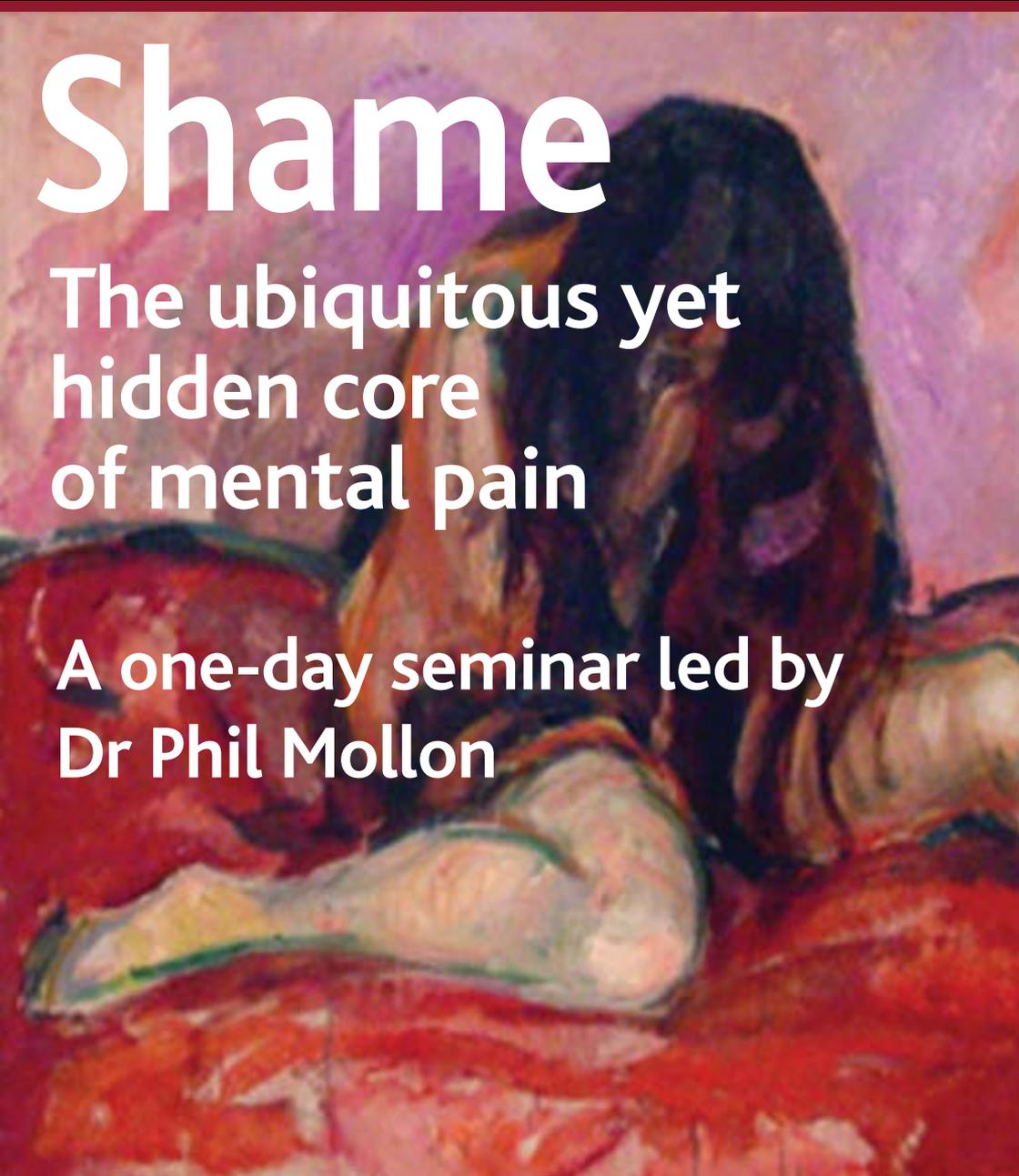


Shame



The ubiquitous yet
hidden core
of mental pain

A one-day seminar led by
Dr Phil Mollon

Saturday 30 October 2010

About this event

Dr Phil Mollon has been described as “a cautious revolutionary, one of those rare honourable thinkers and renaissance figures who rises above the milieu he was trained in to seek answers to difficult questions. Psychologist, psychoanalyst, practitioner of energy therapies, writer and thinker, he illuminates the impact of trauma on the human mind and body while making bridges between groups and subjects who have previously had little contact with each other.” (Dr Valerie Sinason). Phil Mollon’s work became widely recognised following his early writings on shame, narcissism and disruptions to the sense of self. He has continued to elaborate his thinking on these clinical themes, that are so prevalent in the consulting room in shame-based cultures. This one-day seminar will provide psychotherapy practitioners with a thought-provoking and inspiring exploration of how we can help people work through the damaging consequences of this painful affect.

Speaker’s biography

Phil Mollon, PhD is a psychoanalyst and member of the British Psychoanalytical Society. He also trained in psychotherapy at the Tavistock Clinic, and his original profession is clinical psychology. His PhD was a study of shame and disturbances in the sense of self. He has since written extensively on shame, trauma, and the psychology of the self. Amongst his ten books are included *The Fragile Self* [Whurr 1993], *Releasing the Self: the Healing Legacy of Heinz Kohut* [Whurr 2001], and *Shame and Jealousy* [Karnac 2002]. Dr Mollon has worked in the British National Health Service for over 30 years.

Schedule

- 09.30 Registration begins
- 10.00 First session
- 11.30 Coffee
- 12.0 Second session
- 13.00 Lunch
- 14.0 Third session
- 16.00 End

Programme

Part I: Shame is everywhere

The painful effects of shame, and potential shame, are ubiquitous and we do not like to experience this painful affect in ourself or in others. It has been ignored in most psychoanalytic literature - even though the process of seeking help for emotional problems is pervaded with shame. We shall consider how shame begets shame, leading to catastrophic shame spirals, with reference to precursors that are found in very young infants. The psychoanalyst who contributed most to an understanding of this dynamic was Heinz Kohut and we will consider his contribution. The first part of this seminar thus maps the theoretical treatment of shame, and its commonness in our society.

Part II: Shame, the self, the false self, and psychic murder syndrome

Shame is a narcissistic affect, relating to injuries to the sense of self, and it is a core feature of false-self structures. Some forms of false self development involve a pervasive 'psychic murder' - the killing-off of the authentic self. We shall consider this process and how, during therapy, the tentative emergence of authentic aspects of the self are associated with great shame and anxiety and how to work with this.

Part III: Shame in the consulting room

We shall consider cases where shame, and the fear of shame, are the mental pain leading a person to seek psychotherapeutic help. Similarly, we shall consider how the dread of re-experiencing destructive shame inhibits easy disclosure of the areas of deepest vulnerability. Too often, psychoanalytic styles of work may exacerbate shame, entrenching the person in a false-self compliance. We will explore how as psychotherapists we can foster ways of relating to the client that minimise unnecessary shame.

