

**Saint Paul University and The  
Society for Pastoral Counselling Research, and  
The Northeast Ontario Region of the Canadian Association for  
Spiritual Care**

**Call for Papers and Posters**

**Touch in Counselling and Spiritual Care**

**May 23-24, 2014  
Saint Paul University, Ottawa**

Touch is crucial for life and for secure attachments. The literature on touch suggests that most professionals know its healing power but are cautious to bringing touch into their practice. What are the possible and positive aspects to touch in counselling and spiritual care? What are the ethics?

This conference and workshops seeks to treat critically and comprehensively the area of human touch: its biology, psychology, spirituality, and its significance in the helping relationships. We would like to approach three significant themes surrounding the issue of touch.

First, we would like to offer an empirically- and theoretically-based understanding of touch and its role in the human experience. We will include works that offer different perspectives on touch, examining it from the biological, psychological, and spiritual/philosophical dimensions.

Second, we would like to include a variety of works examining the role of touch in the helping professions from an ethical and clinical perspective. A range of such issues could become part of the therapeutic and spiritual care conversation such as inter-partner touch, animal assisted counselling / touch, touch in individual, couple and family counselling, touch in education and training, as well as the more complex and aversive forms of touch causing harm, such as abuse involving physical touch or contact.

Thirdly, we would like to specifically treat the issue of professional boundaries when the touch is between the professional delivering care and service recipients. For example, what is appropriate and inappropriate touch in context of psychotherapy, spiritual care, palliative care, counselling.

We invite submissions in **English and French** that examine the empirical, theoretical, and clinical dimensions of these themes. Clinical implications and/or a case study would be helpful to make touch real.

## **RECOMMENDED TOPICS**

This conference will be interdisciplinary. We welcome submissions from authors in a range of disciplines, including but not limited to psychology, counselling, spiritual care, nursing, social work and sociology. We are particularly interested in submissions addressing the following issues:

- The biology and neuroscience of touch
- The psychology of attachment and touch
- The religious / philosophical dimension of touch
- Touch in psychotherapy, and other helping professions
- Vulnerable populations and children
- Inter-partner touch in couple counselling,
- Touch in spiritual and palliative care
- The ethics of touch
- Touch in psychotherapy education and training

## **SUBMISSION**

Prospective presenters are invited to **submit one page, including a 100 word abstract, and a brief outline of the workshop including major headings no later than February 28, 2014.**

Early submissions are encouraged. Abstracts submissions should be accompanied by the primary author's curriculum vitae. Submissions will be peer reviewed. Presenters will be notified of the success of their submission no later than March 15, 2014.

There is every hope that selected / refereed presentations from this conference will be collected into an edited book on **Touch in Counselling and Spiritual Care**. You are also welcome to think about your presentation as a chapter in this book. Please indicate one of the following options in your submissions:

- My abstract is intended as a workshop for the conference only
- My abstract is intended as a workshop at the conference AND as a chapter for the book.

Presentations and chapters should be written in language accessible to diverse audiences, including counselling professionals, spiritual care professionals, researchers, service providers, and students. It is recommended that authors do not use highly-specialized language accessible only to colleagues in their discipline. If you are thinking about submitting a chapter for the book, it should be approximately 5000-6000 words in length, including references. Book chapter will be selected after the May conference.

**Posters need to be approximately 3 x 4 feet, and will be posted all day Friday. There are prizes for posters with values of \$100, \$100, \$50, \$50, \$50.**

Email your conference presentation / abstract to [mrovers@ustpaul.ca](mailto:mrovers@ustpaul.ca) c/o Martin Rovers

I ask that you pass this announcement on to all your professional colleagues.

Sincerely,

Martin Rovers

SPCR Conference Chair