

International Reminiscence and Life Review Conference 2009
Pre-conference Intensive (1:00 – 4:00 PM)

"Guided Autobiography: Enriching lives and enhancing mental activity in the second half of life"

James E. Birren, Ph.D.
Cheryl M. Svensson, Ph.D.

Description:

Guided Autobiography uses life review techniques to assist middle aged and older persons as they move through transitions in the later stages of life. The purpose is to assist individuals to recall and organize their life stories. The process includes memory priming questions based on the common themes of life, individual writing assignments on the major life themes, reading and sharing the life stories. Current research indicates that the features of Guided Autobiography that are statistically significant are sharing, reading, and listening to other's stories. This session will focus on the following components of Guided Autobiography: Content, process, and outcome.

Objectives:

1. To review the principles and structure of the Guided Autobiography method and understand how this relates to the outcome.
2. To learn the Guided Autobiography process and explore how this can be adapted to various venues.
3. To explore the outcomes of Guided Autobiography on older adult participants.

Presenters:



James Birren is a living legend in the field of Gerontology. He was the founding director of the Ethel Percy Andrus Gerontology Center at the University of Southern California in 1965. In 1989 Jim moved to UCLA where he remained as the associate Director of the UCLA Center on Aging until he retired in 2003. Jim continues to teach the Guided Autobiography method and to facilitate groups. He is currently teaching a graduate class in autobiographical studies at USC.

James E. Birren, Ph.D.

JBirren@mednet.ucla.edu

647 Toyopa Dr.

Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

310/454-2005



Cheryl Svensson has been involved in the field of aging since the 1970s. She graduated from the first Masters in Gerontology program at USC in 1977 and completed her Ph.D. from the University of Lund, Sweden. Cheryl works closely with James Birren to develop and expand the Autobiographical studies program.

Cheryl Svensson, Ph.D.

chsvensson@adelphia.net

241 Evening Canyon Rd.

Corona del Mar, CA 92625

949/640-0451