

POLYAMORY

Basic Information for Therapists

WHAT EXACTLY IS POLYAMORY?

It's a good question. Basically, *poly* is a Greek word meaning many, and *amor* is a Latin word meaning love. Thus, polyamory means many loves. However, in practice, polyamory (sometimes referred to as "poly") is often defined as consensual non-monogamy, which means open, honest, transparent agreement among partners to love more than one.

Other lifestyle choices and relationship agreements like swinging, polygamy and open relationships may or may not overlap with polyamory.

WHO IS POLYAMOROUS?

While it is a matter of controversy, some people believe that they are hard-wired or born polyamorous, and for others, it is seen as a lifestyle choice. Polyamory may be a practice, a lifestyle, an identity or an orientation.

Some clients may find themselves in or wanting more than one relationship at a time. If so, they might be poly or non-monogamous. For some, it is clear from their inner experiences and earliest memories that they want or are most fulfilled loving more than one person. For others, the path to identifying as polyamorous is discovered over time as they become aware of their preferences and needs in relationships.

What are some common presenting issues of polyamorous clients?

- jealousy and use of shared resources (time, money, sex, energy, attention, space, etc...)
- marginalization, disclosure to others and social obstacles
- internalized oppression, identity and coming out issues
- power dynamics within poly relationships
- agreements and contracts within poly relationships

What are some potential gifts of polyamorous relationships?

- an abundance of intimacy, self-expression
- intensified communication and skillful relating
- opportunities for personal growth, self-knowledge and reflection
- a larger family constellation – more love, resources and diversity
- a deep appreciation for the wisdom, strength, and courage that each partner discovers while navigating uncharted waters



PSYCHOTHERAPY CENTER

www.lifeworkspsychotherapy.com

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WHO IS A POLY-FRIENDLY THERAPIST?

A poly-friendly therapist:

- provides a safe place where polyamorous clients can explore the unique difficulties they face in meaningful ways
- explores their own personal ideas, feelings, thoughts, beliefs and attitudes with regard to relationship biases and choices
- develops and uses “meta skills,” or feeling attitudes, of open-mindedness, curiosity, acceptance, compassion, exploration and celebration of diversity
- realizes that people who identify as polyamorous, or who are in polyamorous relationships, may be judged, stigmatized or pathologized by society, family, friends, co-workers, professionals, public institutions and their community
- seeks and applies knowledge of the unique issues of polyamorous clients and requests consultation or supervision when needed

WHERE CAN I GET TRAINING AND SUPERVISION FOR WORKING WITH POLY CLIENTS?

LifeWorks clinicians have many years of experience working with diverse relationship constellations, issues and conflicts. We offer individual case consultation, ongoing supervision, semi-

nars and workshops that support professional development. Please visit our website or contact us for more information.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFO?

www.lifeworkspsychotherapy.com/what-we-do/
www.psychotherapyevanston.com

LifeWorks Psychotherapy Center offers individual, relationship and group psychotherapy as well as seminars and classes open to the public.

Lifeworks helps clients gain clarity, self-understanding and compassion, so they can experience joy, change old patterns and discover new perspectives.

We can help clients reconnect to their deepest values and inner strengths to enhance their connections and find new ways of relating to self and others.



Rami Henrich, LCSW

I believe you already have what you need inside of yourself to have a meaningful life, to solve and resolve problems, to be joyful and content. As a therapist, my job is to help you access a deep sense of knowing your own source of creativity and your true nature. I see myself as a facilitator of inner and outer relationship processes.



Cindy Trawinski, Psy.D.

I believe psychotherapy is one way to learn, to grow and to bring more awareness to our day-to-day lives. The whole of life can be an adventure full of experimentation and learning with the right attitudes and skills.



Pat Cochran, Psy.D.

When you engage with your struggles, it may lead to a shift in attitude, even though nothing on the outside may change. Engagement is at the root of all lasting or profound psychological change. I undertake a journey with my clients towards an openness and receptivity to the very things they would rather move away from, and instead go deeper into them and perhaps develop a new capacity to live within their struggles, seeing them in an entirely new way.

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