New Mexico Psychologist
Publication of the New Mexico Psychological Association

NMPA Fall Conference
Science Based Practice & Advocacy in an Era of Anti-Science
Friday, September 27, 2019
Member Registration Opens July 15!

Details Here

Cutting edge ideas, controversy, collegial camaraderie, 6.5 CE credits, acclaimed speakers, great food—what more could you want?

This year’s conference has it all!

It’s hard to stay up on the news and not run into climate change denial, the anti-vaccine movement, and other assaults on science. While psychologists are trained to rely on “real” science to guide our work, the media “educates” us and our patients somewhat more eclectically. As a result, our best-practices are often at odds with patients’ expectations, and we are often at odds with one another as we debate what constitutes “real” science.

NMPA is excited that Dr. Scott Lilienfeld, an internationally recognized speaker, author, and researcher will anchor this year’s conference. Dr. Lilienfeld has devoted his career to the promotion of evidence-based practice and boldly assaults common myths endorsed by many in the field of mental health and by the general public. His publications are widely acclaimed, and his scientific work has been cited close to 30,000 times. Dr. Lilienfeld will deliver two talks:

Evidence Based Practice and its Discontents: Ongoing Debates and Controversies
Those Who Cannot Remember the Past are Condemned to Repeat it: Using the Histories of Clinical Psychology and Psychiatry to Inform Contemporary Issues

We are also fortunate to have several local luminaries present compelling perspectives on the conference theme:

Tom Sims, Ph.D.: Science, Data, and Behavioral Health Policymaking in New Mexico
Madeleine Goodkind, Ph.D. Advancements, History, and Controversies in Treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
David Ley, Ph.D. Application of Science-Based Practice to Sex Related Difficulties

This conference will sell out!!
July 15-31 is reserved exclusively for NMPA member registration.
Registration will open to nonmembers on August 1 so guarantee your place early!

Early bird discount for all expires 8/31/19
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New Mexico Psychologist
is a publication of NMPA.

Opinions and articles are welcome. All submissions are subject to editing. Opinions expressed are those of the authors.

Please send articles and letters to:
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Upcoming CE Opportunities

July 17—Webinar
Weighing in on Adolescent Obesity

September 27 — NMPA Fall Conference
Science Based Practice and Advocacy
In an Anti-Science Era
Welcome New NMPA Members!

**Full Members**
- John Christopher, PhD
- Josie Gibb, PhD
- Margaret Mcllvoy, PhD
- Wayne Pribble, PhD
- Samuel Shaffer, PhD

**Early Career Members**
- Nechama Capland, PsyD
- Elisa DeVargas, PhD
- Selina Mangassarian, PsyD
- Andrea Theye, PsyD
- Misty Warren, PsyD

**Members in Training**
- Rosa Munoz, PhD

New Member Checklist:
- Make sure you opt in (or out) of the Find-a-Psychologist page of the NMPA website.
- Use the listserv to reach out to colleagues—those who might be helpful to you, those for whom you might be helpful, and those you are just plain curious about. We are a friendly bunch.
- Consider submitting an article to our newsletter. If you have news, expertise, or evidence-based opinions, we want to hear from you. (Email NMPA Executive Director Kevin Kinzie at nmpaooffice@gmail.com)
- Sign up for continuing education programs. They are top-notch, low-cost, and good networking.

I retired from full-time work in April of 2018 and quickly recycled all of my textbooks and all of my tests. My computer is my library. My diplomas are in a box and my clinical records are in others’ hands. My professional activities are limited to volunteer work and a bit of consulting. I’m at the age when I get paid for nothing more than being not-dead, but I’m having a recurring nightmare.

Kenan Thompson created “Oscar Rodgers,” (not to be confused with the wonderful Mr. Fred Rogers) for Saturday Night Live and Mr. Rodgers haunts my dreams. You can see Oscar at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yo3uxqwTxk0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yo3uxqwTxk0)

Have you ever received a “You/They-Should,” message? That’s one that describes a problem, examples of past, present and future consequences of the problem, and a desired outcome that “someone” should enact; “They should fix it!” In professional life, I’ve heard people tell their family members “You should…” and complete the admonition with a series of worthy goals like improve schoolwork, get along with family members, and live a healthier lifestyle. I’ve heard employees “You should…” employers with worthy goals like improve employee benefits, empower creativity, and do more for the community. I’ve heard employers “You should…” employees with be more productive, be safer, and cooperate with coworkers. I confess that I make lots of “You should…” statements of my own.

