

# **Social Construction: A Celebration of Collaborative Practices October 6-9, 2005 in Taos, New Mexico**

**Welcome to a conference designed to:**

- \* Create a unique opportunity to interact with over 50 cutting edge practitioners who will be presenting their work which explores and experiments with collaborative practices.
- \* Develop a forum for sharing across multiple arenas of action.
- \* Provide a context for collaborative creation of new ideas.
- \* Weave theory, practice, dialogue, nature, and good fun.

*All titles, descriptions, presenters and the schedule are subject to change.*

**Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup>      6:00 pm - 9:00 pm**

**6:00 pm – 7:00 pm      Opening Reception**

**7:00 – 9:00 pm**

**Opening Plenary - "An Invitation to Collaboration"**

Taos Institute founders, Diana Whitney, Sheila McNamee, Ken Gergen, Mary Gergen and Harlene Anderson will welcome you into the polyphonic dialogue about the significance of collaboration to human flourishing – personally and socially. They will open the conversation for us to explore and celebrate collaborative practices in education, therapy, health and aging, relationships and organization and community development. They will invite us to mix and meet one another and to begin weaving the fabric of stories and meaning that will envelop us and nurture us throughout our time together in Taos.

Howard Bad Hand, Lakota holy man, author of [Native American Healing](#) will welcome us and offer a blessing.

**Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Morning Plenary #1                      9:00 am-10:30 am**

Title: **Evolving Perspectives on this Thing Called Psychotherapy**

Presenters: Harlene Anderson, Bob Cottor, Peggy Penn, John Shotter

## **Concurrent Session A**

**11:00 am-12:30 pm**

Choose ONE session to attend.

### **A-1**

Title: **Every Child Moving Forward: An Inspiration to S.O.A.R.**

Presenters: Jackie Stavros, Gina Hinrichs, and other members of the Positive Change Corps

Description: Explore what it takes to lead and sustain transformational change with youth and in school systems through collaborative practice. This journey will be one of discovery and enlightenment with two key components: identifying your core values and personal philosophy of education and using those values to create a vision, mission, leadership strategy, and plan. This session will introduce the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) framework to lead a strategic inquiry with appreciative intent, imagine the most preferred future, create innovative structures and systems, and inspire others. The Positive Change Corps is a global community serving schools and youth with strength based approaches. Case studies will be highlighted.

### **A-2**

Title: **Collaborative Practices Across "Disciplines," Languages and Sites**

Dialogists (Presenters): Adrienne Chambon & Bobbie Iversen

Description: Drawing upon the format of the "Vermont Group" dialogues on transforming social work practice, research and theory, we hope to generate "in vivo" sharing of stories and experiences across varied "disciplines," practices, languages, and sites. We'll engage together in the exploration of ways of talking and writing that may shift both processes and results of encounters.

### **A-3**

Title: **Inside the Appreciative Inquiry Summit: The Dynamics of Hope, Joy, and Inspiration in Large-Scale Change**

Presenters: Jim Ludema and Frank Barrett

Description: The AI Summit is quickly becoming a methodology of choice because of its capacity to produce rapid, organization-wide change by involving "the whole system" in the process. Join this playful, interactive session to explore how, from a constructionist perspective, the dynamics of hope, joy, inspiration, and other positive emotions lie at the heart of the AI Summit's success. Also, join in dialogue about how to apply the AI Summit in practice.

### **A-4**

Title: **Playing Spaces: Improvising a Different Language**

Presenters: Saliha Bava and Sue Levin

Description: Collaborative Language Systems practices are often (mis)constructed as limited to the spoken word even though the emphasis is on the process of communal meaning making. We will address this by playing with the notion of *space* in the construction of communication and meaning. Participants will have the opportunity to experience improvisational practices as meaning-making in collaborative practices-therapy, training, supervision, coaching and organizational consulting.

### **A-5**

Title: **Toward Positive Aging: A Collaborative Workshop**

Presenters: Ken Gergen, Mary Gergen, Bob Cottor, Sharon Cottor

Description: In western culture a common stereotype of the aging process is one of decline, decrepitude and defeat. After relevant materials are presented, participants will work collaboratively to create an alternative vision of positive aging. The workshop is designed to facilitate change for participants in both their professional and personal lives

## **A-6**

Title: **Narrative Practice in Peace Building Initiatives**

Presenters: Madelyn Blair, Paul Costello, students from Ireland

Description: The purpose of the session will be to explore the meaning of narrative practice and how it offers an additional dimension to understanding the way in which cultures create and sustain themselves and, more importantly, how they can recreate themselves.

