

Therapists as Agents of Hope

Our Role in a Game of Thrones World

WILLIAM DOHERTY

In the toxic polarization of our society, most of us try to stay focused on our traditional work of personal healing, trying to steer clear of the struggles in our wider culture. But if “winter is coming,” a more proactive alternative is to expand our conception of psychotherapy to include building capacity for people to live in a pluralistic democracy that doesn’t rely on “saviors” of the Left or Right. How can we enhance our impact in a Game of Thrones world, where red tribes battle blue tribes, democracy is in retreat, and climate change threatens us all? Explore a larger vision for our role as therapists. You’ll discover how to:

- Identify the connection between your current clinical work and democratic renewal
- Develop skills in bridging gaps between groups who see themselves as opposing the political “other”
- Practice depolarization skills in your own life and work
- Connect with organizations and initiatives where you can use your knowledge and skills for the public good

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Learning Objectives:

1. Evaluate how your current clinical work can enhance democratic renewal, thereby improving client functioning in the community.
2. Develop skills in bridging gaps between groups who see themselves as the political “other.”
3. Assess how to apply depolarization skills in your own work with clients and within the community.

Outline:

1. Sources of today’s political polarization
2. How this polarization affects communities
3. How it affects clients and therapists
4. Strategies for helping clients depolarize in their own relationships
5. Strategies for helping communities depolarize

References:

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