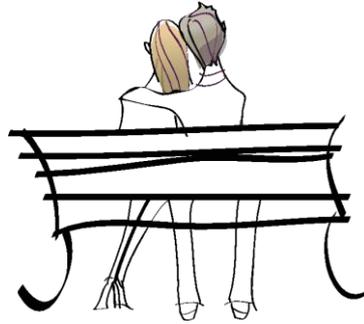


You are invited to a  
**Mindfulness in Couple/Relationships Therapy Workshop**



**A Hakomi Workshop for Mindful Relationships for therapists (CPD 13 hours)**  
**Rob Fisher MFT, an international speaker, Hakomi trainer and author of the book**  
***“Experiential Psychotherapy with Couples, A Guide for the Creative Pragmatist”.***

**August 15th & 16th 2015 ~ Saturday & Sunday (10am-5.30pm)**

An experiential workshop using a gentle and respectful mindfulness approach to strengthen the positive in your relationships and develop compassion for both yourself and important people in your life – for therapists (CPD 13 hours), couples partners, friends, siblings, parents and individuals

**Description:**

This multi-level workshop will present practical tools you can use to enhance and deepen your connection with the important people in your life. Using a gentle, safe and respectful approach based on mindfulness, you can find tune your relationships.

Short talks on the key relationship issues will be followed by mindfulness oriented experiential exercises designed to build relationship strengths and resources and move from alienation to closeness. The concepts and exercises will be immediately useful to friends, couples, siblings, partners, friends, as well as be immediately applicable to those working with couples and relationship issues. (CPD 13 hours will be available).

Those who consult with couples will be provided with maps and tools to work effectively in an experiential, mindfulness based fashion that helps couples step out of adversarial, and into more collaborative interactions. You will learn how build secure attachment and address the underlying emotional issues though talks, demonstrations and experiential exercises you will be able to use immediately in your practice and your life, by exploring the following:-

- Developing compassion for yourself and your partner
- Finding your relationships strengths and resources
- Clarifying and changing limiting, repetitive patterns of interaction that seem to escalate all on their own
- Stepping out of pursuing and distancing patterns
- Attending to underlying attachment injuries
- Developing clear and compassionate boundaries
- How to deal with your partner’s anger and complaints
- The languages of love: assessment and alignment
- Communicating without hurt and blame



**Venue:**

Oaklands House Creative Centre, Blessington, Co Wicklow.  
(10 minutes from Naas; 30 mins from Dublin City Centre; 2 hour from Limerick city;  
2.5hour from Belfast)

**Cost:**

€195 per person: Deposit (non-refundable)€90 secures place

€350 per couple: Deposit (non-refundable)€150 secures place

Full Lunch available for an additional €10/day

**Early Bird;** €175 per person: €295 per couple. Pay by July 1st 2015

Paypal option available send money to [joannesb@gmail.com](mailto:joannesb@gmail.com)

Cheque/Euro Draft payable to Joannes Berkery (Address: Lahorna, Nenagh, Co Tipperary. Ire.)

**For more information please contact:**

Joannes Berkery. Address: Lahorna, Nenagh, Co Tipperary,

Tel: +35386 2606 983. [info@hakomiireland.ie](mailto:info@hakomiireland.ie)

**Rob Fisher**, MFT, is a psychotherapist, consultant and CAMFT certified supervisor in private practice in Mill Valley, California, USA. He is an adjunct professor at JFK University and at the California Institute of Integral Studies and the Co-Developer and Lead Instructor in the Certificate Program in Mindfulness and Compassion for Psychotherapists at CIIS in San Francisco. He is also a Hakomi Trainer who teaches Hakomi Mindfulness Based Experiential Psychotherapy internationally. He is the author of *Experiential Psychotherapy with Couples, A Guide for the Creative Pragmatist*, published by

Zeig/Tucker, in addition to numerous articles published in the US and abroad. He has been a Master and Peer Presenter at annual *California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists* CAMFT Conferences, the USABP Conference and Psychotherapy Networker Conference

*Cancellation Policy:*

*Attendees will receive a full refund minus €30 euros administration fee when cancelling prior to 30 days before the event.*

*No refund will be issued within 30 days of workshop.*

**Introduction:** Think about it... Which would have more impact on you, watching National Geographic on TV or going to Africa and smelling the heat of the rhinoceros as it paws the dust in front of your jeep? Which would be more rewarding, discussing chocolate cake with a friend or eating it (non-caloric of course!)? Which is more pleasurable - talking about sex or having it? If it is true that experience has exponentially more impact than does verbal discussion, then why do we so often conduct psychotherapy as a form of expensive conversation?

Psychotherapy is often practiced as an **in vitro** exploration of a person's or a couples' life. While this is an interesting pursuit, it often lacks depth and aliveness, not to mention brevity.

This workshop is about **in vivo** psychotherapy, about how to bring therapy alive for client and therapist alike. It is dedicated to the premise that people want not just insight about what is going on in their internal worlds, but the opportunity to experience something different. It is dedicated to the idea that you can obtain more information about a psychological phenomenon by exploring it as it is happening than by discussing it as a report after the fact.

