

MDPAC Fall Retreat 2021

Together in Challenging Times: Physician Self-Care

Purpose and Nature of the Retreat

This annual fall retreat will be an MDPAC retreat committee/member facilitated weekend. Each facilitator will guide the participants through an experiential practice. The facilitators are not experts but psychotherapists who have a keen interest in these modalities. Our focus will be on practices that build resilience through self-care.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 15

7:00 – 9:00 pm

Introductions and Improv with Catherine Cameron

Improv is increasingly being explored as a tool for personal development and for use in therapeutic settings. Improv skills can help increase mental flexibility, communication, collaboration and presence. We will explore some of the basic principles and experience them in action in a playful and supportive environment. These skills, in turn, may help us strengthen our ability to deal with an unpredictable environment and remain resilient. No experience is necessary and there is no requirement to be 'funny'.

Objective: To provide an opportunity to explore and experience some of the core principles of Improv in the context of promoting a sense of wellbeing, resiliency and deepening of connection and presence in personal and therapeutic settings.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 16

9:00 – 10:30 am

Expressive Art with Julie Webb

During our time together we will explore using expressive arts to reach a deeper level of emotion and awareness. We will use the medium of drawing under a guided meditation and then discuss what might have arisen using this process. In a shorter time frame we will be invited to 'change the metaphor' by taking what we have made and imagine using another media such as music, dance, words or photography to work further. I will start with prompting people to experience the 'here and now' of their experience and then move into what they might like to change.

Objective: To experience the use of expressive art to access new awareness of self.

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Breathwork with Jackson Lin

Ancient practices bring us modern interpretations of breathwork. Research into the physiological/biochemical effects reveal the benefits on our biological system including decreased stress, optimized oxygen efficiency and improved mood and anxiety states. Most importantly, breathwork provides us with a meditative state that connects us to our bodies, senses, the present moment and those around us.

Objective: To experience, through guided practice, the beneficial effects on our autonomic nervous system of various breathwork modalities.

1:30 – 3:00 pm

EFT with Inge Winslow

Emotional Freedom Therapy, also known as Tapping, is a method to self-regulate emotions by tapping on meridian points in a sequence (handouts will be provided). Studies have shown it to lower cortisol levels significantly. It is used to treat PTSD, anxiety, depression and other emotional distress and can also help body pains.

Objective: By teaching and demonstrating followed by practicing in pairs to offer an opportunity to experience the effects of doing EFT.

3:30 - 5:00 pm

Tibetan Buddhist Meditation with Thomas Minde

Vajrasattva: A Tibetan meditation for purification

When we try to repair something broken, we tend to focus upon the problem. As psychotherapists, we spend a lot of time helping to fix, repair and heal wounds and injuries. This meditation on Vajrasattva, the Buddha related to purification, begins with such an approach, clearing our problems and obstacles. We then go on to engage all the senses in relating to that aspect of us that is already perfect and pure, our true nature. Visualizing oneself as the deity Vajrasattva, we generate the view of ourselves as perfect, cultivating that awareness and becoming more familiar with that feeling. It is the ultimate positive psychology technique! Finally, we end by spreading these blessings out into the world in order to benefit all other beings.

Objective: To learn and practice Tibetan Buddhist visualization practice that will help purify your body and mind.

7:00 – 9:00 pm

Poetry and Sound with George Lewis

The focus of our time together this weekend is on our self-care. So often as physicians, we are 'there' for our patients. Saturday evening is a chance to be there for ourselves and each other.

Objective: To celebrate our own unique self-care journeys via our own words, music and poems.

SUNDAY OCTOBER 17

9:00 -10:30 am

Narrative with Kevin Foster

Narrative Medicine has been defined as that branch of medicine practiced with the narrative competence to 'recognize, absorb, interpret and be moved by our patients' stories of illness'. It proposes that practitioners and patients together construct narratives during their encounters, and that these impact the nature and meaning of health events in both their lives. We hope through this workshop to improve our listening to and appreciation of caring for these patients to deepen our understanding of the impact this has on us and to consider the meaning of illness for our patients.

Objective: To explore the shared health narrative of the patient and physician/therapist and consider what impact this experience may have on both their lives.

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Wrap up and integration of modules, shared experiences and feedback on the weekend