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The Official Newsletter of the San Gabriel Valley Psychological Association

SGVPA.org

AN OFFICIAL CHAPTER OF THE CALIFORNIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

November/December 2016

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Upcoming Lunch Meetings

Date: Friday, November 11, 2016

Topic: Mind-Body Wellness: Shame and Empowerment in the Therapy Room

Speaker: Richard LaBrie, PsyD

Date: Friday, December 9, 2016 (Non-CE event)

Topic: Voices of Experience: A Panel Discussion on Establishing and Sustaining a Private Practice. (Followed by speed networking!)

Facilitators: Melissa Johnson, PhD and Larry Brooks, PhD



**PLEASE RSVP NO LATER THAN THE FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH TO YOUR INTERNET EVITE,
OR TO THE SGVPA MAIL BAG INFO@SGVPA.ORG.**

CE credits available for Psychologists, LCSWs and MFTs

Monthly luncheons are held on the second Friday of the month at the Women's City Club,
160 N. Oakland Avenue, Pasadena, from 12:00 to 1:45 p.m.

Members Costs:

Luncheon, Service, and Parking Privileges...\$22

CE credits...\$20

Audit...\$10

Non-Member Costs

Luncheon, Service, and Parking Privileges...\$27

CE credits...\$25

Audit...\$15

Please note: Unclaimed lunch reservations will be billed to the individual--So please claim them!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



This is my last message as President of SGVPA, since I will step down in January. These two years as President have been a great and growing experience. To be honest, I was not exactly sure how I was going to get up and speak so often in front of groups of people at the onset. Now I can say that I've shaken my way through enough moments of speaking, that I have properly desensitized myself. I do not typically think in terms of behaviorism, but in this instance I've found that repeated practice and exposure changed how that felt. It is a small way of growing, but thank you for being a lovely group to speak to.

I leave more convinced than ever that belonging to a professional association as a psychologist is vital, as a way to keep connected to the larger community. In many professions, it is a given that you will be a part of a larger group—such as a union. The larger group offers a place to discuss and perhaps advocate for needed changes, and where group members can connect with professional colleagues. But for many reasons, we in psychology tend to drift towards independence and isolation. I see a future that necessitates more collegial group process, and more advocacy for our field. It will be through our professional associations, such as SGVPA, that we achieve this.

As I depart, there are several people I want to acknowledge and thank for their support, and many contributions to SGVPA. Special thanks are due to the Board members, which are at this point are better described as friends than anything else. The Board includes Drs. Suzanne Lake, Martin Hsia, Dustin Plattner, Dave Lorentzen, Laurie Nougier, Larry Brooks, Wayne Kao, Karin Meiselman,

(continued on p. 2)

Brett Veltman, and students; Tiffany Shelton, and Karissa Burnett. There are others who have worked behind the scenes to keep SGVPA operating smoothly. To all of you I say, thank you all so much!

Special mention to Stephanie Law, who served as President before me, and has been tremendously supportive and inspiring to me. After she introduced me to my first Board meeting, I commented to her my amazement at being part of a group in which everyone's opinion mattered! My experience with the Board since convinces me that respect creates fertile ground for a group process.

The process most dear to my heart is psychotherapy. Ryan Howes, the visionary who founded the National Psychotherapy Day observance, shares my passion. With Ryan, SGVPA recently co-sponsored a public event called Moments of Meaning, in which therapists present dramatized accounts of experiences in psychotherapy, in order to promote, and demystify the process. The hope is that many who otherwise would not, will take the brave step to seek it out. Moments of Meaning was videotaped, so that the dramatizations (which are all excellent and inspiring) can have the maximum exposure on social media (you can find them on the Moments of Meaning website, and on YouTube.) I was grateful for the opportunity to take part, and applaud this effort as another example of our community of psychotherapists coming together for a greater cause—the cause of promoting psychotherapy to those who need it.

In this vein, I encourage you to think about what you might say to a stranger or a family member about why psychotherapy is important. Honestly, if we do not tell this story—bound perhaps by an ingrained sense of confidentiality, or uneasy with the act of promoting our profession or ourselves— too many will never understand what relief and support they may find. Without our speaking out, psychotherapy is open to misunderstanding, devaluing, and stigma. And I believe that psychotherapy is too sacred not to protect.