More specifically, this workshop is designed to introduce somatic and experiential interventions in couples psychotherapy. Many of these interventions can be used regardless of your theoretical orientation. They provide an opportunity to elegantly access, explore and change systemic and characterological material in a time effective and non-intrusive fashion

#### **Clinical Example:**

*Whenever Helen entered the office with her husband, Henry, the first thing she did was to grab a pillow and hold it tightly covering the middle part of her body. This was a prominent and clear signal. As a therapist I could guess, or interpret what this meant, but that would simply interfere with her own ability to access the meaning of her actions. I proposed an experiment whereby she could sense the difference in her body with and without the pillow. She saw how she relied only on herself to provide safety and comfort and shut her husband out from this potentially nourishing interaction, while complaining that he was never available. We then experimented with what it was like to have him gently hold the symbolic pillow for her against her body. He took over from her the soothing function it provided, and gave her the opportunity to press her limits of accepting care and contact. She noticed how much she resisted this, and he noticed how much he liked feeling useful to her. This gave them a new basis to examine an old problem as well as redefinition its causes.*

***People are holographic.  
Their internal organization is reflected in their every act.***

#### **Another Example:**

*Cynthia and her husband Ron came in to my office. She began to speak immediately and didn't stop until I interrupted. She spoke without punctuation - no commas or periods. One long, desperate run on sentence. The content did not speak nearly as loudly as the presentation. When she took a shallow breath, I inserted: "You feel really fast inside, huh?" She calmed down a notch upon being seen a bit. I took this as a sign that I was on the right track and said, "Let's have Ron say something to you and you notice what happens inside - feelings, sensations, images, memories, anything. Would that be O.K.?" She said, "Yes. Then I instructed him to say, "I hear you and I see you." (Histrionic personality styles are often based on early injuries of not being seen and heard by the significant others in the child's world.) She sat there, quiet for the first time in the session, tears rolling down her cheeks. Finally she said, "That's what I have been waiting to hear from you all these years." I had simply contacted her pace, energy level and quality of physical movement.*

*In a desperate attempt to gain his attention, she talked so fast and so much that she alienated him. The faster she talked, the more disengaged and glazed over he became. This kind of mutually reinforcing circular pattern is common in couples. I wanted to interrupt it, as well as address the wound she carried and how it functioned in the relationship. By noticing and commenting on her pace, I was able to access a significant intrapsychic injury and an interactional pattern based on it. This helped the couple to develop a new and more satisfying way of relating. (Rob Fisher)*

**Mindfulness:** In order to work somatically, to access deeper levels of internal organization, and to avoid the liability of psychological invasion, it is important to enlist the assistance of the client's observing ego in a state that can be called "mindfulness". This is based on the premise that if you are driving down the freeway at 70 miles per hour, it is unlikely that you will notice the smell of the flowers by the roadside. When one slows down and becomes aware of the minute-by-minute flow of internal experience, one begins to notice the core beliefs, feelings and characterological strategies that determine the kind of life that one experiences.

*For instance, a couple came in and the wife complained that her husband was unavailable. While she looked at him, her whole body was turned away from him. As she slowly turned to face him, she found herself uneasy about performance and dependency issues. Studying her posture in mindfulness enabled her to stop blaming him and to notice that she was also ambivalent about intimacy and found it easier to blame him rather than to face her internal conflicts about it.*

Mindfulness is a lot like slow motion. It allows one to notice what was previously unconscious. Couples can become upset, emotionally volatile and begin to blame each other in a session. This is usually not very therapeutic unless they have previously been highly disengaged; in which case it represents the beginnings of reengagement. If, however, mutual blaming and uncontrolled feelings threaten to take over a session, I generally ask the couple to slow down "as I am rather simple minded" and have one partner repeat the central phrase that triggered the emotional reaction. I will direct the other partner to let their spouse know when they are ready to be triggered and then to carefully study and report their reaction, as opposed to acting out in such a way to alleviate their internal pain or conflict. (Rob Fisher)

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It allows one to notice what was previously unconscious.***

Working in mindfulness with couples tends to undercut blaming and promote self-focus. Any therapist who has worked with couples knows the tendency of partners to shift the focus onto the character flaws of the other and to save themselves the narcissistic injury of self-examination. When one notices the present time responses that each partner has to the other and shifts the focus towards understanding their response, there is hope for the interaction disentangling as opposed to escalating in a circular fashion.

**Boundaries:** One filter through which to evaluate a couple is the continuum from enmeshed to disengaged. An enmeshed couple has overly permeable boundaries, while a disengaged couple has boundaries that are overly rigid.

*Alexandra complained in therapy about John's lateness. She organized every aspect of his life. He responded to this by stealing time for himself and by passive-aggressively being late. She responded to his attempts at autonomy with escalating rages. I asked them to draw boundary circles and to note how it felt different inside their bodies with and without the circles. John felt instantly relieved when he drew his circle. Alexandra, however, was faced with an intolerable feeling of aloneness and the memory of her father's abandonment of her and her family when she was twelve.*

***Inexperienced psychotherapists tend to oppose their client's defenses rather than helping them identify, appreciate and reown the wisdom of the defense.***

*Now, instead of John being the villain, the couple was able to appreciate the depth and intensity of her feelings and to creatively and compassionately deal with them, rather than fighting about his lateness and further alienating each other. Alexandra also began to disassociate John from her father and to give him a little more breathing room, which resulted in less rebelliousness on his part. (Rob Fisher)*