Differentiation at Work 2021-2022
Guest Speakers

Carrie E. Collier, PhD, LPC, CRC

Carrie E. Collier became director of the Bowen Center for the Study of the Family in summer 2020. She completed her master’s in rehabilitation counseling from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, Columbia, SC, in 1999. There she became a licensed professional counselor while working in the emergency department conducting psychiatric evaluations and assessments. Dr. Collier earned her PhD in counseling from The George Washington University in Washington, DC. She completed her clinical residency at the Bowen Center Clinic and trained in the Postgraduate Program at the Bowen Center from 2007-2010. She was appointed to the associate faculty in 2013 and the board in 2018. She served as director of the online program beginning in 2016. She also has served as an editor for the journal *Family Systems*, 2018-present.

Dr. Collier has practiced as a Licensed Professional Counselor since 2000. She has provided outpatient and inpatient counseling services to couples and families, children, adolescents, adults, and older adults in South Carolina, Maryland, Washington, DC, and Virginia. She has offered face-to-face and telephonic couples counseling and premarital and marital counseling services. Dr. Collier’s past experiences in the mental health field have led her to use Bowen family systems theory in her practices with individuals, couples, and families. Some of her more successful counseling outcomes have occurred when the couple, individual, and/or the family approached and resolved problems using Bowen family systems theory.

Dr. Collier’s research focus includes parenting in family systems and family system responses to challenges. She has conducted research on the relation between wisdom and ethics of care in late life and parenting. Dr. Collier is an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Counseling and Human Development at The George Washington University, Washington, DC. She has taught at Trinity Washington University in the Department of Counseling and Human Development and at Marymount University in the Counseling and Forensic Psychology Department.
Priscilla J. Friesen, MSW

Priscilla Friesen was introduced to the ideas of Murray Bowen in graduate school in social work at the University of Kansas. She moved from Kansas to Washington, DC, in 1978 to pursue her interest.

She was the clinical and administrative assistant to Dr. Lillian Rosenbaum, who developed the Biofeedback Program at the Georgetown Family Center, while Ms. Friesen participated in the Postgraduate Program. Her early exposure to biofeedback significantly influenced her understanding of Bowen theory and of the physiology of relationships.

She was appointed to the faculty in 1987. She directed the Postgraduate Program in Bowen Family Systems Theory and its Applications, 1990-2003. In 1994, she expanded her clinical work to include neurofeedback. This led her into the study of evolution and the development of the brain, as well as how the brain, mind, and relationships operate in synchrony.

In 2005, she co-founded The Learning Space, a conceptual place where individuals have an opportunity to experience and challenge themselves in relationships through the integration of Bowen theory and neurofeedback.

In 2012, Ms. Friesen and Kathleen Wiseman created a program designed for experienced family enterprise professionals, advisors, and responsible family members. This program integrates Bowen theory and neurofeedback to challenge people to be more of a self in their family and work settings.

Ms. Friesen is also active on the board of The Murray Bowen Archives Project, the organization responsible for making the Bowen Archives available to the world.
Katherine B. Kott, PhD

Katherine Kott has been studying and using Bowen theory for over twenty years with a particular interest in applying Bowen theory to work systems. Her doctoral dissertation, completed in 2012 at Fielding Graduate University in organization development, offers a model for using Bowen theory in organization development work. To create the model, she studied the work practices of twelve people who used Bowen theory in their consulting work with organizations.

Anne S. McKnight, EdD, LCSW

Dr. Anne S. McKnight was appointed director of the Bowen Center in May 2010 and stepped down in July 2020. She is currently a director emeritus, continues to serve on the Center board, and is active in presenting, supervising, and organizing conferences. As director, she had special interest in supporting the development of Bowen theory around the world, including an international conference in Hong Kong and developing the Iberoamerican Institute at the Bowen Center. During her tenure, she recruited twelve new faculty and expanded training programming, while putting the Bowen Center on a solid financial footing.

Dr. McKnight has been a member of the Bowen Center faculty since 1992. Her activities have included directing, teaching, and supervising in the Postgraduate Programs, leading the internship program, organizing and presenting at conferences sponsored by the Bowen Center and at meetings nationally and internationally. As a family therapist for 40 years, she developed a special interest in families with addiction from working, teaching, and supervising students in a child and family substance abuse program in Virginia. She has written chapters in many books on Bowen theory and articles for the journal Family Systems.

Dr. McKnight is in private practice in Arlington, VA, and at the Bowen Center.
Douglas McKenna, PhD

Bio forthcoming

Thomas Merkel, MBA, CPA

Mr. Merkel has an executive coaching and leadership development practice working with mid-sized and family-owned businesses. Since 2004, he has led a Rochester chapter of Vistage, a global CEO membership organization. In 2015, he was appointed Best Practice Chair in Upstate New York. In this capacity, he provides leadership and direction to other professional coaches in the New York Area.