With thanks,

Ellen Miller Kwon, PsyD
President

SGVPA Events Calendar

Friday, 11/11/16 — *Monthly CE Luncheon — 12:00 noon*
Mind-Body Wellness:
Shame and Empowerment in the Therapy Room
Richard LaBrie, PsyD
11:45—Registration
12:00-1:30—Presentation



Tuesday, 11/15/16 —Deadline for casting your vote for SGVPA Executive Committee
(Please watch for your ballot via the Listserv)

Thursday, 12/1/16 —Newsletter Submission Deadline (Address submissions to the
Newsletter Editor at DrSuzanneLake@aim.com)

Friday, 12/9/16 — *Monthly CE Luncheon (No CE's) — 12:00 noon*
Voices of Experience: A Panel Discussion on Establishing
and Sustaining a Private Practice
Followed by speed networking!
11:45—Registration
12:00-2:00—Presentation



Saturday, 12/31/16 —Deadline to apply for the Future of
Psychology Scholarship
(Please contact Ellen Miller Kwon, PsyD for details, or see your
July/August issue of *Analyze This!*)

Kids, Technology, and Parenting in the Digital Age: A Conversation Between Psychologists Joe Dilley and Martin Hsia



*On a recent episode of the podcast Psych Rally, Dr. Martin Hsia interviewed Dr. Joe Dilley about his recent book, *The Game is Playing Your Kid: How to Unplug and Reconnect in the Digital Age*. The following is an excerpt derived from the complete interview, which is available at PsychRallyPodcast.com, or on iTunes.*



M: Why did you choose this topic for your book?

J: I noticed I was having the same conversation with many families in my practice. In addition to parents' questions about ADHD and academic issues, there was this x-factor concern that got in the way: *screens*. It struck me that we could apply a family systems approach to this new problem to work our way out of it, and I thought I should document it and make it available to more people.

M: When we grew up, we had Atari, Nintendo, and computers that took 15 minutes to load, but no social media, YouTube, smart phones or tablets—so parents today can feel out to sea when navigating these issues.

J: Yes, it can be very challenging. But I hope the book conveys that this is completely addressable—there's hope that can have a ripple effect on our communities.

M: Give a brief teaser to the book, and how you help people with this.

J: We're looking at a holistic, systemic level challenge. The problem isn't the kid, or even the parent, but it's in the interplay between the parent, the child, and the x-factor of technology or video games. How do we achieve balance? It's a process of identifying what is sustaining the homeostasis that has taken over the family flow, and how we dismantle that in a way where everyone can still enjoy themselves together.

M: We've all seen two year olds in strollers looking at iPhones, or families at the restaurant all looking at smartphones—though as parents, we're probably all guilty of this at some level. It's tricky because it's a relatively new issue, and we are so dependent on technology. Yet there are concerns about how it disconnects us from each other, and its impact on the developing brain.

J: All of us *are* guilty of this. But if we were talking about something as straightforwardly bad for you as cigarettes, it wouldn't even be a conversation. Technology has inherent advantages. It's not immediately unhealthy. So we should treat it like chocolate or junk food. Do we award it

sometimes? Sure—but not in a steady stream all day. So why are we doing so with technology?

M: There's some debate over whether “internet addiction” is a real thing...

J: Call it an “addiction” or “dependent behavior”—it doesn't matter. The systemic approach is not about the title. We're not getting anywhere by labeling kids “addicts.” The behavior is problematic—there's an unhealthy level of dependence, and we have to break it.

M: The book recommends making access to technology not just a given, but rather how to artfully create a structure in which screentime is the carrot we dangle, contingent upon a certain behavior, like maintaining grades or doing chores.

J: Perfect—just like in the adult world, we're trying to move everything to a “when you, then you” paradigm. You don't expect your paycheck before you work—you go to work, and then get paid. You pay the heating bill and then the heat keeps coming. We're setting children up to demonstrate responsibility *before* receiving privilege.

M: One of the concerns that many adults have is whether the art of interacting with a real person is being lost—where people learn to read emotional and social cues through emojis, rather than through eye contact and body language.

J: Maybe it's not being lost, but it's becoming obscured. Perhaps in some ways it's even enhanced because some emojis can be more animated than a microfacial expression would yield. In some ways we're able to express things in ways that are *more* affective. It's not all bad; but it is different. What's important is just to be mindful, aware, and tuned into what's going on... If junior is in his room connecting with someone, even virtually, that's great. But who's he connecting with? For how long? We can help build that same curiosity and mindful awareness in our kids about the present moment and what they're doing, bringing things to a conscious level.

M: Which is everything we do as therapists.

J: Exactly!

Martin Hsia, PsyD (martinhsia@gmail.com) practices with the Cognitive Behavior Therapy Center of Southern California, and is the creator and host of Psych Rally (PsychRallyPodcast.com). Joe Dilley, Ph.D. (phdilley@gmail.com) is the co-founder of Synergy Psychological, Inc. in Sierra Madre, CA.

Integrating Self and Culture

One Man's Struggle

By Wayne Kao, PsyD
Diversity Chair



Given the ongoing cultural divides in our society, I often reflect on the state of our field, our role in our community, and how we, as mental health professionals, navigate our own cultural differences. Despite most

of our graduate programs emphasizing cultural competence, is it being exercised in both our schools and our professional field? Can we truly claim to understand the psyche and personal well-being if we are not able to embrace and integrate the cultural context of those we serve?

