

INFORMED CONSENT

Dr. Alex Burmeister has been counseling Dallas-area families since 1985. She currently is in private practice treating mostly affluent families and individuals of high net worth and working with diverse clients including artists, entrepreneurs, and family businesses. Dr. Burmeister's practice not only focuses on relationships among couples and families, she also specializes in helping her clients manage grief, recovery, infidelity, divorce and other major life transitions. She works with many individuals and couples on recreating the structure of their lives while reidentifying themselves at mid-life and beyond.

Therapeutic Approach

Over the years, she has done extensive clinical research into adult development, family systems, and social psychology. Her therapeutic approach, although heavily influenced by family systems theory, is not an excavation into the past in an attempt to understand current forces in client's lives. "I see almost all patterns and symptoms systemically and socially," she says "I attempt to understand what the client defines as "problematic" in relationship to the people, the roles, and the social forces operating in their lives, However, the responsibility to change one's experience in life always rests within the individual." She adds, "A key organizing principle of what I do is this assumption: To reconnect with or find joy requires getting in touch with the core of Self and finding the courage and ability to Self express through structures clients have to take full responsibility for creating. The ultimate experience of this freedom requires the ability to freely and deliberately create new structures, let go of the outdated and inauthentic ones, as well as the ability to maintain the essential ones through adaptation." But her biggest gift is translating these complex psychotherapeutic issues into easily understandable and compelling language to those who come to see her.

Aside from family systems theory, Dr. Burmeister also relies on contributions from the fields of narrative psychology (attending to the stories that form one's identity and influences symptoms), cognitive-behavioral theory (shifting personal experience via attention to belief systems and behavioral patterns), existential theory (humanizing and managing the anxieties inherent in the life experience and the creation of meaning). Dr. Burmeister has also studied and trained in East/Asian systems of mind/body healing and stress management.

Education and Clinical Training

Raised in North Texas, Alex received her bachelor's degree from North Texas State University and then attended Southern Methodist University in Dallas, where she obtained a masters degree in clinical psychology. During that time, she enjoyed both research and direct clinical care and considers her internship at Southwest Family Institute (SFI) a turning point in her training. While at SFI, she researched family health variables and completed her thesis looking at goal attainment in family therapy. She later returned to SMU to complete her Ph.D. in social developmental psychology, received a grant from the Timberlawn Psychiatric Research Foundation, and completed an extensive research project looking at the relationship between narrative coherence, relationship ideology, attachment security, and couple health. She was awarded the Most Outstanding Dissertation Award at the conclusion of her research.

Alex is also a devoted educator, having spoken to over 200 groups and to multiple academic conferences. She founded the Institute for Addictive Studies in 1989 and she created and facilitated student assistance programming for at-risk adolescents in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. She has served as a clinical training consultant for Advancement Associates and trained future addiction professionals through Hazelden's Southwest Training Institute. She has served as adjunct faculty for Southern Methodist University's psychology department, teaching both graduate and undergraduate courses in adult development and aging, social psychology, theories of psychotherapy, and marriage and family therapy.

Alex's first ten years of counseling were primarily in residential and outpatient programs treating addictive disorders and dual diagnoses. She worked as a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor prior to her graduate training and completion of her licensure in Texas as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in Texas and Colorado.

Alex is currently licensed as a Clinical Supervisor in Texas (LPCS) allowing her to supervise counseling interns seeking licensure. She is a psychologist who is licensed in the state of Texas as a Licensed Professional Counselor.

Alex began to focus solely on her private practice in 1995 with early emphasis on adolescents and family health. As her practice has evolved, she has elected to remain focused on couple and family health. She sees adults on an individual basis as well and continues to see adolescents selectively.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All patient/therapist privileges are waived when there are issues of elder abuse, child abuse, and threats to self or third parties where intent to harm someone is of concern. This means Dr. Burmeister is bound by law and licensure guidelines to report the abuse or threat to authorities and/or family members.

RECORD KEEPING

Dr. Burmeister keeps written notes of sessions where she records important and relevant information especially related to medical and psychiatric referrals.

RISKS OF THERAPY

It is unlikely but you may not get better or accomplish your therapy goals. When you learn more about your symptoms or the nature of your presenting needs, you may feel unhappy or discouraged at first. This should resolve over a short period of time if treatment is progressing in a positive manner. You may go through periods of feeling worse as a result of therapy but the overall experience should be positive. If you are doubting whether the overall direction of your therapy is positive, please discuss this with Dr. Burmeister. Sometimes an alternative approach or provider is needed.

FEE CHANGES

Fees are usually increased one time per year. You will be informed either by mail or verbally in a session.

YOUR RIGHT NOT TO USE THE SESSION

You are hiring me in essence as a consultant to your emotional and relational health, therefore you can terminate our work together at any time during the course of treatment. If I am not satisfied with the course of your treatment, I will speak with you about alternative approaches.

I have read and understand the policies included in this Informed Consent.

SIGNATURE

DATE

CLIENT PRINTED NAME