**IAAN Conference at Tweed Heads, NSW Australia**

**7-9 September 2023**

**90-minute workshop**

**Title:**

**The Relational Brain: Assisting Couples to Change Their Default Mode Networks for Better Outcomes**

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**Abstract**

One of the most distinctive aspects of couples therapy, compared to therapy with individuals, is the speed and level of reactivity that often occurs between the couple as they trigger each other’s default networks. This natural phenomenon results in couples dysregulating faster than in any other relationships in their lives. Many therapists find it challenging to manage, let alone utilise this reactivity for personal and relational growth.

This presentation will explain the ‘The Mind’s Operating Systems’ (John Arden 2019, pp. 5-17) and its connection with ’Polyvagal Theory’ (Stephen Porges) which underpins a couple’s reactivity and dysregulation. This then will be applied to the ‘Couples Integrated Framework’ (Peter Janetzki 2017) as a means of conceptualising the inter-personal and intra-personal dynamics occurring simultaneously within the couple dyad.

Skills and strategies will be discussed and demonstrated via video clips that can result in better self-regulation and emotional maturation individually and as a couple leading to personal and relational growth.

**Learning Outcomes**

1. An overview of the ‘The Mind’s Operating Systems’ (John Arden 2019, p.5-17) and its connection with ’Polyvagal Theory’.
2. Understanding and utilising the ‘Couples Integrated Framework’ (Peter Janetzki 2017) to better conceptualise the couple dyad.
3. Practical skills and strategies for managing dysregulation within the therapy room, as well enhancing individual and couple regulation.
4. Practical strategies for assisting individuals within the couple dyad to understand, challenge, and change their Default Mode Network.
5. Practical skills and strategies for enabling couples to co-create new meanings within their ‘Mind’s Operating Systems’.

**Learning Process**

1. Didactic input with PowerPoint presentation.
2. Video clips with discussion and interaction, referring to handout materials i.e. Couples Integrated Framework (Peter Janetzki 2017), ‘The Mind’s Operating Systems’ strategies and skills.

**Bio**

**Peter Janetzki**

Counsellor/Psychotherapists/Educator

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Peter is a Counsellor/Psychotherapists and Educator in private practice on the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane, with a special interest in couple’s therapy with a focus on relational and personal growth & applied neuroscience. He brings with him 40 years of experience working with people in a variety of settings.

Peter has been a sessional lecturer in the School of Social Sciences at Christian Heritage College Brisbane, currently teaching half of the Graduate Certificate in Applied Neuroscience program as well as Couples Therapy skills to Master of Counselling students.

Peter has developed several training programs as well as co-authoring the book ‘Being a Bloke: Discovering the Essence of Authentic Aussie Masculinity’, Red Hill Publishing 2010.

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