

Course 200 – Basic Clinical Training in Imago Relationships Therapy: Clinical Track

“For one human being to love another human being: that is perhaps the most difficult task that has been entrusted to us, the ultimate task, the final test and proof, the work for which all other work is merely preparation. Loving does not at first mean merging, surrendering, and uniting with another person – it is a high inducement for the individual to ripen, to become something in himself, to become world, to become world in himself for the sake of another person; it is a great, demanding claim on him, something that chooses him and calls him to vast distances.”

Rainer Maria Rilke

From Letters to a Young Poet – 1904

Imago Relationship Therapy, a model of therapy developed by Harville Hendrix, Ph.D., co-founder of Imago Relationships International along with his wife, Helen LaKelly Hunt, Ph.D., recognizes that the inherent nature of human beings is what Jung described as a “push towards wholeness”. That wholeness contains Maslow’s qualities of a self actualized person: spontaneity and creativity, acceptance of in life, a need to have both solitude and deep intense relationships, a sense of humor, caring and compassion for others, inner directions, and an open and fresh attitude toward life.

Throughout our development as human beings, that wholeness is fragmented through experiences in relationship with our caretakers and results in a significant impact on the choice of a marriage or relationship partner and the dynamics of all our relationships in adulthood. The ultimate goal of the work that couples do in Imago Relationship Therapy is to assist each other in repairing the wounded or injured aspects of that original state, and to reclaim the whole self that can more passionately and vibrantly express itself in life and in relationship.

Goal: This certification track is designed to prepare the Certified Imago Therapist® to be publicly known and recognized in the field of couples’ therapy.

Admission Requirements:

1. Participation In a “Getting the Love You Want Couples Workshop” led by a Certified Couples Workshop Presenter® prior to admission into training. (Note: Participation should be with one’s committed, intimate partner. Single therapists may attend with a close friend, relative, or colleague of either gender). This must be done before training, no exceptions.
2. Possession of an advanced degree (masters or doctorate degree) in the mental health field (the common degrees are M.A. or M.S. in counseling or psychology, M.S.W. in social work, M.Div. in pastoral counseling, Ph.D. in clinical psychology, M.D. in psychiatry).
3. Membership in a recognized professional association (i.e. NASW for clinical social workers, AAMFT for marriage and family therapists, AAPC for pastoral counselors, APA for psychologists, AMA for psychiatrists). Being trained as an Imago Therapist is a couples therapy specialty training and not a training in the formation of becoming a psychotherapists. We want all Imago therapists to be active members of a well

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recognized professional organization that has standards of ethics and standards of supervision. This organization will be the “gate keeper” for your membership in IRI and/or being a Certified Imago Therapist®. All Imago Therapists must keep their memberships in their professional organization current at all times.

We recognize that many in the helping professions get training in massage therapy, rebirthing, gestalt therapy, psychodrama, alcohol and chemical addiction therapy, psychiatric nursing, and many have certifications in these therapies. These are all very useful, but we see them as specialties, just as Imago relationship therapy is a specialty, and they do not qualify one to enter into our training program on the clinical track. Our program is not designed to educate a person to become a fully qualified psychotherapist in the highest meaning of that term. We find it necessary to have already obtained all qualifications, certificates, and licenses with hundreds of hours of supervised internships to have reached the level of being qualified to join a national professional psychotherapy organization on our list before they can become a Certified Imago Therapist®. We allow a person who is in the latter stages of psychotherapy training where they can see clients under supervision to enter the program, but they cannot become a Certified Imago Therapist® until they have been accepted in a nationally recognized professional organization on our list and can legitimately call themselves a psychotherapist.

We also recognize that applicants from countries outside the United States have different standards and requirements for becoming a recognized psychotherapist. We are developing standards in each country that fit the local culture. Educational degrees may be different, but we require that you belong to a professional organization that is on our list that requires acceptable minimal professional educational, supervision, and ethical standards. Please contact the Professional Training Coordinator if you have any questions about admission requirements.

- Two letters of recommendation from colleagues who know your work well.
- License to practice psychotherapy if required by your state.
- 300 hours of post graduate supervision (150 hours may be group supervision. 150 hours must be one-on-one supervision). Supervision means time spent with a supervisor, not client hours.
- Proof of malpractice insurance.
- Copy of graduate degree.
- A photo of yourself.

Each applicant will be considered on his or her own merits. If you do not have all of the above credentials, please attach a cover letter to your applications, which addresses the exception.

Admission to any program does not guarantee certification.

Learning Objectives of the Clinical Training Program: Participants will be able to:

1. Discuss childhood stages of development and wounding as well as resulting characterological adaptations in primary relationships.
2. Discuss the concept of the imago and the role it plays in partner selection and subsequent stages of adult relationships.
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4. Work with a couple's resistance, flow with it and keep volatile couples in dialogue
5. Demonstrate dialogical skills to assist couples in restructuring conflict and frustration, resolving adult and childhood rage, bringing them into a healing relationship, and guiding them from unconscious to conscious relating (moving them from reactivity to intentionality).
6. Demonstrate skills to assist couples in increasing validation and empathy and achieve a deeper level of commitment and intimacy.
7. Focus on their own personal characterological growth and thus be more able to deepen client's affect, getting them in touch with childhood pain, and thus helping them find healing in the adult intimate relationship.
8. Empower couples to continue the work of healing after therapy is terminated.

Video Tapes: Participants are required to submit 4 video tapes. 3 tapes are for supervision only. Schedule for tape submittal: 1 tape at session 2, 1 tape at session 3, 1 tape at 3 months post course, 1 tape at 6 months post course – tape for evaluation showing a complete therapy session including processes creating affect.

