

**ANAMCARA APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM**  
**YEAR TWO**  
*Program Mentors & Tracks*



**OVERARCHING THEME: CELTIC HEALING TRADITIONS**

Primary Mentor: Fionntulach

Honorary Mentors: Caitlin & John Matthews; Fr. Sean O'Duinn, PhD; John O'Donohue, PhD\*

- a. Living in the Celtic Calendar & the Ceile De Tradition in-depth
- b. Anam Chara discernment for individual and group practices
- c. Celtic Body-Mind-Spirit Healing Practices

**PROCESS DESIGN FOR CEILI DE GROUPS: Rev. Caryl Casbon, MA**

**1) THE SACRED ART OF DISCERNMENT**

Primary Mentors: Prof. Richard Groves; Eileen Heaton, MA; Jack Kennedy, MA

Honorary Mentors: Gerald May, MD, and Mary Groves\*

*“Although secular psychology addresses a great deal about how we come to be the way we are and how we might live more effectively, it offers little in terms of why we exist or how we should use our lives. In this sense psychiatry and spiritual guidance complement each other but ultimately diverge.” Gerald May, MD, PhD, *Care of Mind, Care of Spirit**

The core of every great spiritual tradition is about how love and compassion are practiced in the real world and in everyday relationships. The art of this practice is called spiritual direction. In the recent past, few persons had access to formal spiritual companionship. For the modern “anamcara,” this relationship is the heart of the soul’s journey. This track draws from the wisdom of the world’s great spiritual traditions in terms of learning how to discern life’s most challenging issues through the skills of “holy listening.” While respecting differences in belief and culture, participants will discover marvelous common ground for the perennial quest of the human spirit. By distinguishing the roles of psychiatrist, pastoral counselor and spiritual director, each relationship is appreciated without confusion of roles or relinquishing the primacy of the soul’s secrets for healing and transformation. This track will benefit both those who are interested in becoming spiritual directors as well as offering invaluable insights that can support every primary relationship at home, at work and in the larger community.

**Primary Lessons:**

- a. An Inter-spiritual Training and Certification Course for Spiritual Directors
- b. Applications for Chaplaincy & Faith Community
- c. Comparative Religious Studies motif/Global Mystical Traditions

**Practical Skills:**

- d. In-depth study of parallels between depth psychology and the classical Ignatian tools for spiritual discernment
- e. Discovering and applying various archetypes for spiritual direction and how they help or block spiritual growth
- f. Unique skills for relating the art of discernment for every life venue—secular and sacred
- g. Applying the skills of spiritual discernment for group processes and community life

\* Indicates faculty member who has died since their teachings were recorded; however, their instructions will be an integral part of the program track.

## 2) THE ART OF SPIRITUAL ELDERING

Primary Mentors: Rabbis Nadya & Victor Gross, Maryhelen Zabas, MA

Honorary Mentor: Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi\*

*"For all the earlier phases of my life, I had models to inspire and guide me, but when it came to growing old, there were no good models, codes of behavior, scripts, or social expectations to shape and give meaning to my life."* Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *From Age-ing to Sage-ing*

Successful aging is a challenge in 21<sup>st</sup> Century America. Although increasing numbers of the over-sixty-five population are planning creatively how their post-retirement years will be spent, our society does not as a whole have a model for eldering. Unlike indigenous populations who placed their elders in a leading role in their communities, we have yet to seriously consider how American elders can effectively influence succeeding generations by sharing their wisdom and experience. This track will provide materials to dispel common myths regarding the aging process, will introduce tools which have been used successfully to engage adults in the second half of life and in the eldering process, and will address the most predominant spiritual issues confronting adults as they approach the end of life. Apprentices who select this track will be encouraged to use proposed tools in their own lives and with older adults in familial or congregate settings who will help validate the premises of successful aging.

Primary Lessons:

- a. De-mythologizing age-ing
- b. Tools for 'harvesting' the second half of one's life
- c. Appreciating the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement of the Symphony of Life
- d. Claiming one's responsibility as an Elder

Practical Skills:

- e. Learn various methods for conducting life reviews
- f. Develop techniques for story catching involving spiritual pain
- g. Experience meditation practices which enhance the healing of memories
- h. Discern and create practices for conveying wisdom from generation to generation

## 3) HEALING PRACTICES AT THE END OF LIFE

Primary Mentors: Drs. Marlis Beier and Kevin Dieter with Stan Tomandl, MA, & Ann Jacob, BS

Honorary Mentors: Roshi Joan Halifax and Ira Byock, MD

*"I once asked a man who knew he was dying what he needed above all in those who were caring for him. He said, 'For someone to look as if they are trying to understand me.' Indeed, it is impossible to understand fully another person, but I never forgot that he did not ask for success but only that someone should care enough to try."* Dame Cecily Saunders 1918-2005. Founder of the Modern Hospice movement

Healing Practices at the End of Life is a profound training to enhance being with ourselves, the people we serve who are dying, their families and caregivers. This track will help apprentices translate Anamcara principles into practice. The human life journey has numerous challenges and thresholds. We offer practical spiritual skills and awareness tools for use during end of life and other transitions. Apprentices will have an opportunity to explore more deeply coma communication, story and metaphor, creating sacred space, reclaiming the dying process as spiritual work (and other specific practices). We will teach through lecture, resource materials, journal writing, and experiential exercises, with time for

questions, close relationship with a mentor and collective learning discussions. Sessions include more in-depth practice understanding altered states of consciousness, using poetry and writing your own, practice bringing spiritual presence into the medical setting and continuing the greatest value – facing your own demons. Enriching your ability to be direct, compassionate, clear, attentive and connecting to another's nature and needs, you can expect to work with real-life situations, heartfelt experiences, and the potential for furthering deeply meaningful and relieving care, as an Anamcara Apprentice. The content will have value for professional and lay caregivers

