

Hello to the Focusing community,

My name is Biliana Dearly.

I work as a Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapist, Emotionally Focused Therapist, lecturer and clinical supervisor in Melbourne, Australia. In February this year, on the recommendation of my mentor, Karen Whalen, PhD, I had been certified as a Certifying Coordinator.

I have real passion for sharing the power of Focusing, as both a personal process that can help everyone grow and navigate their life's journey, as well as a therapeutic process that brings deep transformation and lasting change.

My whole life I have wondered about and explored human potentials, and observed the dynamics of human interactions in private, corporate, and therapeutic domains. After undergoing a major life transition 16 years ago – migrating to Australia, learning a new language, and changing my career – I embarked on a life-long journey of studying counselling and psychotherapy. During that time, I came across Focusing and Eugene Gendlin's work. Gendlin's views of human beings, his Philosophy of the Implicit, his Process Model, and experiential approach to therapy have had an essential influence on me.

I completed a Masters in Counselling at La Trobe University in Melbourne, specialising in Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT). In parallel, I have done many years of training with various Focusing teachers, and continually practiced Focusing as my own process of self-awareness. I was certified by The International Focusing Institute in New York as a Focusing-Oriented Therapist, Focusing Trainer, and earlier this year as a Certifying Coordinator.

My extensive clinical therapeutic experience covers a diverse range of presenting problems, including working with anxiety, depression, other complex mental health and addiction problems, psychotropic medication dependence, life transitions, traumas, and relationship difficulties.

My professional interests are in the domain of a process-oriented therapy and they include working with the wholeness of human experience, therapeutic presence, relationship, and the influence of the therapist-as-a person. As a trainer, I am interested in applying Focusing in experiential and transformative teaching and in developing congruence and advanced levels of empathy.

Beyond my qualifications and training, I have the courage to stay open in ‘not knowing’, to continue exploring the depths of the human psyche, and to be vulnerable and touched by the pain of the other. I have a passion to whole-heartedly engage in learning about myself and others, and to create connections within, and between people. My capacity for compassion, deep connection, and insight are the result of many years of continual practice of Focusing.

With my passion to contribute and teach, I developed a curriculum and taught an Experiential Focusing course as part of the Advanced Diploma and Bachelor Degree of Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy at Phoenix Institute of Australia for five years. I am currently a lecturer at The Cairmillar Institute, Melbourne in the post-graduate programme in counselling and psychotherapy. I have developed a foundational, short-course training program in Focusing for this Institute, for their current students and graduates, as well as for other therapists who would want to learn Focusing as their professional development. I am hoping to start this program in the next academic year and develop a training base for the therapeutic community at this Institute.

I have continued providing Focusing fundamentals training as I have developed it since 2011/12, as the

tree-parts process of three levels. Although a foundation level training is a way to start, it is important to clearly present and make available further levels of learning, supported practice, and a program of certification. I have developed a clear and comprehensive two-year certification training programme – “The Art of Focusing Connection,” for participants who want to become certified Focusing trainers and FOTs. The first group of participants interested in continuing the Focusing journey with me started the Certification programme in February 2017.

While at the same time recently completing the process of certification myself (as Certifying Coordinator and becoming a Certified Emotionally Focused Couple Therapist) and developing the program of certification, I had the opportunity in the past 2 years to experience the importance of different elements of certification and sit with some emerging dilemmas along the way. It seems that the whole CC community at The International Focusing Institute is currently facing similar dilemmas of holding the need for freedom, allowing, flexibility, inclusiveness, and maintaining integrity of the teachings that requires boundaries, limitations, and a form of ‘gate keeping’...

I endeavour to deliver the trainings in a BIG way (with **B**oundaries, **I**ntegrity and **G**enerosity) where the Focusing spirit of generosity (openness and allowing ‘the more’) is held and contained by friendly curiosity (boundary) to maintain integrity and safety. This awareness that either a too rigid boundary or a too wide-open generosity will compromise integrity could be a guide while navigating the line of paradox between two seemingly opposing needs. My exploration in the field of many different healing practices during more than 30 years has taught me that healing often happens in paradoxical ways and the healing is where the paradox is... Only if we can *hold it all*. And in Focusing we do have our embodied Wholeness, or Grounded Presence to do so.

I have also learned from my experience that when the requirements (boundaries) are too rigid and detailed it feels rather like a need to ‘fit in’ and then as a consequence, I cannot be my whole and best self. On the contrary, when there is enough flexibility and allowing for different styles, cultural elements, expressions, and so on, I feel ‘I belong’ and only then I can fully contribute and grow with that process. I do feel that I belong to the Focusing community and that makes me excited to continue contributing to its development. Focusing has given me so much and I am excited to share that with others. That is what predominantly drives me to teach it.

Besides developing curriculum, teaching Focusing, and developing new programs, I have initiated a monthly Focusing practice and supervision group that has been ongoing for over three years. My dream is to initiate the development of The Centre for Focusing-Oriented Practice in Australia and New Zealand, with the aim of developing a community of people in this part of the world committed to help everyone learn and integrate Focusing into many ways of living and working, to promote and carry forward the practice of Focusing, its values and philosophy as developed by Eugene Gendlin, his students and followers, with a close and productive cooperation with The International Focusing Institute.

Lastly, I have been trying to get a clearer sense of what it is that I bring to the international Focusing community, besides my dedication to the process itself. My interests have been in creating connections and bridges:

- within people – applying and further refining my advanced training with Ann Cornell in Inner Relationship Focusing,
- between people – applying my training with Karen in Wholebody Focusing and its important relational aspects,
- on the avenues within the therapeutic community – by introducing Focusing to therapists of diverse orientations, by pointing to the importance of Focusing in EFT, couple therapy, and other experiential therapies, beyond its current recognition. In the EFT circle in Melbourne, other therapists see me as an EFT therapist who prefers to use the Focusing process most of the time. I

would rather describe myself as an FOT who uses sometimes Gestalt or Art Therapy methods, Jungian, Existential, or Attachment theory, benefits from knowing contemporary theory of emotions, and is living the Focusing attitude and felt-sensing privately and professionally.

Yours sincerely,
Biliana Dearly
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