

2025 Avanti Therapeutic Projects Symposium

Course A: It Only Takes a Spark: Exploring Inner Drive From Survival to Self-Actualization

All proceeds from Course A will support Camp Avanti; all of the speakers are donating their time; this course is replacing the pre-camp conference formerly held in June. The format of this course is different from the other symposium courses.

Speakers: Patti Oetter, MA, OT, FAOTA; Sheila Frick, OTR/L; Gretchen Kamke, MS, OTR/L; Nancy Lawton-Shirley, OTR/L

Thursday February 27th, 2025; 8:30 a.m - 4:00 p.m. CST

Location: Live webinar via Zoom; on-demand via Thinkific for 45 days; recordings will be released within 1 week of the event.

6 Contact hours

Audience: OTs, SLPs, PTs, mental health professionals, and interested others

Course Description:

In Ayres's chapter on "The Art of Therapy" (Ayres, 1972), she discusses the 'internal drive toward sensory integration' and the 'just right challenge.' Since that time, clinical practice has often emphasized identifying the 'just right challenge' while taking the concept of 'inner drive' as a given. This innovative and collaborative course will delve into the concept of 'inner drive' from clinical, physiological, and behavioral points of view. Four gifted and experienced occupational therapists, along with a panel of experts in the field, will explore the scope, breadth, and relevance to practice of inner drive from different perspectives and theoretical frameworks.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe how fetal development relates to inner drive.
2. Recognize the concept of inner drive from a developmental and sensory integrative perspective.
3. Understand the role of relationships in the developmental process.
4. Name three energetic foundations that interfere with the expression of inner drive.

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Course A: Agenda		
8:30 AM - 9:30 AM CST	Fetal Roots of Inner Drive	Patti Oetter
9:30 AM - 10:00 AM CST	Panel Discussion	
10:00 AM - 10:15 AM CST	Break	
10:15 AM - 11:15 AM CST	Inner Ear Inner Drive: The Power of Feeling Safe and Capable	Sheila Frick
11:15 AM - 11:45 AM CST	Panel Discussion	
11:45 AM - 12:45 PM CST	Lunch	
12:45 PM - 1:45 PM CST	Relational Spark: An exploration of relationships fueling the expansion of inner-drive	Gretchen Kamke
1:45 PM - 2:15 PM CST	Panel Discussion	
2:15 PM - 2:30 PM CST	Break	
2:30 PM - 3:30 PM CST	Energy Foundations of the Inner Drive: Therapeutic Implications	Nancy Lawton-Shirley
3:30 PM - 4:00 PM CST	Panel Discussion	
4:00 PM CST	Adjourn	

Speaker Biographies:

Patti Oetter, MA, OT, FAOTA, earned her bachelor's degree in occupational therapy from the University of Kansas and her master's degree in special education, with special emphasis on education and learning difficulties, from Hays Kansas University. Ms. Oetter has extensive clinical experience in Sensory Integrative therapy, Samonas Sound Therapy, Cranial Sacral Therapy, and Neurodevelopmental Therapy (NDT). She has provided consultation and education for teachers, parents, and therapists in the US, Asia, and Europe and she has worked extensively in schools, special programs, and private practice.

She is a Fellow of the American Occupational Therapy Association. Ms. Oetter has co-authored



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a number of publications related to the treatment of sensory processing disorders including; “MORE: Integrating the Mouth with Sensory and Postural Functions” and “Out of the Mouths of Babes: The Developmental Significance of the Mouth.”

Sheila M. Frick, OTR/L, is an internationally esteemed clinician, lecturer, and pioneer in Occupational Therapy. She has over 40 years of clinical experience, having worked in psychiatry, rehabilitation, and home health before specializing in pediatrics. Her expertise includes sensory processing dysfunction, sensory integration, and auditory interventions. She created and continues to expand Therapeutic Listening®, which she has taught to over 15,000 therapists worldwide. She also lectures on such topics as clinical neurology, respiration, the vestibular/auditory system and various auditory interventions. She is the creator and author of Listening With the Whole Body and co-author of Core Concepts In Action, Astronaut Training: A Sound Activated Vestibular-Visual Protocol, Out of the Mouths of Babes and M.O.R.E: Integrating the Mouth with Sensory and Postural Functions.



Disclosure Statement

Financial - president of Therapeutic Resources, Inc. of which Vital Links is a subsidiary. Co-author of the Listening with the Whole Body book and receives royalty payment.

Non- financial - married to Ronald Frick, president of Vital Sounds, Inc.

Gretchen Kamke, MS, OTR/L, is an occupational therapist on a mission to facilitate a more regulated, connected, and compassionate world. She works for ICDL training therapists, educators, and parents on DIRFloortime®, a developmental approach that recognizes how individual differences and relationships impact social emotional development and learning. Gretchen has a passion for learning about sensory integrative processing and exploring how sensation supports function, meaningful participation, and well-being. She has dedicated most of her life to serving pediatric populations and their families, while viewing them as holistic individuals on their own unique journey through life.



Disclosure Statement

Gretchen Kamke receives a salary from the International Council of Development and Learning (ICDL)

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Nancy Lawton-Shirley, OTR/L, is an occupational therapist who has integrated many techniques into her rehabilitation and wellness clinical practice. She has been in private practice serving children and adults for over 35 years in Hudson Wisconsin. Her passion is the integration of more traditional and less traditional, cutting edge techniques and programs. She has had advanced training in a wide variety of energy techniques including: CranioSacral Therapy/Myofascial Release, Pranic Healing, AcuEnergetics, Integration of CranioSacral Therapy and Acupuncture, QiGong, and Higher Brain Living. She was co-director for 25 years of Camp Avanti—St. Croix, which was a special camp for children with sensory processing challenges. She speaks nationally and internationally on topics related to sensory processing and craniosacral therapy/ myofascial release. She is a Berard Auditory Integration Training instructor. Nancy also served on the board of Red Thread Charities which worked with orphanages in China to assist rehabilitation program development for their special needs children.