**Primary lessons:**

- a. Weaving together the medical, psycho-social and spiritual dimensions of care
- b. In-depth mentorship for communicating with people in altered states of consciousness
- c. Developing our anamcara presence with persons during all major life transitions

**Practical Skills:**

- a. Facilitating conversations about death and other essential real-life situations
- b. On medications: Learning about appropriate times and management of medication during the dying process
- c. Skills for working more effectively with family systems and cultural diversity
- d. Enhancing communication using non-verbal signals: how to read positive and negative feedback, find insight in delirium, follow and respond to end-of-life breath patterns
- e. Interact usefully during communication dilemmas by learning to use your personal reactions, intuitions and synchronicities in service of the spirit in the moment
- f. Specific practices using "nature to connect with human nature"
- g. Practice with the use of metaphor (poetry and psalms) in transition
- h. A month using Fintan's Blessing for guiding self and others to "lean into the pain"
- i. Practice creating a sacred space for self/others anywhere - including medical settings
- j. Discussion and practicalities of reclaiming the human journey during dying in medical settings

#### 4) SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF GRIEF AND LOSS

Primary Mentor: Tom Golden, LCSW

Honorary Mentors: Wendy Howard, PhD

*"Long after the initial loss has passed and the period of grieving has ended, an unattended sorrow lingers within us accounting for a host of physical, emotional and spiritual maladies... by courageously confronting this sorrow with mercy and compassion, we can travel a smoother path to healing the heart."*  
Stephen Levine, from *Unattended Sorrow: Recovering from Loss and Reviving the Heart*

Grief is an essential part of life and of our spiritual development. As Rumi so wisely wrote, "Grief is the garden of the heart." Sadly, this garden is drastically undervalued in our culture and this track will bring to life the nature of grief in ourselves, in others, and as it relates to our Spiritual Path. We will be observing the nature of grief and, importantly, what moves us through the grieving process. This movement requires us to find some degree of safety and once we find this we proceed to "tell our story" from that safety. We will focus on how we all differ in our choices of safe places and even more importantly how we differ in the ways we tell our story. We will see how the Enneastyle, whether we are male or female, cultural influences and many other factors have a marked impact on the way we work with grief. We will be focusing on how we as healers can help others find safety and how we can help facilitate the telling of the story. An oversimplified but highly accurate description of this process could be summed up in two words "listen and love." When we can listen and love good things happen. We will be discussing the issues of walking the fine line between compassion and detachment and how both are essential.

**Primary lessons:**

- a. Exploring grief through physical, cognitive, behavioral and spiritual dimensions
- b. The effect of our gender in dealing with bereavement issues
- c. Dealing with the many deaths of life in more constructive, life-giving ways
- d. Working with our own losses to support our own healing and working with others in a fresh and alive way

**Practical Skills:**

- a. Understanding Grief through Alan Wolfelt's Reconciliation theory of grief and loss
- b. Studying and applying the evolutionary psychology of how men and women deal with threat, loss and mortality
- c. Applying practical lessons from the world's great spiritual traditions regarding grief and loss
- d. Mentorship into a variety of clinical 'best practices' for grief and loss
- e. Learning practices of breath and movement to help with somatic grief
- f. Working with children and adolescents in healing ways
- g. Practicing self-care skills so that we can be more present for ourselves, our clients and in personal relationships

**5) SOUL OF WELLNESS: Who are you? What do you want?**

Primary Mentor: Dean Sharpe, MD

Guest Mentor: Marlis Beier, MD

Honorary Mentors: Miranda Macpherson, Frank Ostaseski, Prof. Richard Groves

*"Everything changes and ends. Not everything goes according to plan. Life is not fair. Pain is part of living. People are not always loving and loyal." David Richo in The Five Things We Cannot Change: And the Happiness We Find by Embracing Them*

Years ago, our answering machine message played: "You have reached the Sharpe/Beier question machine and there are only two questions...Who are you? And what do you want? Lest you think these trivial questions, most people go to their grave having answered neither one." Given this reality, we still rail against the Universe and create suffering for ourselves. If healing is simply "coming to right relationship with what is" or "regaining our lost connection", why is it so hard? This course will be an exploration of this topic of healing through lecture, reading, poetry, music, journaling, visualization, working individually and with partners, holistic inquiry, and group process. We will discover that everything in our lives is something we have created, promoted or allowed, and that "it is never about the other person." We will have the opportunity to explore the relationship between the extraordinary work of interpersonal neurobiology, the personal growth movement and the deep spiritual realizations humanity has discovered over the millennia. Lest we descend in this exploration into ompheloscepsis (navel gazing), we will investigate these topics against the very real issues of spiritual pain in human existence.

**Primary Lessons:**

- a. Consideration of exquisite empathy and its components of self-knowledge, self-compassion, mindful/dual awareness, and contemplative awareness
- b. Exploration of mindfulness as a daily practice
- c. Examination of multiple psychological models, i.e., resilience, mind traps, the interpersonal gap, etc.
- d. Standing in the "tragic gap"

**Practical Skills:**

- e. Find the connections between relational neurobiology, psychological knowledge and spiritual wisdom
- f. Develop a deeper understanding of the human condition and our relationship to pain and suffering
- g. Strengthen the ability to be present with another's suffering
- h. Grow in self-compassion and self-awareness in order to be compassionate with others
- i. Develop mindfulness and dual awareness
- j. Deepen the ability to coach/facilitate others and self when suffering

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