

# **GALVANIZING FAMILY THERAPY 2**



## **A Think Tank for Social Action**

May 30<sup>th</sup> - June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 / Galveston Island, Texas

### **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Jill Freedman, Karen Young, Gene Combs, Jim Duvall**

### **ADVISORY GROUP**

**Vanessa Jackson, marcela polanco, Julie Tilsen, Jan DeFehr  
Rosy de Prado, Mukungu Akinyela, Timothy Corvidae**

# Invitation

Dear Colleagues,

- **Are you passionate about social justice issues?**
- **Are you ready to both talk about the issues and help to develop realistic doable action plans?**
- **Are you bringing any experiences and knowledges that will enrich the understandings of others about these issues?**
- **After the event itself, will you have the time and ability to stay connected with possible actions that come out of the meeting?"**

If you answer yes to these 4 questions we invite you to join us for **Galvanizing Family Therapy 2: A Think Tank for Social Action**, which is a three-day meeting that will build on the lessons and effects of our first event in May 2016.

## **Background**

We live in challenging and turbulent times. Most of us entered the mental health field to help others and contribute to the world. We now find that political and professional forces are blocking and undermining our ability to practice in collaborative, non-pathologizing ways. Individuals, families, and communities suffer violence and neglect as the few remaining shreds of any social safety net are reduced or eliminated. White supremacy, patriarchy, and other forms of hierarchical injustices are on the rise. Our public education and health care systems are under direct assault. The corporatization and medicalization of social services has increasingly thrust our field toward a focus on the pathology of individuals and away from the health of communities. As neoliberalism has swept much of the western world, the context we all live in has changed significantly. There are far fewer services available; and the values that once protected vulnerable families and impoverished communities are rapidly being challenged or replaced by economic rationalization and greed.

Some of us have unwittingly become distributors of Big Pharma. Most of us have been coerced into giving people pathological labels in order to qualify them for much needed services. While these actions may help particular people, they also sustain a worldview that separates people instead of supporting communities. These practices do not fit with the values that brought us to our work and that we believe would best support the families and communities we serve.

But it's not all doom and gloom.

For decades now, people who have identified as family therapists have been evolving and expanding approaches to health and education that focus on hopeful interaction, and on promoting healthy, healing interactions in complex systems. In May of 2016, a group of academics, social scientists, researchers, practitioners and activists came together to address the current state of service delivery and therapeutic practice. One tangible result of that conference was the *Galveston Declaration\**, an attempt to articulate shared values and present those values in a way that encourages practitioners, agencies and organizations to enact those values in their daily practice.

### **Purpose**

We hope to enrich the connections and commitments that we began to form at the first meeting. We especially want to explore and articulate specific, fine-grained ways to engage in socially just interactions with colleagues, with clients, and with those in power in our organizations (both professional and governmental). Specific topics we hope to address include:

- Strengthening our connections with each other
- Moving our society's focus from individual pathology to the health of families and communities
- Developing and sharing practices that undermine structures, funder requirements, and therapy approaches that are driven by pathology
- Critically reflecting on the institution and practice of therapy itself
- Promoting each other's security and well-being as we work toward alternatives to our current corporate/pharmaceutical/individual-focused model of "mental health care"
- More effectively advocating for fairness and equality in health care, education, housing, and people's places of work
- Exploring and developing viable alternatives to corporate capitalism (with its focus on individualism, competition, and financial profit) and learning what people such as ourselves can do to move our culture toward them.

We are interested in finding grounded, "do-able," ways to focus collective attention on interdependence and on our collective responsibilities toward the life of the whole planet. We want to find ways to live and work more consistently with what we value in our personal lives, in our workplaces, in our communities and in

our organizations. We hope to discover together things we can actually do that will increase fairness, share resources, provide basic public and private safety, assure access to compassionate healthcare, and give all people real opportunities for rest, recreation, and creative expression.

### **Invitation**

We are inviting you to this meeting because we believe you share in the values underlying our purpose and because we think you have valuable knowledge, experience, and skills. Our planning team is working to find a way of structuring our conversations that minimizes talk *at* each other and maximizes generative, collaborative brainstorming. We hope we can work together with you to develop actions that we can all take in our various contexts and in our own ways. We can accomplish more through our actions if we work collaboratively and support each other. As we develop new practices we can teach them and spread the word of their impact.

We are asking if you accept this invitation that you do so with a commitment to being part of a think tank to develop ways of turning our concerns into actions:

- in our conversations with clients (what we ask about/what we don't ask—what narratives we deliberately privilege through our questions)
- Through what we write in our notes and reports
- in our conversations with colleagues
- through the questions and challenges we pose to those in power in our organizations
- through how we respond to broader issues in our field such as directions being taken by funders of our services, accountability and educational bodies, and government policies

We hope you will come work with us.

Warm regards,

The Planning Committee

**\*You can find the Galveston Declaration at: <http://galvestondeclaration.org/>**

**PLACE: Galveston Island, Texas**

**VENUE: TBA**

**DATE: May 30 - June1, 2019**

**REGISTRATION FEE: \$75 (USD) (covers expenses of venue, refreshments and a reception)**

**Everyone is responsible for their cost of transportation and lodging**

**RECEPTION: May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019 | 6:00pm – 9:00pm**  
**20 Legas Drive, Galveston Island, Texas**  
**Appetizers will be served**

**REGISTRATION \$75.00 (USD)**  
**PLEASE NOTE: THIS EVENT HAS A CAPPED ATTENDANCE AND IS**  
**FILLING QUICKLY. REGISTER ASAP TO SECURE YOUR SPACE.**

**LOCATION & TIMES:**

Unless otherwise noted, the event will be held from 9am to 4:30pm  
Please check your confirmation letter carefully for more information on  
accommodation and ground transportation to and from the airports

**REGISTRATION WILL CLOSE WHEN THE EVENT REACHES CAPACITY.**

**TO REGISTER:**

<http://jstinstitute.com/event/galvanizing-family-therapy-2/>

**Questions? Email [info@jstinstitute.com](mailto:info@jstinstitute.com)**

**The confirmation letter will provide additional information regarding  
accomodation and ground transportation.**

# Welcome to Galveston Island!



It's island time! Leave the stiff and boring behind for the excitement of experiencing Galveston Island, one of Texas' top tourism destinations. This tropical island offers 32 miles of Gulf Coast beaches, rich history and culture, unique shopping, many great restaurants featuring fresh "just out of the water" gulf seafood and a variety of world-class attractions to make your visit far from ordinary. You will find that mixing your participation in the Galvanizing Family Therapy 2 event with casual pleasure is easy on the Island where you will be surrounded by a tropical paradise. Located just 50 miles south of Houston, this small island possesses all the charm of a historic beach town while offering modern amenities.

For more information on Galveston Island contact the Galveston Island Convention & Visitors Bureau at 866-505-4456 or visit [www.meetgalveston.com](http://www.meetgalveston.com). or, [www.galveston.com](http://www.galveston.com).