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Disaster Response

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Fall Lunch Meetings

Date: Friday, November 9, 2012
Topic: Handling Overt Conflict in Couples Therapy
Speaker: Enrico Gnautati, PhD

Date: Friday, December 14, 2012
Topic: How Psychoanalysis is Like a Roach Motel: Better Termination through Better Metaphors
Speaker: Christina Emanuel, MFT, PsyD



FALL CHANGES!!

Brand new location!
Brand new Friday!
We will gather at
the WOMEN'S CITY CLUB
dining room at
160 N. Oakland Ave.

Meetings will be regularly be held on the
SECOND FRIDAY of each month.
(All costs will remain the same.)



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Colleagues,

Donald Miller, in his book, "A Million Miles in a Thousand Years" states that the "structure of a good story involves a character who wants something and overcomes conflict to get it." Miller goes on to say that, "the stuff of a good story is a character that faces his/her greatest fears," and, "the point of life is character transformation." I have found myself pondering these words a lot recently, and I'm profoundly struck with the narratives all of us are trying to create with the work we do. It really is true, isn't it, that the folks who walk into our offices are experiencing painful narratives? Each client is hoping to create a more meaningful "story" for him or herself. Blessings on each of you as you toil with them, attempting to create a more meaningful, sacred narrative.

Speaking of trying to create a good narrative... A recent legislative Meet-&-Greet with Senator Ed Hernandez was an absolutely wonderful event, and truly monumental for our chapter. On Friday, September 28, at McCormick & Schmick's Restaurant here in Pasadena, twenty-five SGVPA members--representing a broad array of specialties, jobs, and experience--were able to have a very pertinent conversation with the Senator. As Chair of the Health Committee, Senator Hernandez is uniquely situated in the State Legislature and will be introducing legislation in the years to come, which will affect every aspect of mental health care. Folks, we CANNOT turn a blind eye to issues of advocacy. *If we're not at the table, then we're going to be on the menu!*

I'm so proud of those of us that were there (even CPA's Amanda Levy, Director of Governmental

(continued on p. 2)

Affairs, joined us from Sacramento). A special thanks goes out to our Governmental Affairs Chair, Dr. Linda Nelson, for helping to put the event together.

Speaking of advocacy, the Board of Directors is launching a “5-for-20” campaign to raise money for CPA’s PAC. Each board member has promised to ask at least five SGVPA members to donate \$20 to the PAC. I know, I know... in the current political climate it’s easy to become jaded and cynical, wondering if politicians really do have our best interests in mind. *But again-- if we’re not at the table, we’ll likely be on the menu!* Our only reasonable option is to develop relationships with the legislators who may be holding our future in his or her hands. It’s just a fact and CPA’s PAC enables us to create relationships with specific politicians who seem willing to lend an ear to our particular interests in the mental health field. Please consider giving as various board members reach out to you .

Sincerely,

Stephanie Law, PsyD
President

Dr. Stephanie Law can be reached at Stephanie@drstephanielaw.com.

C’mon Psychologists! Join the Five for Twenty Campaign!

By Linda Nelson, PhD
Governmental Affairs Chair



When I first became your GAC rep the term *PAC* was somewhat a mystery to me. Yes, I knew it stood for Political Action Committee; and I recalled seeing a little box with the word PAC after it on my CPA renewal form... But

what does PAC really stand for? And where does the money we contribute actually *go* when we check off the PAC box?

The PAC is the mechanism for political change in California. The PAC is the means by which we can advocate for the interests of our profession. The PAC is how CPA fights for us in Sacramento, where laws and policies that affect us are routinely being made.

In a competitive mental health field, our profession as Psychologists is always vulnerable. We compete with many other groups of mental health professionals: Certified Psychometrists, LCSWs, MFTs, MDs, etc. Some of these may duplicate--or appear to duplicate--the services psychologists provide, and go on to sell them to the public, and to insurance companies, at much lower rates than doctoral level psychologists do.

With the phase by phase implementation of the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”), the future of healthcare is changing, and it is changing fast. *Exchanges*, as they are called in healthcare reform language, will presumably want to contract with the lowest rate providers. Psychologists are not low rate providers compared to Master’s level psychotherapists, and according to the CPT codes, our

services are equivalent and interchangeable. We are going to need to be proactive if we want to have a chance of protecting our unique scope of practice!

Mental health is often the first benefit to be sacrificed in these tough times—even though mental health care is even more critical during economic stress. The PAC ensures that we, as a profession, are not forgotten. More importantly, the PAC has a stake in making sure our patients’ needs and best interests are not forgotten.