Mr. Merkel has over 35 years of experience in general management, sales and marketing, as well as finance and accounting. He has held numerous leadership positions: President and CEO, Vice President of sales and marketing, Vice President of finance, and Controller.

He serves as an operating Director for Delta Point Capital. He sits on the board of several of Delta Point Portfolio companies. Furthermore, he supports local non-profits, having served on boards and fundraising for organizations such as: Compeer, Highland Hospital, United Way of Rochester, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. He served as president of Monroe Golf Club, site of the 2014 LPGA tournament.

Mr. Merkel has acquired, started, and sold several businesses over the last 30 years. Prior to managing closely held businesses, he held various positions with Nabisco and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Mr. Merkel is a New York State CPA, has earned an undergraduate degree in accounting from Ithaca College, and an MBA from Rutgers University. In addition, he has completed several years of the Postgraduate Program in Bowen family systems theory.
Stan Proffitt is a leadership teacher and executive coach whose work with organizations is anchored in Bowen family systems theory. His professional experience includes 10 years in both inpatient and outpatient mental health programs and 20 years in organizational development, leadership development, and executive coaching.

Through Stan’s study in the Postgraduate Program at the Bowen Center for the Study of the Family, he developed a clear recognition of how Bowen theory as a framework for thinking about leadership enables leaders to make shifts in their effectiveness that business strategy cannot produce.

In 2010, Mr. Proffitt founded Shoshin Leadership Inc., a leadership development and executive coaching practice, which he operated through 2020. There, he brought an integration of his professional experience, Bowen family systems theory, and the influence of 30+ years of traditional martial arts training to family firms, privately held corporations, not-for-profit organizations, and large-scale enterprises. In January 2021, Mr. Proffitt began shifting his focus from client work to furthering the advancement of theory through the Bowen Center for the Study of the Family, where he now heads the Postgraduate Program.

Mr. Proffitt holds a bachelor of science in physical education with a concentration in exercise physiology and an Advanced Corporate Coaching certification from Coach U. He completed his training in the Postgraduate Program in 2015. He brings into his role as associate faculty his passion for learning and teaching, and his dedication to the practical application of theory to real-life family, organizational, and community challenges.
Patricia T. Sheridan, MBA, RHIA, FAHIMA

Patty T. Sheridan is a health information executive and leadership coach. Patty helps organizations and individuals think about business strategy, leading change, managing self, succession planning, and adaptive organizational challenges. She applies Bowen theory and adaptive leadership frameworks to liberate the human potential and build leadership capacity in teams and individuals.

Patty has held executive positions at Ciox Health, Care Communications, and the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), and is a faculty member for the Center for Family Consultation, where she focuses on the application of Bowen theory to leadership development.

She is a member of the AHIMA Foundation Board of Directors and a member of the University of Pittsburgh School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Health Information Management Undergraduate Advisory Committee. Patty is a Past Chair of AHIMA, NYHIMA, and Resurrection University. Patty is a fellow of AHIMA and the recipient of AHIMA’s Distinguished Member Award, and the Illinois Health Information Management Association’s Professional Achievement Award. She is a speaker and author on the topics of Bowen theory; Adaptive Leadership; and health information management.

Patty has been learning and applying Bowen theory to workplace systems since 1999. Her family of origin work began as part of her participation in the “Women’s Leadership Center, a Time and Place to Think”, a program sponsored by the Center for Family Consultation (CFC). She continues to deepen her understanding and application of Bowen theory in her personal life and to the workplace through ongoing family of origin work and participation in CFC and the Bowen theory networks. She joined the CFC faculty in 2017.

Erik Thompson, MA

Erik Thompson, MA, Licensed Psychologist-Masters is Executive Director of the Vermont Center for Family Studies. Erik founded Thompson Leadership Development, Inc., which provides executive leadership development services to senior executives nationally. He helps leaders expand their capacity to grow exceptional teams, coach top performers, and overcome high-stakes relationship challenges.

Erik is a Licensed Psychologist-Master whose professional discipline for the past 30 years has been the application of systems thinking to human behavior, and leadership. After earning a graduate degree in psychology, Erik completed a three-year training in systems thinking at the Bowen Center. He worked in community mental
health as a clinician, supervisor, and consultant, and also had a private family therapy practice for many years.

Erik has published peer-reviewed research in the journal *Family Systems*. He co-facilitates the Bowen Center’s Bowen Theory and Organizations online community of practice. He is also a leader of the Chicago-based Center for Family Consultation’s Bowen Theory and Meditation online study group.