

A Role for PBSP in Healing the Wounds of Compulsory Heterosexuality and Policed Gender Roles

(or Building Positive Self-Image re Gender and Sexual Orientation Using PBSP)

Gus Kaufman, PhD.

Workshop (optional)

Saturday, 28 September 2019, 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

All humans, but especially LGBT people and women, have been wounded by the foreclosure of possibilities caused by compulsory narrow gender roles and love/partner choices. Pessó's identification of "integrating our polarities" as a primary developmental push can be useful in helping people achieve meaning, satisfaction, integrity and relationship around gender role and sexual orientation issues.

The PBSP therapist needs to take an active role to facilitate this growth process.

In a patriarchal society, all of us, but especially those whose gender and sexual expression is not mainstream, suffer from a loss of part of the self, from hiding and from self-hate. I would argue that normative gender socialization is traumatic, causing numbing, all-or-nothing thinking, and huge industries devoted to making men be men and women be women. In truth humans are not strictly binary; "our erotic personalities are as unique as our fingerprints".

Pessó's notion of integrating polarities of masculinity and femininity, receptivity and power can be a healing tool. To utilize this effectively, the therapist must be alert to what has been suppressed and actively work to undo this normative gender and sexuality socialization, using tools of ideal parents, but also ideal schools, social and religious groups, and ideal society.

Further, when a child "comes out of the closet", the parent and family members "go in the closet", meaning they begin the long journey from denial to acceptance, sharing and celebration of this aspect of their loved one. In helping the client and the family members, "neutrality", a historic psychoanalytic ideal for therapists, serves to reinforce a life-threatening status quo. PBSP therapists can become facilitators of these journeys, helping all affirm and bless all of who each of us is. To do so we must educate ourselves.

This is not an utter departure in PBSP – Diane Boyden Pessó was always clear that Psychomotor realizations were not just for structures, but were for healthy child rearing, personal relationships and social institutions. She taught positive parenting using psychomotor principles.

Gus Kaufman, PhD. (USA)

Gus Kaufman is a psychologist, social activist and senior PBSP trainer, having been certified in 1976. His doctoral dissertation "Body Signals of Childhood Loss" was a theoretical and experimental validation of key PBSP concepts, later summarized in a chapter in "Movement in Psychotherapy". Gus has conducted PBSP training around the U.S. and Europe and has presented at all of the international PBSP conferences.