Certification Permissions: Graduates of this track are eligible to represent themselves as Certified Imago Therapists®. They may advertise themselves as such and may practice Imago Relationship therapy in their practice. They may present at conferences and various meetings up to four hours in length and may demonstrate the Intentional Dialogue and the Flooding of Admiration in public. They may use this designation for all speaking engagements and will be referred to as Certified Imago Therapists® during speaking engagements conducted by the Institute.

CE Credits: 96

Tuition: \$2,500

A Non-refundable Deposit of \$500 along with the application form and required documents is to be sent to the IRI Training Department, 250 Blackwater Pl., Longwood, FL 32750. The check or credit card is made out to IRI. Make sure you send a duplicate application packet and a copy of the check to the Clinical Instructor so that they have you on their roster of trainees. The balance is due directly to the Clinical Instructor to be paid in full three weeks before the start of the training. If you would like a payment program, this can often be arranged directly with the Clinical Instructor.

Course 200 – The Clinical Track - Continued Description Session I

The primary focus of Session I is to give participants the meta-theoretical framework and essence of Imago Relationship Therapy. Assumptions serving as the foundation of the theory and the resulting paradigm shift in understanding and working with couples are presented. The assumptions are further developed in exploring the evolutionary journey of the self and how that impacts on relationships. The focus moves to the developmental journey of the individual self from a relational paradigm. The various ways individuals are wounded throughout the developmental process through parenting styles and socialization are discussed. The concept of the formation of the imago and the role it plays in partner selection and subsequent interaction is explained. And overview of the major therapeutic processes is given.

Explanation, clinical demonstrations, and practice by participants of therapeutic techniques and processes form a significant portion of the first four days.

Session I includes:

- The initial interview with the couple to establish safety as the primary therapeutic issue, to reveal the relationship conflicts in a safe manner, and to start the couple learning the dialogical process.
- The specific structure of the Imago dialogue is to create not only clear communication, but also cognitive and affective empathy and a safe “holding” environment.
- The parent-child dialogue to access the childhood wound (s).
- The partner holding process which allows safe regression to the childhood experience and re-imagining by the partner.

Practice of the techniques by training participants is done in small group format with real material from each participant’s personal experience. Participants experience each process as therapist, as client, and as observer. The clinical instructor provides supervision within the small groups.

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Description Session II

Session II continues theoretical explanation, clinical demonstrations and practice, and adds small group supervision of video taped client sessions from within the framework of Imago Relationship Therapy.

Theoretical material consists primarily of the process and purpose of initial partner attractions and selection and how that forms the basis of the power struggle as a natural stage in the relationship. Symbiotic beliefs and other factors contributing to the power struggle are discussed. Character adaptations to the developmental wounding and socialization wounding are explained, as well as how the partner we chose is in a unique position to contribute to the healing of that wounding.

Reactivity, loss of empathy, and the origins of self-hatred, projection, and prejudice are placed within this framework. Discussion of the maximizer-minimizer polarity and how that affects the relationship is presented. Explanation of the theory also includes discussion of the denied self, lost self, hidden self, disowned self, presentational self, personal self, and social self. Discovering and working with the core of resistance and the couple's core scene is explained.

Explanation, clinical demonstrations and practice by participants of therapeutic techniques and processes included are:

- The Behavior Change Request Dialogue which lead to the restructuring of frustrations in the relationship through identifying the underlying wound and create positive, specific, and measurable requests of the partner that are designed for success.
- Learning that closing exits in a relationship is a process and not an event and how to do it.
- The importance of developing a relationship vision is discussed and demonstrated.

Supervision of participant's work with clients between Session I and Session II, and work within small groups is included.

Course 200 – The Clinical Track - Continued Description Session III

The theoretical portion of this last session includes the concepts of containment within the relationship. Containment is further developed to include a framework and safe structure for intense anger or rage. Concepts regarding re-visioning and re-romanticizing the relationship are presented. Techniques are presented on how to transform the relationship with positive flooding and to understand the fear of pleasure and our resistance to letting love in. The overall structure and progression of therapy using this approach is presented, including the format and duration of sessions with couples, commitments on the part of the couples and therapist, the focus, structure, and process of a session, and the use of assignments and guided imagery.

The primary focus of Session III is on clinical practice and supervision of client sessions.

Processes demonstrated and practiced in Session III include:

- Introduction to containment processes for resolving anger and rage.
- The process of full positive containment.
- The flooding of admiration.
- Processes to re-romanticize the relationship.
- Developing a relationship vision.

Certification makes a graduate of the program eligible for referrals from Imago Relationship International. Therefore, the review process of videotapes during training is supervisory and evaluative.

Post Course Requirements

At three months, the participants must write a one or two page typed report of their experiences both in their personal lives and in their clinical practice and submit it to their Clinical Instructor. This report can be written before the evaluative tape is passed. It is important that this report is not a glowing report of how wonderful everything is. It is to be a report of your growing edge and what you are personally and professionally working on to become a better clinician.

At six months, the participant must write a second one or two page typed report of their development both in their personal lives and in their clinical practice and submit it to their Clinical Instructor. These two reports need to be about the trainee's growth edge both personally and professionally to encourage the theory and practice of Imago Therapy to become more integrated in the trainee's life and practice.

After completion of the formal course and passing of the video tape assignment, the participant must serve as a support therapist in a twenty hour "Getting the Love You Want Couples Workshop: conducted by a Certified Workshop Presenter®. The trainee must meet with the presenter for one hour after the workshop for feedback and receive a positive evaluation from the presenter, which must then be submitted directly to the Professional Training Coordinator with a copy sent to the course instructor. At this point, the trainee is granted the title: Certified Imago Therapist®.