In order to increase support for the PAC, the SGVPA Board is launching a “5 for 20” Campaign. Beginning November 1, the members of the Board will be individually contacting you, asking for contributions to the PAC in amount of at least \$20 (hopefully higher). Contributing is easy, and can be done by a click of the mouse... Board members will explain how to do it when they call you.

Psychology students from LACPA started a “5 for 5” campaign to raise funds for the PAC last year: Each sought out five students to contribute \$5. Currently, our Student Rep John Nelson is spearheading a similar campaign among SGVPA students. Now it’s our turn! Our chapter is taking the lead as the first in CPA history to initiate this type of campaign among Psychologists, on behalf of Psychologists! Each Board member is seeking at least five colleagues to donate at least \$20.

C’mon Psychologists... Let’s show the students--and even other chapters--how to effectively support our profession! When you get the call for the Five for Twenty Campaign, please donate as much as you can to the PAC!

Dr. Linda Nelson can be contacted at lnelson@mednet.ucla.edu.



On Embracing Theoretical Diversity

By Ellen Miller Kwon, PsyD, Diversity Liaison
and
Suzanne Lake, PsyD, Past President



It is the winter of 2009, as Otto Kernberg sits across from Thomas Szasz--two giants in the field of psychology--debating how narcissism should be conceptualized. Each is deeply involved in personality theorizing, and demonstrates immense passion for his particular view. It is clear that they wildly disagree. Szasz declares that the medical nosology of personality pathology reduces psychological phenomena to brain function, and casts as mental disease those aspects of behavior that are simply unacceptable or distasteful to the mainstream society. Kernberg, then working on revising the DSM, counters vehemently that psychopathology could and should be defined medically. Despite the brilliance and deserved high standing of each theorist in the mental health community, the unescapable impression left by their contentious debate is rampant disdain for each other's perspective, if not ad hominem contempt.*

Internecine contempt for differing points of view in our field is depressingly common. Beginning with Freud's theoretical breakthroughs concerning the unconscious and the significance of drives, proceeding to Ego Psychology, Object Relations, then Infant Research, on to Attachment Theory, Intersubjectivity, the Cognitive Behavioral paradigm, and on and on, warring camps tend to stake out their grounds and vigorously propound the superiority of their conceptualization above all the others. In both public and private conversations, followers or one or another perspective unabashedly argue for the primacy of theirs over others'. And not infrequently, these conversations devolve into denigrating the opposing or alternative theoretical viewpoints, and even disdaining their adherents as well.

It is curious and paradoxical that while psychotherapists more or less universally promote respect, appreciation, and understanding of others as desirable and healthy models for emotionally troubled individuals, they can also direct such narrow, disrespectful attitudes towards each other when it comes to theoretical divergences. In ways, it is analogous to religious folks who adhere to creeds of interpersonal love, tolerance, and understanding, while at the same time attacking other creeds and their believers. Perhaps it was such observations as these that led Paul Vitz to write about "psychology as religion," and Jerome Frank to opine that

"psychotherapy is not primarily an applied science. In some ways, it more resembles a religion."

From another perspective, tensions and even hostilities between diverse factions within psychology can be seen as analogous to tensions between countries, or as a kind of tribalism that thrives on the conviction of one's own superiority, and by extension, the inferiority of others. But the truth is that in virtually every case, a psychological school of thought that endures is based on some brilliant person's discovery of something that has demonstrated power to help patients achieve healthier functioning. While it is sometimes the case that attempts at integrating new theories with apparently divergent theories, or at least finding common ground, are made, it is just as common that newer theorists and their followers make their case by attacking others' work. "I'm right, and you're wrong," or, "You may be right about some things, but I'm right about everything," paraphrases how some of these promote their perspectives, evoking disturbing echos of bratty children fighting in the sandbox.

Those of us working with students in the field may recognize how disorienting all this can be for them, as they forge ahead in developing their own therapeutic style and orientation. In the face of vociferous theoretical arguments, students can feel like teenagers caught between parents angrily arguing about topics vital to them, who are more enmeshed in the dynamics of power, fear, and competing egos than constructive intellectual pursuit.

It seems to us that our strength as psychologists lies in striving for unity in the midst of diversity, as we all strive for more integrative theories in our mutual pursuit of finding tools to help suffering people. We have to be critical thinkers, but not necessarily critical people. We have to work hard enough in study and training and growing to have confidence in our approach and perspective, but not so confident that we feel entitled to devalue others. Ours is a challenge that is not unique among people with differences. But so far, for psychology it is certainly true that, just as in religion and politics, embracing diversity is a goal that is still not quite within reach.

