

28th International Conference on

PSYCHIATRY AND MENTAL HEALTH

November 20-21, 2017 Melbourne, Australia

The promise of empathy for the relief of suffering: A hermeneutic and mindful exploration of a promise often implied, sometimes wanted and occasionally not needed**Allan Donsky**University of Calgary, Canada
Mount Royal University, Canada

It is given that empathy is a worthy and necessary part of any healing practice and perhaps nowhere more heartfelt than in the field of mental health. This is taken for granted and never questioned. Yet, who decides if empathy is always needed and where should it live? When was it promised and by whom? This presentation will explore the virtuous and highly treasured goal of relieving suffering, both for oneself and others. With the clarity that a mindful awareness of our own necessary fictions can bring, we will discuss the construct of and the various facets of empathy. The initial promise of empathy, who some would argue is at the core of caring, will be examined from the moment of its arising, through the desire grounded in the rescue fantasy of healers, to the ultimate realization that suffering itself may offer its own paths to healing. Is it possible that empathy is already embedded in suffering? With a hermeneutic lens we may see that some of our caring is a fictional construct and that suffering and empathy have their own relationship, beyond our promises. This presentation will include quotes from persons who willingly suffered their humanity and found relief in completed suicide.

Biography

Allan Donsky is formerly a Pediatrician, practiced as a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist for 22 years. The current focus of his work is capacity building and enhancing mental health using mindfulness as the foundation. He is a Consultant Psychiatrist with the Healthy Minds/Healthy Children (HMHC) program in Calgary and a Core Committee Member of the Alberta Health Services Addiction and Mental Health Strategic Clinical Network. He has delivered presentations and led mindfulness workshops with educators and administrators, at teacher conventions, medical conferences, psychiatry residents, post graduate university students, Wellness Center staff at the University of Calgary, the City of Calgary Fire Department Leadership Team and Calgary Catholic Immigrant Society.

allandonsky@shaw.ca