



# Regulating Existential Feelings: The Challenge of Meaning-Making

**Exploring and promoting hope, tolerance and resilience for clients in challenging times.**

The early 21st Century is presenting monumental challenges to both leaders and everyday people. Global threats of climate change, mounting numbers of refugees, declines in civility and respect for democracy and accelerating inequality, to name only a few! Such matters may feel 'all too big' to fathom, let alone respond constructively. Evidence also suggests these conditions are raising a degree of existential anxiety in societies across the world. Mental health professionals are increasingly finding themselves impacted by these and similar trends. The 'outside world' is increasingly visiting us in our lives as well as our provision of care. How can we respond?

There is much we can do, but perhaps we need first to pause, acknowledge the challenges we face and assess our own strengths. This unique seminar proposes a dynamic model of secure base and safe haven functions to support therapists working in troubling times. [Yes, an attachment derived approach to our own practice.] What might count as our unique secure bases/safe haven of support? The first part of the workshop aims to help us explore this question. The workshop will assist us to (1) claim the values/virtues—components of our unique secure base—that motivate us to face challenges, and (2) identify the people and places that support us along the way—our safe havens. This initial exploration will be set within the psychotherapy humanist/spiritual traditions of the mid 20th Century. The seminar asks us to revision or renew our practice in the notion of the Mythological Hero.

The second half of the morning turns to a focus on empirical findings on the regulation of affect. How do we and our clients best cope with the range of feeling states encountered in facing the world. And more practically, we look at recent critical discussions of existential feelings: affect states that are more like moods but with the broader implications for things like curiosity, innovation and global care—but also despair and paralysis. These more existential states have been shown to potentially influence

our abilities to be open to new possibilities. And as such, they are capable of regulation as are emotions and moods.

They may also function as less conscious background experiences capable of being raised to the foreground of awareness—something clinically relevant for clients.

Next, the third and fourth sections in the afternoon continue our practical exploration into building tolerance and anchoring ourselves and clients in hope. The influence of healthy anger—still a controversial and unresolved topic—is initially surveyed. The less healthy influences are considered in light of growing lack public civility and the rise of hatred in societies. The potential role of forgiveness is combined here to assist us in applying knowledge to clinical realities. Two practical areas will be addressed: (1) the challenging topic of hate crimes in light of recently published ISTSS guidelines on treatment of victims, and, (2) a look at how we might assist in building increased tolerance within all who may be faced with anger challenges.

Finally, the fourth section brings back experiential reflection to the table. Hope will be examined and its role in our clinical work will be raised. Hope need not decline when matters might less than optimistic. But bringing the sort of heroic awareness discussed at the outset will return to conclude our day.

### Learning objectives of this training:

1. Explore personal perspectives on values/virtues (including spirituality and meaning making) that support our well-being and practices.
2. Identify how existential feelings impact the pursuance of a good life.
3. Update our understanding of current empirical views on nature of emotions and moods and their regulation.
4. Reassess both adaptive and unhealthy roles of anger.
5. Understand how forgiveness and hope may be unrecognised sources of strength in life.



**Kevin Keith, PhD** is a counsellor, psychotherapist and supervisor. He splits time between private practice and education/academic activities. He is a lecturer in the Jansen Newman Institute (JNI) and Australian College of Applied Psychology (ACAP). In 2017, he completed his PhD at the University of Sydney (History and Philosophy of Science Unit) with primary research interests in Attachment Theory. His thesis—The Goal-Corrected Partnership: A Critical Assessment of the Research Programme—brings focus on attachment development post-infancy. This work rearticulates Attachment Theory in light of advances in the lifespan developmental sciences, especially approaches to biological complexity. Kevin presents regularly on Attachment Theory to a wide range of audiences, including a May 2016 paper at the International Society for Philosophy of Psychiatry in Atlanta GA USA [on attachment within the NIMH Research Domain Criteria, an alternative model to the DSM-5]. He is acclaimed as an engaging and inspiring presenter whose seminars change the way therapists perceive and work with their clients in ways that surprise and delight.

**This training may qualify for Focussed Psychological Strategies (FPS) CPD. Please refer to the Dept. of Health <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/mental-ba-focus#cpd> for more information.**

**MELBOURNE: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020**  
MANTRA ON RUSSELL

**SYDNEY: 7<sup>th</sup> November 2020**  
UTS SHORT COURSE ROOMS

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Our continuing professional development events meet the quality standard recognised by many relevant professional associations including psychology, social work, occupational therapy, mental health nursing, community work, counselling, psychotherapy and more.

*We recommend checking with your association for the correct calculation of points for this event.*

A certificate of attendance for 7 hours of face-to-face training is issued in the week following attendance at this event.

### **Morning Session**

Includes a short morning tea break.

Personal Exploration: Responding to Suffering in a 'less sustainable world' (Our Unique Heroism).

Regulating Existential Feelings in addition to Moods and Emotions (Openness to Possibility).

### **Afternoon Session**

Includes a short afternoon tea break.

Working with Anger, Forgiveness and Agency (Building Tolerance).

Sustaining Hope in the Therapy Room (Combatting Today's Nihilism).

Evaluation and closing.

***"Mental health workers can embrace the anxieties of the early 21st Century and, in doing so, foster hope and tolerance within our clients."***

Kevin Keith

### **How will you benefit from attending this training?**

- Identify their own strengths and supports that provide support in troubling times.
- Develop skills for assisting clients to regulate existential feelings.
- Clarify options in working to grow hope and tolerance in today's world.

### **Registration details:**

Registration fee: **\$298**

A current PDP 'Student and New Graduate' discount code may be applied to this standard registration fee. (Apply online)

This seminar provides 7 hours for CPD points.

Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea included.

We accept payment by Visa, Mastercard, Amex PayPal, cheque and EFT.

**Register at [www.PDPseminars.com.au](http://www.PDPseminars.com.au) or call us on 1300 887 622**

This seminar has been designed to extend the clinical knowledge and applied skill of Counsellors, Psychotherapists, Coaches, Psychologists, Hypnotherapists, Social Workers, Community Workers, Mental Health Nurses and Psychiatrists.

### **Here's what people have said recently about Kevin's training for PDP:**

*"One of the better presentations/seminars that I have attended in years. Well targeted, excellent pacing."*

*"Made it interactive and relevant to people attending."*

*"Very well done, valuable subject with application to today's profession."*

*"Thank you – I'd forgotten all the attachment stuff from formal study days – good new and helpful research, particularly dealing with 'difficult client groups', giving us and our clients hope."*

*"Very interesting, hopeful perspective."*

*"Very informative and stimulating! Made me want to explore the area of attachment more and more."*

*"Interesting references to the progression of this theory."*

*"One of the best seminars I have done! This seminar improved my understanding about attachment theory in a significant way. Kevin is an amazing presenter, he engaged participants from the beginning to the end of the seminar!"*

*"Always enjoy the high quality and clarity of Kevin's work. It is well researched, well structured, time is extremely well managed and consistent effort is made to meet the personal needs of all attendees. Gluten free food is good!"*

*"Kevin was an engaging and knowledgeable presenter who demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of his field."*

*"Great presenter, venue."*

*"PDP staff were amazing, useful, so friendly. Kevin was really great, loved his passion and knowledge. Interesting content."*