This session will build on Paul Costello's experience of working with young people of Ireland over the last 8 years, his work in Tashkent after the fall of the Soviet Union, and Madelyn Blair's experience in the use of narrative practice in organizational settings and group work. Practitioners of AI will gain new insights into the power and meaning of the stories that are gathered as a part of the discovery phase of AI. They will also see the types of stories that contribute best to healing groups in conflict and the role of forgiveness stories.

## **A-7**

Presenters: Peter Whitehouse and Arlene Katz

Title 1: Peter Whitehouse: **The End of Alzheimer's: the narrative deconstruction and reconstruction of brain aging**

Description: Description: Is Alzheimer's a degenerative brain disease or a two-word eponym? The label has come to terrorize the growing number of people around the world concerned about their cognitive abilities as they age. As we approach the 100th anniversary of Alzheimer's first case in 2006, we need to reflect deeply on our conceptions of about Alzheimer's. Alzheimer's as a disease label did not exist until 1906 and need not in the next century. The social construction of the concept of mild cognitive impairment (a milder state of memory loss with aging) illustrates the medicalization of aging and the power of pharmaceutical companies to dominate our discourse about health, illness and disease.

Title 2: Arlene Katz: **The Council of Elders: Creating a Culture of Care**

"Listening is a great expression of love."

(One 100 year-old member of the Council of Elders, Katz, et.al. 2000)

Description: We would like to present the "Council of Elders", collaboratively developed with professionals and community elders in which medical residents and nurse practitioners meet to ask Elders for advice and wisdom about clinical and moral dilemmas they are struggling with. In the conversations that ensue, the Elders (two of whom are over 100) come to function not simply as teachers, but as co-participants in a process in which doctors, researchers, and elders altogether - they from their resources and we from our ours - create possible ways to engage with each other which were not apparent to either group separately. We will discuss not only the special nature of such 'resourceful communities', but also the special preparations required in creating them.

**Friday, Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>, 1:15- 2:00 pm**

Lunchtime Speaker: **Vera John-Steiner**

Title: **Creative Collaboration: A Vygotskian Perspective**

Description: New theories have emerged which contrast with psychological assumptions that posit a developmental end point in human growth and emphasize self-contained individual activities. Many of us see in collaboration a broadening of the self through mutual and respectful interdependence. In this context Vygotsky's zone of proximal development is re-interpreted as a mutually beneficial relationship between equals in which each partner builds on complementarity, trust, and shared vision. I will elaborate on some of these notions, situate my own work in a socio-cultural tradition, and present a few collaborative examples including Vygotsky's own partnerships.

Book signing: 2:00 pm – 2:30 pm

## **Concurrent Session B      2:30 – 4:00 PM**

Choose ONE session to attend.

### **B-1**

Title: **Reading, Writing, and Responding**

Presenter: Brock Dethier

Description: Working alone and in groups of various sizes, participants will expand and clarify definitions of "collaborative writing" and will experiment with and discuss ways to make collaborative writing productive even for those who insist "I write alone."

### **B-2**

Allan Irving and Adrienne Chambon (two separate presentations)

Title 1: Allan Irving - **Dim Light: The Possibilities for Dialogue in the Fractured Self of Postmodernism**

Description: This 45 minute presentation and conversation will explore the visual art of Francis Bacon and the literary work of Samuel Beckett and the aesthetic of the fractured self and identity of postmodernism. I try to explore the question of how within shadowy ambiguity and discontinuous narratives there can be any sustained human connection. Is our human condition bleak, as Beckett certainly suggests, or can we, by resisting any and all discourses on fixed identity, open up new spaces for human existence and relationship beyond the dualisms of Enlightenment community?

Title 2: Adrienne Chambon - **The Struggles of Living Together: From Italian Frescoes to Contemporary Videos**

Description: How do we think of social ties and of living together — the possibilities, circumstances and the art of living together? This presentation draws from early frescoes in 14<sup>th</sup> century Siena (Italy), and from contemporary videos by Ariella Azoulay and Miki Kratsman projected in the art gallery of the Arab city of Oum-el-Fahem in Israel in 2004. These pre-modern and contemporary works present public and everyday forms of living together, and conversely, highly severe forms of the fraying and disruption of social ties. In between, will be shown images by Henri Matisse and by Kathe Kollwitz on the same topic. In this presentation, we step outside the familiar bounds of the social disciplines to explore and learn from the tensions and struggles expressed in art forms and in art practices on topics of contemporary and urgent concern.

### **B-3**

Title: **Appreciative Inquiry: A Collaborative Performance for Positive Change**

Presenter: Diana Whitney

Description: Join Diana Whitney, a leading innovator and practitioner of Appreciative Inquiry, in an improvisational learning experience. After a brief overview of Appreciative Inquiry you will participate in a performance - creating and asking positive questions, sharing stories, making meaning and mapping the "positive core" of **living boldly in relationship**. The session will end

with a discussion of the implications of Appreciative Inquiry for the creation of “life giving” communities and organizations.