It's no secret that our own association, SGVPA, consists largely of upper middle class, Caucasian, private practice psychologists. As an Asian American psychologist who's spent a majority of his career in community mental health, my general status is as a minority in this organization. As much as I enjoy being a member, I cannot help but wonder if we are truly welcoming to *all* mental health professionals of *all* backgrounds and career aspirations.

We cannot claim to embrace diversity in our field and associations if we are not diverse.

While I'm proud of the friends and colleagues I have met throughout my years in SGVPA, I cannot ignore that I've experienced many conversations at events that inadvertently advocate for a hierarchy of private practice psychologists over psychologists who practice in community mental health. In many ways, I feel I'm seen as a pseudo-psychologist—because I may put in more hours for less pay, and my job requirements includes advocacy and social work. I've heard countless times that it's insulting or embarrassing to have to work in community mental health, or that community mental health doesn't provide “real therapy” due to the multi-disciplinary nature of the system. In these cases, it's conveyed that being different means “less than;” because community mental health does not fit with what traditional psychology dictates.

I also cannot ignore that, while private practice psychologists are pre-dominantly Caucasian, community mental health psychologists involve a great diversity of psychologists from many different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Because of the aforementioned hierarchy

superimposed on private practice and community mental health, have we also inadvertently perpetuated the racial and ethnic hierarchy in our own field? Are we covertly saying that, as much as our work as psychologists emphasizes the humanistic and existential value of every human being, certain psychologists are simply better at being psychologists because of the way they look or the culture they were raised in?

Unfortunately, discrimination is often unintentional. I will always remember studying for my doctorate, and hearing from classmates that because of the combination of my gender and ethnicity (male and Taiwanese American), they were surprised that I was not only studying psychology, but that I was competent and outspoken. If you've spoken to me, can you say that you've never had this thought?

This brings me to a larger issue. Are we as mental health professionals able to describe, to the larger culture, what mental health and wellness is? Has its definition truly evolved from the days of Sigmund Freud? It seems to me that we are still struggling to describe what being mentally and emotionally well looks like, what steps we have to take, and if there can be a manual or not. Instead of truly understanding how different people and cultures view and shape our collective understanding of mental and emotional health, our studies and conversations often devolve into which culture or group of people better understand mental health or “do it better.” To this day, we're still debating which is better—autonomy or collectivism—and oftentimes falsely equating collectivism with enmeshment. Let's not forget that the pioneers of our field drew from the philosophies of both Western and Eastern cultures, understanding the merit of both to the art and science of psychology.

I believe that we should be able to evolve together. However, as professionals we must learn to truly share the same space. In order to strengthen our community, we need to embrace and value community mental health as much as private practice. We need to embrace not just how psychology was defined in the past, but how it has evolved and continues to evolve, by valuing our contributions and philosophies equally. Only then can we shape not just the individual, but our society.

Dr. Wayne Kao can be reached at dr.waynekao@gmail.com.

The SGVPA Membership Year is Ending!

Announcing Our New Renewal Policy

By Laurie Nougulier, PhD
Membership Chair



It's hard to believe it, but we are in the last quarter of 2016! And just as the calendar year will be ending soon, so will your SGVPA membership expire—that is, on January 31, 2017. This is a membership policy modification, so please take note.

Until now, your membership would expire exactly one year from the day you joined or renewed. Beginning in 2017, however, membership will be based on a *calendar year* and *all memberships will expire on January 31*.

Since the majority of our memberships expire in January anyway, most of you will not be affected by this modified policy. But, if you are one of our members who joined mid-year in 2016, you will be offered a special pro-rated renewal rate.

If you happen to have joined after January, someone will be contacting you within the next few months. Alternatively, please feel free to contact me for the special pro-rated membership renewal rate—that is, if you know that you joined later than last January.

Our new policy will allow *all* members to take advantage of the discounted membership rates always offered at the annual January Jubilee festivities! So please mark your calendars now for the fabulous January Jubilee, scheduled for January 13, 2017 at the Noor Boutique Event venue in the heart of Pasadena! I'll see you there!

Please contact Dr. Laurie Nougulier with any questions at drnougulier@yahoo.com.

Announcing the Future of Psychology Scholarship From SGVPA

Are you interested in getting help to attend a professional event like the CPA convention, the CPA leadership and advocacy conference, CPA PAC dinner or another professional development conference?

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ellen@drmillerkwon.com

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manny.burgess@yahoo.com

Psychology and Family Law

The Importance of Empathy in the Legal Profession

Part III



By Mark Baer, Esq.