*This example is an amalgam of these two theorists' public speaking, described here with poetic license.

Dr. Ellen Miller Kwon may be reached by email at ellen@drmillerkwon.com.

Dr. Suzanne Lake may be reached by email at DrSuzanneLake@aim.com

CPA Corner

By Melissa McMullin, PsyD
Representative to CPA



As we move into the last months of 2012, it's time for CPA members to renew their membership, and for non-members to consider joining. As you evaluate whether membership in the only powerful and active political advocacy group psychologists have in California is worth the investment, I'd just like to make a pitch and say-- YES IT IS!

There are so many benefits to supporting, and belonging to, CPA. You can, for example, keep up with legislation as it impacts your practice, complete free CEs, obtain free ethics consultations, obtain affordable health insurance, and enjoy a large peer support network.

Most importantly, as Psychology's primary voice in Sacramento, CPA needs our support. There are almost twice as many MFTs in the state, who on a per person basis donate far more to support their political interests in the capitol. Similarly, psychiatrists have a very loud, powerful, and well-financed presence there. For some reason, psychologists have been the least active, and the least donating, of all the mental health professional groups. Your CPA dues are vital to the Association in furthering your, and your colleagues', interests. Here are just a few things that CPA has been up to this year:

- The Board of Psychology recently survived powerful efforts in Sacramento to shut it down, largely as a result of the strong defense mounted by CPA's Governmental Action Committee. The BOP's existence is now protected until 2017.
- At the end of 2012, the MCEP Accrediting Agency will be dissolving. In response, CPA has developed a program to take over keeping track of CE credits for psychologists who utilize that service, and credentialing individual providers as well.
- CPA's Neuropsychology Division is sponsoring their first ever neuropsychology conference on November 3, 2012 in Glendale!

Please take a moment to consider: California psychologists need CPA, and CPA needs you to step up and stand together with your colleagues, as we go forward into the coming year. Go to CPAPsych.org, and sign up for 2013! You'll be glad you did.

*Dr. Melissa McMullin can be reached at
mcmullin.melissa@gmail.com*

Confronting the Issues Confronting Psychology: A Meeting with California State Senator Ed Hernandez

By Adrienne Meier, MA
Governmental Affairs Committee Member



On Friday night, September 28, Senator Ed Hernandez, representative of the 24th District (including much of the San Gabriel Valley), joined SGVPA members for a Meet-&-Greet event at a local restaurant. Governmental Affairs Chair Linda Nelson, and President Stephanie Law organized a round table discussion of the new policies which will affect the practice of psychology in California.

Senator Hernandez broke the ice by describing his own work in the health care field, as an optometrist, and his lifelong passion for bringing benefits to underserved populations. Psychologists posed questions in regards to their concerns about mental health parity, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and the issue of prescription privileges. The Senator candidly addressed each issue, resulting in a vibrant discussion. Of particular concern among everyone present was the future of psychological practice under the implementation of the ACA. Senator Hernandez jolted us by asserting, "The day when you could graduate, then just put up your shingle and expect patients to start coming to see you, is over."

He explained that the face of private practice and the delivery of mental health services will change drastically when the Act is fully implemented in 2014. Providers will be required to establish formal relationships with health care organizations in order to obtain patient referrals. Furthermore, our scope of practice as psychologists is being threatened, due to the several varieties of mental health professionals, and the apparent similarities in the services they offer.

After this discussion, I am convinced that we need to continue pursuing prescription privileges, which will play an important role in expanding our scope of practice, and staving off encroachment by other professional groups. However, no matter where you stand on the issue of prescription privileges, this conversation with Senator Hernandez was definitely a wake up call for all of us. We clinicians need to recognize the overarching issues at stake for our profession, and get more involved in advocacy efforts to promote and protect it! After all, the policies made today are going to profoundly affect our ability to practice and provide treatment for those in our community tomorrow.

*Adrienne Meier, MA, can be reached at
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Pairing Partying with Politics Psychologists Dialogue with Senator Hernandez



Psychology and Family Law

The Timely Abolishment of “Gay Reparative Therapy”



By Mark Baer, Esq.

I have become rather known for speaking out about problems in the family law system and the way in which family law is handled, because it destroys families. Please don't think that my concerns about people being unfairly and carelessly injured are limited to my efforts to transform the family law system. They also happen to include speaking out when any one person's or group's personal beliefs happen to harm other persons. I personally don't care what anybody's beliefs are--as long as those beliefs do not harm others.