#### **B-4**

Title: **Family Therapy without a Family: Systemic Groups as Schools of Life**

Presenter: Charis Katakis

Description: In the context of the integrative approach to systemic psychotherapy we have been practicing for decades, the central axis of our practice is family oriented group therapy with individuals. Conjoint family therapy and family oriented group therapy -being both based on systemic notions- are considered as two sides of the same coin. Family therapy methods and techniques, as well as methods and techniques stemming from the wider field of psychotherapy, are being applied in the group setting. During occasional visits of other members of the family, the group becomes the reflecting team for the family, triggering change in the visiting family, in the members of the group and their own families. Our extensive, deeply rooted experience with groups has taught us that family oriented group therapy is a systemic modality par excellence, allowing us to promote a spiraling process of therapeutic change in the midst of the overwhelming complexity of interrelated levels of interconnected systems.

#### **B-5**

Title: **Focus on Relationships: An Appreciative Approach**

Presenters: Jane Watkins, Ralph Kelly

Description: This session will give participants a mini-experience and share some stories of our work with couples using an Appreciative Inquiry process. Of all the work that we do, this has proven to be the most durable. Couples stay in touch and share with us their on-going use of AI as they re-visit their shared visions and keep their relationships aligned with those visions.

#### **B-6**

Presenters: Sara Cobb and Dora Fried Schnitman

Title 1 – Sara Cobb - **Turning Points in Conflict Resolution Processes and the Ironic Practitioner**

Description: As practitioners, we know that conflict resolution is a non-linear process filled with turning points and critical moments. This workshop offers a normative model for the positive evolution of relationship, tracking turning points in narrative processes. The role of "irony" in the generation of these turning points will be discussed. Participants will be invited to practice the "ironic gesture" as an intervention, and discuss how they see it playing a role in the generation of turning points.

Title 2 - Dora Fried Schnitman - **From Crisis and Conflicts to Resources and Social Creativity**

Description: Crisis situations are often terribly painful; frequently the people involved confront each other rather than the crisis at hand. Clashes between persons tend to go against dealing with or resolving the crisis effectively, that is to say, against facing the crisis and finding a path. When transformative and generative dialogues develop, resources become more available and we can focus on facing the crisis. Usually, people are less aware of their potential to generate resources. By specifying particularities, dynamics and conversational tools that favor the emergence of resources and creativity we can facilitate productive facing. We will work on this perspective collaboratively through a process of generative inquiry.

#### **B-7**

Presenters: Bliss Browne and Rene Bouwen

Description: Bliss and Rene will share with us their experiences working in community development work around the world. See below for more details.

Rene Bouwen

### **Title 1: Multi-party Collaboration for Emergent Social Contexts**

Description: Rene will share his experiences with multi-party collaboration projects in social development in Ecuador and in Vietnam. He will share his learnings about the quality of the relational practices around knowledge work that can really make a difference. The cultural differences in those contexts don't seem to be so crucial but the differences among modes of understanding or knowing (between disciplines and professions) can create opposed views that are difficult to bridge. A social construction perspective on 'knowledge-as-participation' can be a very resourceful approach to facilitate conversations across knowledge boundaries.

Bliss Browne

### **Title 2: The Art of Community: Creating a Culture of Solidarity**

Description: Bliss Browne, President of Imagine Chicago will discuss recent work in a housing development in Denmark and in the city of Bogota to build bridges between municipal and community leaders to benefit the most marginalized populations. Discussion will include both the processes used in these engagements and the implications for building a global community of practice for process consultation to municipalities.

## **Afternoon Plenary #2                      4:30 pm-6:00 pm**

### **Title: Collaborative Education: From Mind to Relationship**

Presenters: Sheila McNamee, Ken Gergen, Stanley Witkin and Dennis Saleebey

Description: What does it mean for educational practices when we shift our concern from the mind of the individual student to the forms of relationship that make up the educational process, and its place within society? In their opening contribution Sheila McNamee and Kenneth Gergen will first focus on collaborative practices of promise - both within the classroom and relating class to culture. Stan Witkin and Dennis Saleebey will then take up a specific and unheralded rhetorical contribution to educational practice: humor. Stan and Dennis join together as the Abbott and Costello of the conference, intent on using humor to enhance the educational pursuits of the conference, and also to poke some fun at the serious social constructionists in the room.

**Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005**

**Morning Plenary #3                      9:00 am-10:30 am**

Title: **Transformation of Human Communities and Organizations: A Spiritual Partnership**  
Presenters: Diana Whitney, Theresa Bertram

Description: Theresa Bertram, Executive Director, will share the inspirational story of The Cathedral Foundation's transformation ... from what we do to who we are, what we stand for, and why we exist ... from planning to dreaming ... from strategies to aspirations ... from surviving to thriving. It is a story about purposeful collaboration informed by Appreciative Inquiry, ongoing dialogue, and sweeping engagement in the meaningful work of creating the future of aging in our society

Diana Whitney, Taos Institute founder and board member, will delve into the mysterious realm of large scale organizational transformation by reflecting upon 25 years of work with organizations around the world. She will share two evolving concepts: organizational consciousness as socially constructed; and dialogue as communication and co-creation in relation to spirit.

Together Diana and Theresa will invite us to explore and enrich our vocabularies of living in harmony with spirit as a mutually co-creative force.

**Concurrent Session C                      11:00 – 12:30 PM**

Choose ONE session to attend.

**C-1**

Title: **Exploring the Relational, Collaborative Complexities of Apology and Forgiveness**  
Facilitators: Sheila McNamee, Peggy Penn

Description: This session will open dialogue on the very complex topics of apology and forgiveness. Traditionally, we think of these as largely private gestures that one gives to another in hope that the other will accept/take. We would like to propose that apology and forgiveness are not commodities to be exchanged but rather relational possibilities to be jointly constructed. We hope to invite participants into dialogue about the relational ramifications of apology and forgiveness as well as the potentially pathologizing effect of labels such as "victim and perpetrator," and "vengeance and retribution." Implications for therapeutic conversation (in and out of the formal therapy room) will be explored.

**C-2**

Title: **Education -- It Really Does Take a Village**  
Presenters: Carolyn Miller, Nila Rinehart, Tish Wilson (CDI)

Description: A case study of an early education school turn around from isolation and poor performance to well performing and integration into the community using AI. The presenters direct a national effort to rehabilitate "failed" Head Start programs around the country. They have partnered with and called forth the best in more than 40 programs in the last 3 years, restoring hope, purpose and vitality where little but despair existed.

**C-3**

Title: **Social Construction and AI in Coaching and Therapy: An Exploration of Similarities and Differences**

Presenters: Barbara Sloan, Sharon Cottor

Description: In this interactive session participants will explore the implications of social construction and AI in coaching and therapy. Barbara Sloan will describe how AI can challenge several assumptions and norms in “traditional” coaching and generate greater effectiveness in achieving desired results. Sharon Cottor will discuss how our memories of the past are constantly revised through our ongoing relational and social constructions of new meaning and how AI works effectively given the newest research on the brain and memory.

#### **C-4**

Title: **'Minding' Our Contributions to Generative Dialogue**

Presenter: Tom Strong

Description: Want to consolidate and add some conceptual and discursive tools to your collaborative toolkit? Drawing from discourse theory and research we will delve into some "whats" and "hows" useful to generative dialogues focused on client-preferred outcomes. To further the poetic and resourceful possibilities of dialogue this interactive workshop promotes mindfulness about important discursive signposts while aiming to add to your constructive contributions when noticing them.

#### **C-5**

Title: **Community Participation at its Best: An Appreciative Inquiry into the Future of Longmont, CO**

Presenters: Amanda Trosten- Bloom and Barbara Lewis

Description: How can communities break their economic dependence on growth and sprawl? Visionaries in Longmont, Colorado put this tough question to their community in an AI process that generated a shared vision for a “vital and sustainable” city. In just 4 months, this groundbreaking initiative engaged hundreds of citizens of all ages and walks of life. Through presentation and discussion, we will discover how communities can engender high-level engagement and *informed choice making* through powerful cross-community conversations.

#### **C-6**

Title: **Extending and Critiquing the Boundaries of Practice**

Presenters: Murray Anderson-Wallace, Chris Blanter, Christine Oliver

Description: In this session two contemporary approaches to working with patterns of meaning and action in organizational life will be articulated and illustrated through case example and discussion.

##### **Part 1: Disturbing Relational Practice**

Using Relational Practice as their principal frame Murray Anderson-Wallace & Chris Blanter of Inter-Logics will discuss their methods for organisational change-work. Through an exploration of how patterned, relational practices position and occasion people through the expectations of their 'proper participation' Chris & Murray will talk about how through their consultancy practice, they work to disturb these patterns to allow new forms of participation, co-operation & meaning to emerge.

##### **Part 2: Critical Reflexive Inquiry**

Presented by Christine Oliver, Reflexive Inquiry (RI) is a consultancy methodology, inspired by Appreciative Inquiry (AI), but representing an attempt to transcend the polarization of positive and negative embedded in AI. It posits reflexivity as a core consultancy practice and draws on systemic, constructionist, critical, appreciative and complexity principles in creating a framework for the usage of RI tools.

