

# A Practical Introduction to Working with Small Figures in Psychotherapy

with Dr John Barton  
Portland  
2nd & 3rd April, 2009

Learn how to use small figures with counseling and psychotherapy clients. Small figure work is a powerful and effective method of working with adults, adolescents and children. Clients quickly understand themselves from new perspectives and find themselves thinking in new and creative ways.

This workshop will focus on working with adults in the one-to-one setting. The work can be directly applied with couples and in family therapy, in supervision and in workplace/management settings.

Participants who work with children will need to modify the work to suit their clients.

The work is primarily derived from Psychodrama. There are also elements of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Narrative Therapy.

## ***Using small figures enables clients to:***

Express and understand their knowledge of the family and social systems they inhabit.

Experience themselves and their stories from both internal and external perspectives.

Connect with feelings and understanding that are held in nonverbal memory.

Concretize and thus more fully experience their hopes and wishes for the future.



## ***Day One will cover:***

- General principles of combining small figure work with talk-based methods.
- A specific way of using small figures to work with a client who has a difficulty in a relationship.
- A specific method for bringing to life the memories, feelings and actions of functional roles. This is particularly useful with depressed clients.
- How to obtain small figures.

## ***Day Two will cover:***

- A way of exploring the history of a relationship. This is particularly useful in grief work. It can also be used to celebrate a relationship and to allow expression of things previously unsaid. This will include the use of simple psychodrama techniques: Expression of thoughts, feelings and action; role reversal and soliloquy.

**Plus:** Two or three items selected (by the participants) from the following:

- A way of looking at the client's social system and relationships in the present.

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- A way of looking at the client's social system and the nature of their relationships at earlier times in their life, for example in childhood.
- Action Genogram. Making a genogram with the figures and then using this to find further meaning for the client.
- An exercise that links some of the client's present roles with the earlier events that led to the development of those roles.
- Working with an unwanted repetitive behavior. This has some relevance to addictions.
- The Empty Chair: Using the figures to enable the client to have a psychodramatic conversation with another person.
- A way of assisting the client to make a decision.
- Practice and development of confidence in working with small figures.

## **The workshop will be experiential.**

Participants will have the opportunity to be both the client and the therapist. There will also be demonstration and discussion of practical and theoretical aspects of this work. The workshop is likely to be enjoyable and to heighten participants' appreciation of themselves.

**NB** It is expected that all participants are able to take responsibility for self care if they uncover personal material that is difficult, for instance through access to their own therapist or supervisor. At the end of the workshop the figures used in the workshop (Playmobil toy figures) will be for sale.

**John Barton** is a New Zealander, a registered medical practitioner and accredited psychodramatist who works as a psychotherapist in Melbourne Australia. He was a Family Physician (mainly in country NZ) for over twenty years. He uses small figures in his own practice and has presented this workshop in New Zealand, Australia, USA, Europe and Asia. He has a lighthearted teaching style which shows his enthusiasm for small figure work and his joy in the practice of psychotherapy.

**Venue:** Mark Spencer Hotel,  
409 SW 11th Avenue, Portland, Oregon.

**Time:** 9:00 am to 5pm, 2nd and 3rd April.  
Morning and afternoon tea will be supplied. There will be a one hour lunch break.

**Cost:** \$240 (Concession for students and unwaged: \$140).  
Attendance at one day only: \$140 (\$80).

It is strongly recommended that participants attend both days. Preference will be given to those who attend both days.

The workshop will be limited to twenty-four participants.

**To register or for more information contact John Barton:**  
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phone: +61 3 9480 6335.

14 CEUs have been approved by the Addiction Counsellor Education Board of Oregon (ACCBO).

A Certificate of Attendance will be issued at the workshop.