

Creating Sanctuary for Shame and Shadow



Psycho-educational and experiential workshop and retreat for people-helping professionals

Presented by Karen Lorimer and Dr Ruth Lawson-McConnell

“Shame can and often does stifle love. But if we simply refuse shame, we may find that we have also refused love - in all of its vulnerable exposure - as well. Can we afford such a refusal?” Virginia Burrus (2011, p.xii)

“Transformative Christianity is really not about sin and guilt; it is about transformation of shame experience. The great saints and icons of Christianity have used the Christ event to transform shame and experience grace” (McNish, 2013, p.20).

Shame, a primary organizing principle of the human condition, is the most painful, universal human experience that plays a significant role in the creation of our shadow. Shame, by its very nature, is highly contagious. It does not like to be named or talked about. And yet, it has much to teach us as individuals, persons-in-relation, and self-as-helping-professionals. Similar to the neurophysiological patterning of trauma, shame can profoundly disrupt persons’ social engagement system. Shame-constrained persons are unable to reach out to participate in the relational repair that could end their isolation. When shame can be honestly faced into, without the deployment of shame defenses, it lies at the core of transformative change. To work effectively with shame, it is important to know as much as we can about our own relationship with shame, and the ways our body-mind resists and veils our awareness to the presence of shame in self and others. We also need to recognise and identify how the cultural embeddedness of vulnerability as weakness, and of sin and guilt based understandings and practices, have colluded with shame avoidance, allowing shame to grow exponentially in guilt’s shadow. At this workshop and retreat will explore body-based and mindful practices that support us to know our own shame from the inside out, so we can remain present with self and our people when shame makes its power-full presence felt.

Suitable for: counsellors, therapists, spiritual directors, pastoral counsellors, social workers, and trainees in these disciplines. Participation in the workshop is a pre-requisite to attending the retreat.

Karen Lorimer is a counsellor and spiritual director. Her special interest is working with chronic and core shame associated with relational trauma, attachment injuries, and the traumatization of spirituality. Karen’s other areas of interest include the neurobiological legacy of trauma, Internal Family Systems, compassion-focused therapy, mind-body therapy, and sensorimotor therapy. Karen will soon be a certified practitioner of the Becoming Safely Embodied skills-based approach to working with core shame, trauma and dissociation that supports the development of trust in our body’s innate wisdom in the integration of aspects of self, long hidden and constrained by shame, and thus, the development of earned secure attachment. Karen lives in Auckland. She has four adult daughters and two grandchildren.



labradoodle and two cats.

Dr Ruth Lawson-McConnell has a PhD in Counselling Psychology, is a counsellor and supervisor, who has trained and worked in the UK, Canada and New Zealand, and grew up in the Amazon region of Brazil. Her areas of interest include attachment-based counselling, neuro psychotherapy, working with partners of sex addicts and betrayal trauma, as well as parent consulting on emotional and behavioural issues related to attachment dynamics in children. She trained with Dr Gordon Neufeld in Vancouver in the Developmental Attachment paradigm. She has lectured in England, New Zealand and Australia and is a popular conference speaker and workshop presenter. She lives in Auckland with her two adult daughters, a

Dates: Auckland workshop, June 22nd; retreat 25-27th October.

Dunedin workshop, 17th August; retreat: to be advised.

To register go to <https://ruthmccconnell.com/events/>