#### **C-7**

Title: **Collaboration as Liberation: Mind, Soul, and Practice**

Presenters: Jose Bayona and Thelma Jean Goodrich

Description: The current practice of medicine continues to perform under the dualistic thinking of the mind/body split even though much information and research suggests that humans are a unit. With focus shifting from the particular, molecular, and cause and effect towards holistic integrated way, opportunity for new way of practice where there is more comprehensive treatment of the patient as a whole and allow health professionals to work collaboratively. We call that collaborative integrative practice and those who venture to build upon biomedicine to have more holistic will experience a sense of liberation in their thinking and way of feeling about their practice and find satisfaction in their practice. Once you experience this way of practice, no choice but to celebrate.

## **Lunch TABLE TOPIC DIALOGUES            12:30-2:15 PM**

**See separate document for titles and descriptions.**

Choose ONE Table Topic to join.

## **Concurrent Session D**

**2:30 – 4:00 PM**

Choose ONE session to attend.

### **D-1**

Title: **'Minding' the Talk: Attending to Inner Dialogue in Therapist Training**

Presenter: David Paré

Description: When we look closely at therapeutic conversation, we discover a multitude of dialogues unfolding simultaneously. The outer dialogues—the visible and audible exchanges—are the focus of most therapist training. But therapeutic conversations feature a range of inner dialogues as well: therapist and client are in conversation with broader discourses even as they respond to the person across from them. In this workshop, participants will engage in an experiential exercise designed to heighten awareness of one of these covert streams of talk: therapists' inner dialogue. David will draw on his research with graduate counseling students to illustrate the diversity of inner conversation and to explore possibilities for attending to inner dialogue in counselor education.

### **D-2**

Presenters: Katherine Tyson, Dan Wulff, and Sally St. George

Katherine Tyson

Title: **Accuracy and quality in psychotherapeutic process: Rethinking subjectivity, objectivity, and therapeutic change**

Description: Psychotherapists want to be as effective as possible in helping clients change, and scholars seek to study psychotherapy without interfering with the change process. Now that traditional ways of approaching accuracy and quality have been thoroughly debunked, do we have to throw the baby out with the bathwater? How can we maintain the values of accuracy and quality as therapists and scholars? This presentation offers thoughts about reconceptualizing subjectivity and objectivity so they are based in the therapy partnership and foster accuracy and quality.

Dan Wulff and Sally St George:

Title: **A Return to the Good Neighbor Metaphor: Family Therapy + Social Work**

Description: In our workshop we will discuss a project in which we demonstrate how the "good neighbor" metaphor allows us to join in special ways with those who suffer on the margins of our

society. The good neighbor metaphor begins with individuals- and families-in-distress and works outward to those community and societal ideas and practices that are implicated in individual forms of distress and back again.

### **D-3**

Title: **Appreciative Sharing of Knowledge and Appreciative Evaluation: Possibilities in Mutual Embeddedness**

Presenters: Bernard Mohr and Tojo Thatchenkery

Description: This workshop builds on the core ideas of two Taos Institute Focus books, *Appreciative Sharing of Knowledge: Leveraging Knowledge Management for Strategic Change* (Tojo Thatchenkery) and *Appreciative Evaluation: Measuring What Matters in People, Projects and Programs* (forthcoming – by Bernard J Mohr and Mette Jacobsgaard), Approaches, methodologies, and case studies shared in both books are examples of customizing and applying Appreciative Inquiry for specific purposes, in this case for knowledge management and evaluation. The presenters will briefly share the highlights of each model and transition to showing the interconnection between the two, since each is embedded in the other. This interactive session will begin with presenters' input followed by audience participation in exploring both approaches in action.

### **D-4**

Title: **Movement as Collaborative Practice**

Presenters: Ken Gergen, Mary Gergen

Description: In this experientially based workshop we explore bodily movement as a form of collaborative practice. With occasional musical assistance, participants will explore avenues of coordination and the co-creation of meaning through movement. No fancy shoes or skills are required to join in the fun.

### **D-5**

Presenters: Lewis Mehl-Madrona, Marie Rose Phen Lee – together Lewis and Marie Rose will weave the threads of storytelling and healing.

Title #1- Lewis Mehl-Madrona: **Narrative Medicine: restoring story and dialogue to health care**

Description: A narrative approach coupled with social constructionism allows us to view medicine from other vantage points, most productively those of indigenous cultures and their healing systems. From these vantage points we can consider what has been lost from medicine in its rush to become scientific. This approach to diagnosis and treatment ignores the person of the illness and the community/context in which the illness arose. When we question people more deeply, we discover that everyone has a story to explain their illness. This story is more or less shared by family members and may or may not relate to the medicine's official story of the illness. Nevertheless, within these stories lie radical possibilities for restoring balance and harmony, an indigenous concept of healing which is largely neglected by medicine.