It should go without saying that mental health professionals must not allow their personal beliefs to harm others, and especially not when acting in their professional capacity. One would think that this is such a basic concept, it should need not be spoken. Unfortunately, recent governmental legislation became necessary for just this reason.

On September 30, 2012, Governor Brown signed Senate Bill 1172 into law. This bill banned the use of Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE) with minors. SOCE is commonly known as reparative therapy, conversion therapy, or ex-gay therapy. Mental health professionals who are practicing any form of SOCE are by definition allowing their personal beliefs harm others. Such “treatment” has been found to be ineffective, and often to cause severe emotional harm, including suicidality. In other words, it is akin to psychological abuse.

Homosexuality was declassified as a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association in 1973, and removed from the DSM, 39 years ago. Nevertheless, the implicit premise of SOCE is that homosexuality is a psychological disorder, because otherwise such therapeutic efforts make no sense. Thus, therapists who utilize some form of SOCE in their practice need to evaluate their personal beliefs with regard to homosexuality, because such “treatment” is not based on a pathology diagnosis.

In the March/April 2012 edition of *AnalyzeThis!* I published an article titled “Judicial Bias in Family Court.” In that article, I stated, “No amount of bias elimination training can educate a judge to forget about their life experiences, assumptions, personal beliefs, and opinions.” This statement is obviously not limited to judges, but applies to all human

beings, even highly trained ones, and even mental health practitioners.

As a man, I will never understand what it is like to be a woman. Similarly, heterosexuals will never understand what it is like to be homosexual. Heterosexuals should not pass judgment against homosexuals and discriminate against them, including assuming that they somehow can, and should, become heterosexual. The fact of the matter is that homosexuals are different from heterosexuals, primarily by virtue of their experiences in the greater social situation. Heterosexuals can't relate because they have never had to walk in their shoes. By the same token, male lawmakers should not be regulating women's bodies, when they will never know what it is like to be a woman, and will never get pregnant, and face the kind of choices women must face.

Certainly, nobody will dispute the fact that some homosexuals don't want to be homosexual, and seek SOCE. But that is only because they have been forced to hide their true selves in response to the way social norms have discriminated against them so strongly. They would prefer not having to hide the sexual orientation aspect of their lives, and not feel ashamed about it. The reason they have issues with their sexual orientation is due to the guilt, fear, and shame they experience--or expect to experience--from their family, friends and society. If society would stop shaming homosexuals, maybe homosexuals would not want to change their sexual orientation – something that cannot be changed, in any case, because it is not a psychological disorder but a natural human condition.

Perhaps we should change our families, our schools and our culture instead, so that homosexuals feel safe, accepted, and respected. Once we've moved beyond violence, political disenfranchisement and homophobia, then let's see how many homosexuals want to be “converted.”

Instead of helping homosexuals to accept and love themselves for who they are, mental health care professionals who practice any form of SOCE are in essence reinforcing the guilt, fear, and shame that their parents and society have caused them to experience. Some therapists who advertise they are “gay friendly” or “gay affirming” actually utilize reparative therapy. In my opinion, this is highly unethical. When any profession fails to monitor itself, the government will do so. SOCE is not therapy. The credibility of therapy and your profession depends on people understanding this fact.

Mark Baer, Esq can be reached by email at Mark@markbaeresq.com.

Obsessive Ruminations

How to Soar into Adulthood:

Live and Love with Passion and Engagement

(Dedicated to Misha and Natalie)

By Alan Karbelnig, PhD, ABPP



Are you in your early 20s or early 30s, and feel terrified, furious, jealous, lost? Who wouldn't be? We live in a bizarre age. Never in human history have we been so brutally assaulted by mass media, infecting us like syphilitic spirochetes. Television, web streaming, satellite radio, social media, brands; these parasitically invade us, every minute of every day.

Historical contexts of life radically change one generation to the next, yet your immediate developmental challenges have changed little in generations. Fifty years ago, developmental psychologist Erik Erikson offered the still-modern guidance that the two essential questions of early adulthood are: Who am I, and am I able to love others?

No matter your degree or work, you will inevitably struggle with finding a sense of self. Today "adolescence" extends well into one's 20s, probably a result of relaxed parental authority and economics. Erikson thought adolescents must transcend "identity versus ego diffusion." In brief, are you going to establish your identity around fairly stable self-concepts like "I am artistic" or "I am a math person," or are you going to end up with a poorly-defined or "diffuse" sense of self?

