

# **A FAMILY SYSTEMS APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS: THEORY AND PRACTICE**

***Presenter: Christopher Burnett, Psy. D.***

**Friday, February 14, 2025 ♦ 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Nova Southeastern University Alvin Sherman Library  
Adolfo and Marisela Cotilla Gallery (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)  
3100 Ray Ferrero Jr. Blvd.  
Fort Lauderdale, Davie, FL 33314**

**This workshop will begin by introducing the systems thinking concepts underlying a family systems clinical framework. Then the presenter will present an overview of the family systems theory of Dr. Murray Bowen, who developed his theory of family functioning while working with the families of schizophrenic patients at the Menninger Clinic and NIMH. Applications of this theory to clinical cases will be discussed and contrasted with other major approaches.**

*Level of Curriculum Content: Advanced*

## ABOUT THE PRESENTER

**Christopher Burnett, Psy.D.** is an Associate Professor of Human Relationship Systems in the Couples and Family Therapy department of the Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine at Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. He has been at the university since 1993, and has been involved with Bowen Family Systems Theory for over 40 years. He utilizes the human relationship systems principles embedded in Bowen Family Systems theory in both his supervision of clinical practice as well as his organizational consulting business. In his time at NSU, he has served as a dissertation chair on over 100 student research projects, and more than 50 of these have been Bowen Family Systems themed projects. He is associated with both the Western Pennsylvania Family Center and the Florida Family Research Network, which are centers of Bowen Family Systems theory research and dissemination.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- Analyze the fundamental ways that “models of the world” shape clinician’s perspectives and the practices that follow from them
- Describe the concept of Chronic Anxiety as understood from a Bowen Family Systems theory perspective
- Assess Bowen’s concept of multigenerational transmission process as it applies to serious mental illness and its treatment

## PROGRAM AGENDA

9:00am – 9:15am	Welcome, introduction, and program overview
9:15am – 10:00am	Introduction to a systems thinking conceptualization of theory and research
10:00am – 10:45am	Contrasting Models of Serious Mental Illness: From “micro” to “macro”
10:45am – 11:00am	Bowen’s development of his theory as an alternative to conventional psychoanalytic practice
11:00am – 11:30am	Principles of Bowen’s Family Systems Theory
11:30am – 12:00pm	Implications of a Family Systems approach for clinical practice and practitioners

**For additional information on continuing education policies, please visit our web site at <http://psychology.nova.edu/ce>**

## CONTINUING EDUCATION INFORMATION

**Psychologists:** Nova Southeastern University's College of Psychology is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. Nova Southeastern University maintains responsibility for this program and its content.

**Clinical social workers, mental health counselors, and marriage and family therapists:** Nova Southeastern University's College of Psychology is approved by the state of Florida's Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Mental Health Counseling to offer continuing education. Provider number: BAP# 330, Exp. 03/31/25.

**School psychologists:** Nova Southeastern University's College of Psychology is approved by the state of Florida's Board of Medical Therapies/Psychology, Office of School Psychology, to offer continuing education. Provider number: SCE# 11, Exp. 11/30/25.

Nova Southeastern University's College of Psychology is approved by the National Association of School Psychologists to offer continuing education for school psychologists. Nova Southeastern University maintains responsibility for this program and its content. Provider# 1024

**Professional counselors:** Nova Southeastern University's College of Psychology has been approved by NBCC as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 4548. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. Nova Southeastern University's College of Psychology is solely responsible for all aspects of the programs.

**All mental health professionals will receive three (3) continuing education credits for the workshop. Full attendance is required. No partial credit will be awarded. Check your licensing state's rules and regulations for more information regarding your continuing education requirements.**

Nova Southeastern University is committed to making its programs accessible to all prospective attendees. Let us know if you have specific requirements due to a disability.

## ABOUT THE SPONSOR

Nova Southeastern University's College of Psychology is dedicated to providing high-quality training, education, research, and service its students and to the community. The college offers two American Psychological Association (APA)-accredited doctoral programs (Ph.D. and Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology); a specialist and a doctoral program in school psychology; master's degree programs in counseling clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, substance abuse counseling, and applied behavioral analysis), forensic psychology, experimental psychology, and general psychology; and bachelor's degree programs in psychology and behavioral neuroscience. The College of Psychology has two APA accredited doctoral internship programs, the South Florida Consortium Internship Program and the Psychology Services Center Internship program.

## NOTICES OF ACCREDITATION, MEMBERSHIP, AND NONDISCRIMINATION

Nova Southeastern University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097; Telephone number 404-679-4501) to award bachelor's, master's, educational specialist, and doctoral degrees. The university is chartered by the State of Florida. The College of Psychology Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association. The College of Psychology Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association. The College of Psychology has two APA accredited doctoral internship programs, the South Florida Consortium Internship Program and the Psychology Services Center Internship program. Questions related to the programs' accredited status should be directed to the Commission on Accreditation: Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation, American Psychological Association, 750 1st Street, NE, Washington, D.C., 20002-4242, Phone: (202) 336-5979, Email: [apaaccred@apa.org](mailto:apaaccred@apa.org), Web: [www.apa.org/ed/accreditation](http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation). The college's master's degree program in school counseling and specialist program in school psychology are approved by the Florida Department of Education. In addition, the specialist and doctoral programs in school psychology holds the designation of National Recognition by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP).

Nova Southeastern University admits students of any race, color, sex, age, nondisqualifying disability, religion or creed, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school, and does not discriminate in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.