Title #2 – Marie Rose Phen Lee: **My Journey - Revealing Your Own Story**

Description: I began filming healing traditions around the world as an effort to preserve a precious part of our collective cultural heritage that is rapidly disappearing. As a filmmaker, the best way to accomplish this is by being an effective storyteller - gathering stories of healers and their practices and presenting them in a creative and compelling manner. On my journeys, I learned that studying members of another culture as an exotic "other" or hiding behind the myth of the objective documentarian would no longer work. The new paradigm required me to reveal my own stories in order to earn the honor of hearing those of another, and together we could create a new tale.

### **D-6**

Title: **Justice as a Collaborative Art**

Presenters: Thom Allena and Peggy Nelson

Description: One of the more encouraging social change models to emerge in recent years has been the development of “restorative” practices which possess both a collaborative structure and a spirit of healing. Restorative justice models such as the South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission have now found their way into mainstream organizational settings. Restorative practices go beyond the violations of laws, rules and policies and redefine our ideas about authentic dialogue, personal and collective accountability and how to repair the harm associated with conflict and harmful incidents. This interactive session will explore the indigenous roots of restorative justice and the principles upon which these processes are built, provide a brief demonstration of a restorative circle practice and facilitate a conversation of potential restorative applications within our communities and workplaces.

## **D-7**

Title: **Smuggling Constructionist Ideas and Practices into Everyday Lives: A Graduate Education Experience**

Facilitators: John M. Peters, students: Ron Bridges, Cynthia Ghosten, Annie Gray, Rong Li, and Cheri Torres (60 min),

Summary Thoughts by Fred Steier (30 min.)

Description: This session will focus on the experiences of professors and other members of a new and innovative graduate education program in collaborative learning. Members of the program include the professors and other practitioners in businesses, government organizations, higher education institutions, community development agencies, law, and a variety of other fields of practice. They bring their work and personal experiences to the program and dialogue about social constructionist ideas and practices in terms of their experiences. They also co-create a new way of being together that serves as its own example of constructionist practice. Session facilitators will share their experiences of introducing constructionist ideas and practices into their respective organizations, including the host university department.

## **Afternoon Open to Explore Taos on Your Own**

### **Saturday Evening Gala Dinner (additional \$45.00 paid by Thursday, Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>) 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM**

Join in an evening to remember. Gather to the enchanting sounds of a Native American flute. Celebrate with a Champagne toast. Dine on fine food and wine. Enjoy entertaining Native American Drumming and Dancing.

## **Sunday, October 9<sup>th</sup>**

### **Closing Plenary 8:30 – 10:30 AM**

Title: **Social Construction Practices for World Benefit: Business and Beyond**

Mary Gergen and David Cooperrider

Description: David Cooperrider will share with us recent experiences involving collaborative practices at the Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit, and in Nepal. At the heart of the Center is the World Inquiry - a global search for the many ways dynamic leaders in the business sector are putting their people, imagination and assets to work to benefit the earth, from its ecosystem to the needs of its vast, diverse population. Also, David’s efforts to extend peace and justice through a collaborative inquiry in Nepal will be highlighted.

Mary Gergen, a Taos Institute Founder and board member, will weave together and bring to the forum the threads of the weekends' conversations, stretching them to fill the horizons with hope.

Finally, participation of the audience in conversations and as individuated voices will end the session.

**Sunday, Oct. 9th- 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM**  
**Closing of the Whole**

TI Board

**Spectacular Sunday Brunch (additional \$20.00 paid by Thursday, Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>)**  
**11:00 AM – 12:00 Noon**

## **Special Sessions and Meetings**

**Friday, Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> – 7:45 – 8:45 AM**

Title: **Taos Institute Founders, Board Members, Associates and Advisors Meeting**

**Saturday, Oct. 8th- 4:00 pm - 5:30 PM**

Title: **Meeting of Taos/Tilburg PhD Students and Advisors**

This meeting is for all students (past and current) of the Taos/Tilburg PhD program and the advisors.

## **Taos Institute Publications Meetings**

**Saturday, Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> - 7:45 – 8:45 AM**

Title: **Collaborative Publishing: New/Interested Author's Meeting**

Facilitators: Jane Seiling, Jackie Stavros, Dawn Dole, Harlene Anderson and Ken Gergen

This meeting is open to anyone who is interested in learning about Taos Institute Publications.

We will discuss the process for exploring a book topic, creating a proposal, how to get accepted, and what happens in the process from acceptance to publication.