After reading an earlier draft of this article, my 22-year-old friend Rmax sardonically remarked, "Ok, that's all well and good, but how do you find these answers?"

Begin your journey by turning inward. Consider who you really are. Via psychotherapy, meditation, spirituality, or other, transcend whatever self-limiting dramas populate your "inner world." If a domineering, narcissistic father oppresses you, or an overly gratifying mother makes you feel superior, they've obscured your vision. First try to clean your spectacles to clear your vision and, if that fails, crush your glasses beneath your shoes.

If problematic DNA causes a so-called "mental disorder," seek consultation – in an active, engaged way, not a passive-dependent one. Ask the psychologist what she reads or who his greatest influences are. Find one who best "treats" those problems. If given "a diagnosis," question and discuss it!

A recent interpreter of Freud, Jacques Lacan, differentiates between the "ego" and the "subject." The "ego" consists of who you "think" you are; it is developed

by early social and ongoing cultural influences. The subject is who you "really" are. How do you know? Lacan and Freud emphasized dreams, slips-of-the-tongue, etc. Pay attention to choices and themes that characterize your life.

Nietzsche writes in his 1881 notebook:

Live your life in such a way that you must wish to live it again... If striving gives you the highest feeling, then strive! If rest gives you the highest feeling, then rest! If fitting in, following and obeying give you the highest feeling, then obey! Only make sure you come to know what gives you the highest feeling, and then spare no means.

Proclaiming "God is dead," Nietzsche banished 1500 years of ideological dominance by religion, and the subsequent supremacy of science. Nietzsche asserts, "Amor Fati." Be who you are. As Morpheus proclaimed in *The Matrix*, "Free your mind!" Never mistake what you're "doing," i.e. architecture, from your "being."

Now turning outside, what do you confront? Marketing media, images, noise. Do you want to be a "nice girl," or a "slut?" Is your masculinity defined by ripped guys who chase objectified women? Do you desire intimacy and, if so, with three or ten? Are you interested in marriage, or would you rather act European and forget about marriage entirely?

Ascending single-player technology and social media are elements of a breakdown of society's capacity for intimacy. Should all communication be a form of entertainment? How else to get attention? Should we send naked pictures of ourselves via cell, or should we "sit down and have a talk." What is more intimate?

Most have stopped talking entirely. As comedian Aziz Ansari says, "Why did you call me with that shit? Are you on fire? Text me that shit!"

I urge you to finish this essay, and aggressively question the internal (psychological) and external (cultural) influences that block your ability to be present, to love with passion and truth. If you have no idea of what you want to do with your life, you are actually ahead of the game. You don't have to waste time becoming a doctor or a lawyer if it is, in fact, your parents' desire, not yours. Pay attention to what excites you; seek out those who appeal to you. Take your sweet time. You will find yourself, and you will find love. But you must do so authentically.

-

Dr. Alan Karbelnig can be reached at AMKarbelnig@gmail.com.

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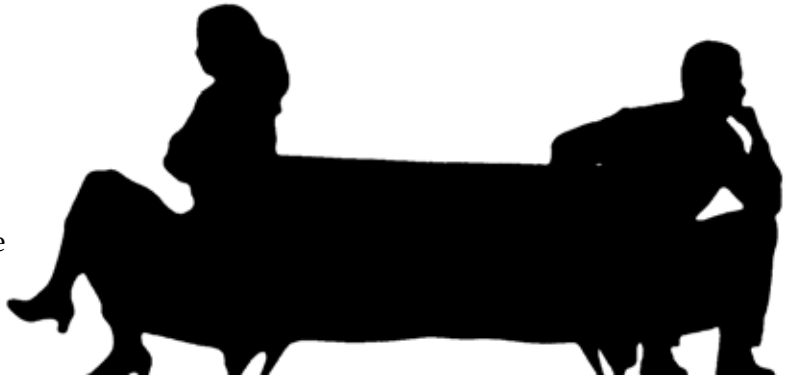
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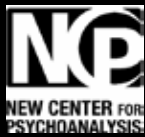
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*Psychoanalysis as
Performance Art:
The Triumph of
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Alan Karbelnig, Ph.D., a supervising and training psychoanalyst at the New Center for Psychoanalysis and the Newport Psychoanalytic Institute, practices psychoanalysis, couples therapy, and forensic psychology in South Pasadena.

He recently received the 2012 Excellence in Teaching Award from the New Center.

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