

York University Psychology Clinic

Therapeutic Presence and Self-Compassion: Boosting Your Foundation for a Strong Alliance and Effective Therapy

Dates: May 9th & 10th, 2024 (9:00am - 12:30pm)

Trainer: Dr. Shari Geller, Ph.D., C. Psych

Therapeutic presence (TP) and **self-compassion** (SC) are essential factors in effective therapeutic and clinical relationships. **Therapeutic presence** is a way of *being* that optimizes the doing and techniques of therapy. Growing research is demonstrating therapeutic presence as a common factor to a strong therapeutic alliance and outcome. Presence provides clients with a sense of safety, allowing them to be seen, heard, understood, and “feel felt,” while also strengthening the therapeutic relationship so they can engage in effective therapeutic work. TP invites therapists to balance presence and compassion within themselves and with clients, ensuring they remain centered and effective even in the face of difficult emotions. This type of relationship helps regulate clients' emotions and supports their movement towards emotional health and neurophysiological integration. Practicing TP also sustains clinicians' vitality, connection, and effectiveness.

Self-compassion is also a key resource for clinicians, allowing them to work through the challenges and barriers to being fully present and attuned. Research shows that SC is strongly associated with therapists' emotional well-being and balance, and more fulfilling relationships. Together, therapeutic presence and self-compassion are powerful resources for counsellors to maintain emotional balance in the midst of challenging clinical work, to enjoy their work and their clients more fully, and to prevent caregiver fatigue and burn-out.

In this two-part training, we will explore an empirically validated model of TP and how to create safety using neurophysiological principles based on concepts such as co-regulation and neuroception of safety stemming from Polyvagal Theory (Geller & Porges, 2014). We will also explore working with barriers to presence with self-compassion. We will incorporate core, evidenced-based presence practices from Dr. Geller's books, 'A Practical Guide for Cultivating Therapeutic Presence' and 'Therapeutic Presence: A Mindful Approach to Effective Therapeutic Relationships (co-authored with Dr. Leslie Greenberg). The workshop will weave didactic learning with experiential presence, mindfulness, and self-compassion practices, with techniques offered for cultivating presence during therapy and in life for clinicians, students, and clients.

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In this training you will:

- Explore an empirically validated model of therapeutic presence along with core presence practices
- Discover the neurophysiological mechanisms of therapeutic presence
- Learn practices and skills for attuning in the moment with clients
- Practice self-compassion techniques to sustain emotional connection with clients and work through the barriers to presence
- Apply presence and self-compassion skills for self-care and to prevent and alleviate burnout
- Receive take home practices for clients, students, trainees and for yourself

Dr. Shari Geller is an author, clinical psychologist, and certified Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) teacher, offering training modules in therapeutic presence internationally as part of a longer-term vision of having presence be a foundational training across psychotherapy approaches. Shari co-authored the book, [Therapeutic Presence: A Mindful Approach to Effective Therapeutic Relationships – 2nd Edition \(2022\)](#) with Dr. Leslie Greenberg. Shari's book: [A Practical Guide For Cultivating Therapeutic Presence \(2017\)](#), offers hands on tools and guidance for cultivating and strengthening presence in therapy. Shari is a co-editor on a new book: **Self-Compassion in Psychotherapy: A Clinical Handbook** (manuscript in preparation).



Shari is the co-director of the [Centre for MindBody Health](#), in Toronto, where she offers training, supervision and therapy in Emotion-Focused therapy (EFT) and Mindfulness and Self-Compassion modalities for individuals and couples. She is a therapist, supervisor, and trainer in Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT) and a certified Mindful Self-Compassion Teacher (MSC). Shari is part of the core faculty of the [Self-Compassion in Psychotherapy \(SCIP\) certificate program](#) and is Membership and Networking Committee Chair for [the International Society for Emotion Focused Therapy \(isEFT\)](#).

www.sharigeller.ca www.cmbh.space

Fees: \$300 (\$250 for full-time graduate students and York faculty/staff, \$225 for full-time York University graduate students)

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