**Sunday, Oct. 9<sup>th</sup> - 7:30 – 8:30 AM**

Title: **Current Taos Institute Publications Authors**

Facilitators: Jane Seiling, Jackie Stavros, Dawn Dole, Harlene Anderson and Ken Gergen

## TABLE TOPIC DIALOGUES

**Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 12:30 – 2:15 PM**

**Choose ONE Table Topic Dialogue. Visit the buffet to pick up your lunch and then join the table for a lively discussion.**

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### 1

**Title: Dynamic Relationships: Unleashing the Power of Appreciative Inquiry in Daily Living**  
Facilitators: Jackie Stavros and Cheri Torres

Topic: The authors of *Dynamic Relationships: Unleashing the Power of Appreciative Inquiry in Daily Living* will begin with a brief overview of the book, discussing how this book is just the beginning of a dialogue. They will then open the conversation around using the Principles of AI and Awareness as the foundation for relating in ways that generate and sustain positive change within organizations, communities, and families and across cultures.

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### 2

**Title: Experience AI: A Practitioner's Guide to Integrating Appreciative Inquiry with Experiential Learning**  
Facilitator: Miriam Ricketts and Jim Willis

Topic: Jim and Miriam will present the main concepts from their book *Experience AI: A Practitioner's Guide to Integrating Appreciative Inquiry with Experiential Learning*. Share in a conversation around the power and efficacy of embedding experiential learning models, tools and techniques into appreciative inquiry in order to accelerate positive change, motivate teams and individuals, generate buy-in and engage people at all levels. By sharing and learning from experience, people attain the high levels of rapport, empathy, trust and mutual understanding necessary to risk and embrace change together. When integrated into each stage of an Appreciative Inquiry, Experiential Learning supports and illuminates the AI process, making AI "come alive" for all stakeholders.

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### 3

**Title: Experiential Learning Exercises in Social Construction**  
Facilitator: Robert Cottor, et. al.

Topic: Members of the Institute for Creative Change will share concepts and learnings from their field book titled *Experiential Learning Exercises in Social Construction*. This book presents exercises that have been organized into Learning Labs that will invite innovative thinking and practice with those familiar with social construction theory as well as those who are newcomers to constructionist thinking. Learning Labs are designed to generate new thinking about diverse societal and professional issues. These exercises promote and enhance creative change strategies for mental health, educational and organizational development professionals.

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#### 4

Title: **Appreciative Sharing of Knowledge: Leveraging Knowledge Management for Strategic Change**

Facilitator: Tojo Thatchenkery

Topic: In this Table Topic Dialogue, we will talk about a new tool for enhancing knowledge sharing in organizations. I would like to initiate the conversation by borrowing from my recent book about a new knowledge management methodology called Appreciate Sharing of Knowledge, or ASK. Using research evidences I will show that appreciation is the missing link in facilitating knowledge sharing and seek your reactions supporting and challenging this proposition.

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#### 5

Title: **The Social Construction of Philanthropy in Seacoast New England**

Facilitator: Susan Lord

Topic: This discussion will focus on the findings of a qualitative research study I conducted with a sample of wealthy philanthropists in southern Maine and southern New Hampshire. The study examined the patterns and social structures of elite philanthropy in these areas, looking at issues of class, culture, social capital, and civic participation. Previous studies have concluded that philanthropists give to organizations that maintain the status quo and perpetuate their positions of power and influence in society. In this study I uncovered a previously unstudied group of wealthy philanthropists, some of whom engage in traditional practices of elite philanthropy and others who support organizations that are working to offer social provision to those in need, and organizations that are working to alter some of the social structures in society that lead to inequality. Discussion will also focus on an exploration of participants' views on philanthropy and its role in society, experiences participants may have had with philanthropists, and ideas they have held about philanthropists and the relationships that are possible between philanthropists and nonprofit organizations.

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#### 6

Title: **Dialoguing the tensions: Relationships between Academia and Practice**

Facilitator: Karen Frewin

Topic: Sharing 'significant' moments in both my academic and therapeutic journeys that have prompted me to reflect upon my philosophical worldviews and how I am positioned in my world. In particular discussing the tensions and conflicts produced through

a) in 1992, taking up traditional undergraduate psychology studies alongside training outside the tertiary setting in alternative psychotherapeutic practices such as Gestalt, Psychodrama, Bioenergetics, and Transpersonal Psychology ...

b) my introduction to social constructionism in 1994 and the shattering of all my worldviews,

c) the challenges produced through attempting to explore poststructuralist theoretical positions in a mainstream academic setting and the complexity of 'integrating' poststructuralist academic research positions with my psychotherapeutic practice,

d) the thrill of poststructuralist research; sharing the process of engaging with my doctoral dissertation (2002) which explores constructions of self and subjectification to psychotherapeutic practice through a poststructuralist standpoint,

e) in 2005, reflecting on my practices, both academic and psychotherapeutic.

