



THE WRIGHT INSTITUTE

EDUCATING CLINICIANS TO SOCIETY

Continuing Education
for Psychologists, LMFTs, LCSWs, LEPs, and LPCCs

The Depolarizing of America for Ourselves, Our Clients, and Our Communities

Kirk J. Schneider, Ph.D.

Saturday, September 26, 2020
9:55am – 12:00pm PST

Live via Zoom

Please Register by: Sept. 23, 2020

Wright Community Register Here:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WICE_Schneider

General Public Register Here:

<https://twi.123signup.com/event/registration/rhxjc>

Free for The Wright Institute Community

**Staff, Faculty, Students, Alums, Practicum and Internship Training
Directors/Supervisors/Post Docs (serving WI practicum and internship trainees)**

General Public: \$50, Non WI Students: \$20



CE Credits:

2 CE hours. The Wright Institute is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The Wright Institute maintains responsibility for this program and its content.

Workshop Description:

This webinar will introduce the concept of the “polarized mind” as well as strategies for depolarizing this (individual and collective) mindset. I developed the concept of the polarized mind based on existential-depth and social psychological research on the roots of human destructiveness. Beginning with the definition of the polarized mind—which is the fixation on a single point of view to the utter exclusion of competing points of view—I will trace the historical roots of this problem, consider their implication for contemporary times (particularly in the U.S.), and suggest some alternatives that have helped to counter the polarized mind. I will also discuss some of the clinical implications of the polarized mind for both individual and collective functioning.

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In the balance of my talk, I will focus on the recent surge of interest in dialogue groups in the U.S. as a counter to the polarized mind. These groups bring people of contrasting backgrounds together for supportive, structured dialogues aimed at helping them to learn about and understand one another as distinct from imposing views on one another, which is the typical—and often polarized—way that such encounters devolve. The ultimate aim of these groups is discovery followed by the increased prospect of achieving common ground. I will draw attention in particular to a one-on-one dialogue format that I have developed over a decade that I call “the Experiential Democracy Dialogue.” This approach is a hybrid of my development of the latter along with my experience as a trained moderator for the nation-wide organization called “Braver Angels.” Braver Angels is a grass-roots citizens movement that uses a highly structured group format to bring self-identified liberals and conservatives together for “living room” style dialogues. I will use power point to discuss the phases of the Experiential Democracy Dialogue and offer it as a possible resource for audience members to use in their work with clients and the community. There will be a 25 minute period for audience members to discuss and try out some of the skills in dyads, prior to a general discussion period with the entire group.

After completing this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Summarize the basic concepts of the Polarized Mind and Experiential Democracy Dialogue
- List three phases of the Experiential Democracy Dialogue
- Apply the Polarized Mind and Experiential Democracy Dialogue in their practices and communities.
- Summarize two implications of the Polarized Mind and Experiential Democracy Dialogue for contemporary cultural and political divides in the U.S.

Course Outline:

- 10am-10:30am: Introduction and summary of the polarized mind accompanied by power point
- 10:30am-10:50pm: Summary of the Experiential Democracy Dialogue format accompanied by power point
- 10:50am-11:15am: Break-out Dyads to discuss and try out some of the dialogue phases (agreed to by dyad partners)
- 11:15am-11:20am: Stretch break
- 11:20am-12pm: Q & A with the audience

Instructor Bio:

Kirk J. Schneider, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist and leading spokesperson for contemporary existential-humanistic psychology. Dr. Schneider is a cofounder and current president of the Existential-Humanistic Institute (an award-winning psychotherapy training center), Council Member and Candidate for President of the American Psychological Association (APA), past president (2015-2016) of the Society for Humanistic Psychology (Division 32) of the APA, recent past editor of the Journal of Humanistic Psychology (2005-2012), a trained moderator for the conflict mediation group Braver Angels, and an adjunct faculty member at Saybrook University and Teachers College, Columbia University. Dr. Schneider is also an Honorary Member of the Society for Existential Analysis and the East European Association for Existential Therapy. His work on existential-integrative psychotherapy has been featured in a special issue of the Journal of Psychotherapy Integration (March, 2016) and is the inspiration for the psychotherapy training program of the Living Institute, Toronto, Canada. A Fellow of five Divisions of the APA, Dr. Schneider has published over 200 articles, interviews and chapters and has authored or edited 13 books including *The Spirituality of Awe*, *The Polarized Mind*, *Awakening to Awe*, *The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology*, *Existential-Humanistic therapy*, *Existential-Integrative Psychotherapy*, *The Wiley World Handbook of Existential Therapy*, and *The Depolarizing of America: A Guidebook for Social Healing*. Dr. Schneider's work has been featured in *Scientific American*, the *New York Times*, *Psychology Today* and many other health and psychology outlets. For more information on Dr. Schneider's work visit <https://kirkjschneider.com>.

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