This is the final part of a series promoting the importance of empathy in a lawyer's work and based on a professional program I presented. In Part II, I discussed how argumentative and contentious a great number of lawyers are, even outside of the litigation process itself. Rather than

being empathic or just plain courteous, today's lawyers tend to act out an adversarial stance both inside and out of the courtroom. Reflecting on this, the attorneys to whom I presented agreed that it is a lawyer's ethical responsibility to advise clients that it is counter-productive to create unnecessary conflict.

However, one attorney opined there is a need for aggressive lawyering on occasion. Did he mean lawyers who express their opinions, and those of their clients, in a confident and professional manner; or those who are unnecessarily confrontational, belligerent, antagonizing, and otherwise lacking in civility? After a discussion, the group decided that *assertive* lawyering is good, and that *aggressive* lawyering is bad, regardless of field of practice.

"What do you believe is the cause of most conflicts and disputes?" I then queried. "Misunderstandings, based on poor communication," came back the considered response of the audience. Then I asked if there is a difference between conflicts and disputes. I have long made a distinction between conflicts, which are emotionally-driven, and disputes, which are fact-based. After another discussion, the participants reached the same conclusion I had: Disputes are fact-based, and conflicts are emotional. It follows theoretically that most disputes might be resolved by careful and reasoned discussion, whereas emotionally fueled conflicts might be more difficult to solve or otherwise manage.

I then posited that when we, as lawyers, draw clients into an adversarial process, and behave as aggressors and "gladiators" to "win" their case, we are unnecessarily escalating conflict, in order to address a dispute. Nobody present disagreed.

"Lawyers are supposed to zealously advocate for their clients, right?" I then queried. This is a term from the legal code of ethics, with which everyone routinely agreed. However, what does "zealous advocacy" actually mean? As the question circulated the room, it became abundantly clear that the definition is highly subjective; and that of the responses offered, all seemed to connote various levels of aggression on their clients' behalves.

Another lively discussion ensued when I asked them whether those present believed that laws are fundamentally fair.

Quite a few attorneys answered, "Yes," while others asserted that all "American laws are fundamentally fair." Yet, I reminded them that laws vary greatly from state to state, and country to country, and change over time. I asked them, "What the hell are 'American laws,' and how can they be fundamentally fair, if they vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction?" Everything is a matter of perception, I suggested. We tend to get accustomed to the laws and culture of the jurisdiction in which we live, and to confuse our comfort with those laws, with our innate sense of fundamental fairness.

I then read them the following quote (from a recent article by Laura Meherg): "The art of persuasion is not about nagging, arguing or bullying. It's about empathy and active listening." This invigorated another discussion around the core theme of the presentation—Empathy as an important tool of effective lawyering.

I offered further that the core of empathy is "perspective-taking," using the term of social work researcher Brene' Brown. Perspective-taking is the basis upon which we can recognize the needs of others, and to do so requires empathy. Dr. Brown contends that we can try to remove the lens through which we see the world, in order to try on the lens of another person. We all view the world around us differently, based on our information, insight, and experiences. She adds, "Perspective-taking is listening to the truth as other people experience it, and acknowledging it as *their* truth. What you see is as true, real and honest as what I see; so let me be quiet for a minute, listen, and learn about what you see. Let me get curious about what you see. Allow me to ask questions about what you see. Empathy is incompatible with shame and judgment. Staying out of judgment requires understanding."

As discussion continued, the group concluded that as attorneys, we tend to shame and judge people, rather than trying to gain an understanding of the various perspectives involved and help our clients solve their problems.

As the program drew to a close, I think it's fair to say that everyone felt stirred and intellectually stimulated. There seemed to be a lot of agreement with the notions put forth. Lawyers present found the program very "thought provoking" and "philosophical." One told me that the presentation required people to engage in some very deep thinking. It was a very lively program, and very gratifying for me, I confess.

What I experienced in that room was incredibly powerful and uplifting. It really was one of the most exhilarating experiences of my life because I could not have imagined a better outcome and response to the power of empathy in the practice of law.

Mark Baer, Esq. can be reached at Mark@MarkBaerEsq.com.



**Please Hold the Date
for the Fabulous Annual**



SGVPA

January Jubilee!!

Friday evening January 13, 2017

At Noor

Boutique Events Venue

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Elisse Blinder, Ph.D.
January Jubilee Committee Chair




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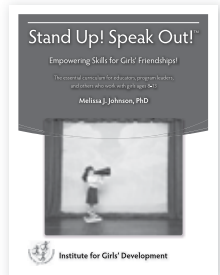
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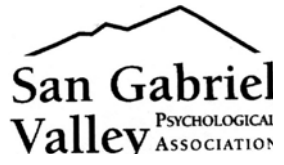
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