

Earth Circles

COUNSELING CENTER

Compassionate Psychotherapy

The Bay Area has long been a pioneer of alternative and progressive psychology. It's a movement that Oakland's Earth Circles Counseling Center is proud to be part of. Explains Earth Circles' Executive Director and Marriage and Family Therapist Yvonne Beyer: "Psychology is going toward experiencing therapy through the body's memory. That's the big explosion," she explained.

"At Earth Circles, we take a holistic approach to treating our clients, which includes a somatic and spiritual focus."

What Beyer describes is an addition to talk therapy — in which patients discuss how they feel. Now therapists are also using body-oriented therapy, including Holotropic Breath Work, co-developed by Mill Valley resident Stan Grof, Hakomi, Somatic Experiencing, and many others.

Earth Circles opened in 1973 as a non-profit that focused on the educational component of the environment. In the 1980s, the center reorganized as a non-denominational religious organization with a focus on New Age spirituality, violence prevention, and psychotherapy.

In the 1990s, Earth Circles reorganized once again, this time as a public benefit non-profit that included more inclusive psychotherapy options. Ever since, the center has provided holistic psychotherapy to the whole community as well as an MFT (Marriage and Family Therapist) intern training program.

At Earth Circles since 1994, Beyer started as an intern after receiving her MA from JFK, focusing on Somatic Psychology. Her goal is to run a psychotherapy center that remains as current and accessible to the community as possible. "We have something special here, because we treat a range

of people, from full fee to low fee and Medi-Cal," Beyer said.

Beyer's campaign to become a Medi-Cal provider with the County of Alameda has grown the center's client diversity. Granted this contract in 1997, Earth Circles provides services to individuals and families with Medi-Cal and through CPS. Now the center's staff sees many of the East Bay's most vulnerable residents, such as those

with severe mental illness, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, domestic violence, trauma and more. They also see many individuals under the Victims of Crime funding.

This diversity of clients makes a rich, complete training ground for Earth Circles' interns to prepare for licensure. The center is one of

the few training programs in the area that specializes in alternative and progressive psychology. Once licensed, interns may bring most of the clients with them to launch their own private practice careers. Most interns come from colleges and universities around the Bay Area including JFK and CIIS. All spend a year or more at Earth Circles to see clients, attend trainings and case presentations, and become adept in their clinical preparations for final exams.

With Earth Circles' sliding scale fees, Medi-Cal, and the intern-training program, the center serves the community with compassionate, cutting edge psychotherapy. Explained Beyer: "I just don't believe you have to be rich to receive excellent psychotherapy."

Now thanks to Earth Circles, she's absolutely right.



For More Information

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