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## 7

Title: **Creating Radical Mutuality in the Training Center Context**

Facilitator: Marjorie Roberts and the Rev. Bill Blaine-Wallace

Topic: Trainees and clients, subject to the dominant societal discourse of authority, are apt to enter a counseling center with a presumption of a “three tiered universe,” a hierarchy, from the top down, of therapist, therapist-in-training, and client. The facilitators, one a supervisor and the other a supervisee, will dialogue with attendees about their experiences in a therapy and training center committed to deconstructing a vertical, power-over dynamic, and privileging a horizontal, power-between environment. The presenters will dialogue with participants about how they seek to co-create and preserve such an atmosphere. This collaborative environment is one in which a visitor walking into the interview room, and listening to the conversation, would be hard pressed to distinguish who is in the supervisor, supervisee, or client roles.

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## 8

Title: **The Social Construction of “Professor:” Mona Lisa’s Grimace**

Facilitators: Laura Béres and Allan Irving

Topic: Laura has just completed her first year as an assistant professor, after 14 years of direct practice as a narrative practitioner. She is informed by postmodern thought and critical pedagogy and theory and so has found it a challenge to bring her ideals of multiple truths and client expertise into an academic setting where she experiences students and the hierarchy expecting her to take on the role of expert. Allan has been a professor for 26 years, but has also been shaping and reshaping his approach within the classroom, informed by postmodern thought and the desire to bring creativity, compassion and chaos into his interactions with students. We wish to start a discussion about what has influenced our approaches to the role of “professor” and ask others to join us in sharing their experiences negotiating that role – whether in their interactions with students, professors or in their own development as professors.

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## 9

Title: **Imagine New Orleans**

Facilitator: Bliss Browne

Topic: A conversation to discuss effective participative processes for re-imagining the future of that city and region. In recent years, New Orleans' economic imagination has focused around its past; the devastation wrought by the hurricane opens the possibility of organizing around a vision of its future. What can we social constructionists contribute to the design and facilitation of a process of reconciliation that can gain authority and political support? What process might be large, inclusive and practical enough to re-enchant the heart of America?

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## 10

Title: **Is there a balance for individuality, liberty freedoms and aggregate behavior with social organizations, systemic cybernetic monitors, and civil public discourse?**

Facilitator: Roz Leppington

Topic: Our culture prizes individuality, liberty and choice. Personal identity construction is commodified into media, corporate and capitalist interests ~as~ Media, corporate and capitalist interests are expressed through personal identity construction. Aggregate behaviors produce unintended or anti-social consequences. We create systemic structures that exacerbate painful paradoxical tensions between individual freedoms and social responsibilities. One man's litter destroys the human ecological niche. Social Services break up families in the name of protection. Politics and theology intervene to apply ideological dictates. The Patriot Act "protects" us from terrorism but erodes our human rights. Can we imagine systemic process-structures that manage these tensions and contradictions, or that supersede them? Do social constructionism and collaborative practices point towards some forms of "cooperative anarchy" as a viable philosophy, a moral political movement and a radical social activism?

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## 11

Title: **Revisioning Organization Development**

Facilitator: Gervase Bushe, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

Topic: Gervase will present a model of the evolution of organization development incorporating post-modern elements to elicit discussion about:

- 1) whether this model captures a post-modern vision of organization development
  - 2) actual change practices (besides appreciative inquiry) people are using that incorporate these (or other post-modern) principles
  - 3) interest in contributing to a book on these ideas.
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## 12

Title: **Civil Collaborative Law**

Facilitator: Kathleen Clark

Topic: Civil collaborative law is an emerging process in which parties in conflict, with the assistance of their attorneys, negotiate problem-solve, and make their own decisions without court intervention. The process is thoughtful and respectful of the parties, involving open exchange of information and respectful communication. It is an alternative to litigation. The process, which has been used successfully in the family law context for over ten years, is increasingly being used in other areas of the law, including medical malpractice, probate, and commercial transactions.

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## 13

Title: **Change-Talk©.**

Facilitator: Muriel McClellan and Wendy Ellis

Therapists and consultants who work under the umbrella of a social constructionist perspective often find themselves frustrated with the lack of supplementary "self-help" books to recommend to their clients. Muriel and Wendy have written a self-help book that is useful as an adjunct to

therapy or consultations that value collaborative and relational stances. It serves as a valuable bridge between the writings of Ken and Mary Gergen, Harlene Anderson, Sheila MacNamee, David Cooperrider and others with the public.

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