



Course Syllabus: Becoming 401

From Nurse to Therapist: Foundations of Advanced Nursing Practice in Psychotherapy

Course Overview

From Nurse to Therapist: Foundations of Advanced Nursing Practice in Psychotherapy introduces registered nurses to the essential principles of trauma-informed psychotherapy. Over three weeks, you'll explore how trauma shapes the body, mind, and spirit, and you'll be introduced to Narrative Therapy, Somatic Therapy, Internal Family Systems (IFS), and the Becoming Method®—all within the framework of Ontario's psychotherapy guidelines. This course is designed for nurses who are curious about expanding into psychotherapeutic practice, providing both inspiration and clarity as you consider the RN–Psychotherapist pathway.

Course Description

Becoming 401 *From Nurse to Therapist: Foundations of Advanced Nursing Practice in Psychotherapy* is a concise, three-week introductory course that supports nurses in making the transition from traditional nursing roles to psychotherapeutic practice. Each week blends live online teaching with reflective exercises and group discussion, helping you understand how trauma manifests across physical, psychological, relational, and spiritual dimensions. You'll gain foundational knowledge of Narrative Therapy, Somatic Therapy, Internal Family Systems (IFS), and the Becoming Method®, and learn how these holistic approaches to trauma recovery differ from conventional talk therapy.

In the final session, you'll receive practical guidance on Ontario's psychotherapy regulations, including the principles of Safe and Effective Use of Self (SEUS) and the steps required to practise psychotherapy legally and ethically as a nurse. By the end of the course, you'll have a clear understanding of holistic trauma-informed psychotherapeutic care, greater confidence in your evolving professional identity, and a sense of direction for the next stage of your learning—whether that continues through the Becoming Institute's RN–Psychotherapist Credentialing Program or other aligned opportunities that nurture your growing passion for psychotherapy.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

1. **Recognize** how trauma affects individuals holistically—across physical, psychological, relational, and spiritual dimensions.
2. **Compare and contrast** four trauma-informed modalities—Narrative Therapy, Somatic Therapy, Internal Family Systems (IFS), and the Becoming Method®—and explain how they contribute to healing beyond symptom management.



3. **Apply** an introductory understanding of the therapeutic process and the principles of Safe and Effective Use of Self (SEUS) to their evolving role as nurses in psychotherapeutic practice.
4. **Interpret** key regulatory guidelines from the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) and the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO) as they relate to psychotherapy and the RN–Psychotherapist pathway.
5. **Identify** clear next steps toward a professional specialization in psychotherapy, including pathways for advanced training such as the Becoming Institute’s RN–Psychotherapist Credentialing Program.

Course Goals

Deepen Understanding of Trauma and Healing

Equip nurses with a holistic perspective on trauma and recovery, expanding awareness beyond symptom management toward practices that restore connection, resilience, and wholeness.

Support Transition into Psychotherapeutic Practice

Guide nurses in bridging their existing clinical expertise with psychotherapeutic principles—cultivating presence, self-awareness, and regulatory clarity as they explore the RN–Psychotherapist role.

Strengthen Professional Identity and Next Steps

Inspire participants to envision themselves as future psychotherapist-nurses, fostering confidence in their evolving professional identity and clarity on pathways for advanced training and specialization.

Course Instructor

- Dr. Joan Samuels-Dennis, Ph.D, RN-Psychotherapist
- Contact: dean@becominginstitute.ca, 647-265-0804

Course Textbooks

- Baranowsky, A. B., & Gentry, J. E. (2023). *Trauma practice: A cognitive behavioral somatic therapy*. Hogrefe Publishing.
- van der Kolk, B. A. (2015). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Penguin Books.

Relevant Resources

- [CRPO Standards of Practice](#)
- [CRPO Entry to Practice Guidelines](#)
- [CNO PRACTICE GUIDELINE: Independent Practice](#)

Course Schedule

Week	Module	Resources	Assessment(s)	CRPO Entry to Practice Competency
Week 1	Introduction to Trauma & Holistic Trauma Responses	<p>Required Readings: van der Kolk, B. A. (2015). <i>The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma</i>. Penguin Books—Chapter 11, 12</p> <p>Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., & Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. <i>American journal of preventive medicine</i>, 14(4), 245-258.</p>	Weekly Reflection and Discussion: Week 1 (due the following Thursday at 11:59PM EST)	<p>1.1 Integrate a theory of human psychological functioning</p> <p>1.2 Work within a framework based upon established psychotherapeutic theory</p> <p>1.3 Integrate knowledge of comparative psychotherapy relevant to practice</p> <p>1.5 Integrate knowledge of human and cultural diversity</p>
Week 2	Holistic Approaches to Trauma Recovery	<p>Required Readings: Samuels-Dennis, J. (n.d.). <i>The Becoming Method®: Evolving how we understand and treat traumatic responses to adverse life experiences</i> [Unpublished Manuscript]. Becoming Institute Inc.</p> <p>Baranowsky, A. B., & Gentry, J. E. (2023). Phase 0: Foundation of the Trauma Practice model. In <i>Trauma practice: A cognitive behavioral somatic therapy</i> (4th ed., pp. 9-19). Hogrefe Publishing.</p>	Weekly Reflection and Discussion: Week 1 (due the following Thursday at 11:59PM EST)	<p>1.1 Integrate a theory of human psychological functioning</p> <p>1.2 Work within a framework based upon established psychotherapeutic theory</p> <p>1.3 Integrate knowledge of comparative psychotherapy relevant to practice</p> <p>1.5 Integrate knowledge of human and cultural diversity</p> <p>4.3 Ensure safe and effective use of self in the therapeutic relationship</p> <p>4.5 Structure and facilitate the therapeutic process</p> <p>5.1 Remain current with professional literature</p>

Week 3	Professional Integration of the RN-Psychotherapist Role	<p>Required Readings: CRPO Standards of Practice CRPO Entry to Practice Guidelines CNO PRACTICE GUIDELINE: Independent Practice</p> <p>Welling, H. (2005). The Intuitive Process: The Case of Psychotherapy. <i>Journal of Psychotherapy Integration</i>. 15(1). 19-47.</p> <p>Video: Accessing intuition as a tool: your internal guidance system</p>	<p>Weekly Reflection and Discussion: Week 8 (due the following Thursday at 11:59PM EST)</p> <p>Self-Care Wheel Self-Care Checklist</p>	<p>1.1 Integrate a theory of human psychological functioning</p> <p>1.2 Work within a framework based upon established psychotherapeutic theory</p> <p>1.3 Integrate knowledge of comparative psychotherapy relevant to practice</p>
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Assessments

Assessment	Weight	Due Date
Module 1 Assignment: Integrative Reflection	33%	Thursday at 11:59PM (EST) after Week 1
Module 2 Assignment: Model Attunement Reflection	33%	Thursday at 11:59PM (EST) after Week 2
Module 3 Assignment: My Identity as an RN-Psychotherapist Reflection	33%	Thursday at 11:59PM (EST) after Week 3