I almost always agree with the person presenting the “You Should” message—something needs to be done! Someone is laboring under a misapprehension! Someone is doing something that will have dire consequences and they need to stop! Some-
Early Career Psychologist Update

Melissa Falkenstern, Ph.D.
ECP Committee Chair

Hello fellow ECPs! We are continuing to work on offering a variety of social, professional, and educational events for you. First, however, I want to thank ECP committee members: Fritz Schoepflin and Kristina Dumas for their dynamite coordination efforts!

Most recently, several ECPs and their families came out to the New Mexico Natural History Museum to see the temporary exhibit "Brain: the inside story" ([http://www.nmnaturalhistory.org/exhibits/exhibits/brain-inside-story](http://www.nmnaturalhistory.org/exhibits/exhibits/brain-inside-story)). It was a really fun and informative exhibit, and a nice reason to meet and connect with other ECPs.

We have upcoming social and educational events to keep your eye out for.

- July 16th and August 20th, we’ll be meeting at Hyder Park for Tasty Tuesdays for yoga, music, and food trucks. Feel free to bring friends or family and enjoy some self-care time while meeting other ECPs!
- We’re also working with a member of the Board of Psychologist Examiners (BoPE) to offer a "Lunch and Learn" about what the BoPE does and to discuss recent rules changes. Watch the ECP listserv for details soon to be finalized!
- As always, we have our ongoing ECP consultation group, which is open to all independently licensed ECPs.

We hope to see you all at some of our upcoming events!

Public Education Campaign Update

&

Call for Members!

Laura Lundy, Ph.D.
Public Education Campaign Coordinator

Hello! As the new APA Public Education Campaign Coordinator for NMPA, I want to introduce myself and send out a request for committee members! The goal of this committee is to spread the word about Psychology in NM as well as nationally, in order to improve community awareness of issues and access to important resources.

I’ve had some interest from a couple NMPA members about being part of this group, and I’m hoping to recruit a few more members from all areas of psychology (clinical, health, research, education, etc.) to join our group and increase community awareness of our work. If you are interested, or if you have ideas about information that may be useful to share with the NM community, please email me at drlauralundy@gmail.com.
Continuing Education Update

Thomas Sims, Ph.D., Continuing Education Coordinator

Last quarter I described our intent to try some new formats in NMPA’s continuing education program. Here is what we’ve done and some of the things we have learned so far.

We started in April with a six-hour Saturday Seminar entitled *End of Life in New Mexico: Clinical, Ethical and Legal issues*. We had not presented a full-day spring program for many years, but the time seemed right for a program with critical and timely information regarding legislative efforts in New Mexico. The event was a success on all fronts.

- Attendees gave very high quality ratings to all three presentations.
- The event sold out well ahead of time with almost 80 attendees. Despite a full house, we did accommodate a few members who wanted to register at the door; this resulted in a bit of crowding which triggered a few complaints and from which we have learned.
- With strong attendance, we also enjoy financial success. As you know, NMPA depends on both membership and continuing education fees to accomplish our mission. Good seminar attendance keeps us from having to raise fees. Please remember that the presenters are fellow NMPA members who volunteer their time and expertise, so their generosity allows us to keep costs very low and offer very high quality programs. Like you, I get lots of CE advertisements in the mail so I know that our CE fees are low compared to other offerings.
- We further contained costs by having attendees lunch on their own rather than provide food on site. No one complained but we are interested in your thoughts about whether to continue this practice.

This program was a success, at least in part, because it involved a current issue which was controversial, but of interest to many. It allowed us to further our listserv discussion in person. When similar issues arise, even if they are controversial, we will strive to address them in our offerings. For example, there has been some recent listserv discussion about gun violence and what psychologists might do about it. If you would like to see a program about that, let us know.

Most importantly *if you have expertise and can present, please consider volunteering to do so.*

In May, we offered three two-hour workshops that fulfilled your cultural diversity requirements for licensure renewal. These were structured as separate two-hour workshops and you were be able to register for one, two or all three. Participants obtained two CE credits for each. This format was also new and we learned from it.

- From a quality standpoint, it was a tremendous success. All three presentations were rated very high by attendees. Thank you to the expert presenters who volunteered their time to make that so.
- Again, attendance exceeded expectations so we continue to learn how to predict size of audience and space needed.
- The experiment of offering separate two-hour programs from which you can pick and choose appears to have been successful and we will continue with that format in the future.

I hope that you can tell from this article that we are listening to you and want your feedback and ideas. We are always looking for presenters. If you would be interested in the opportunity to provide continuing education to your NMPA colleagues, please contact either me (tksims@comcast.net) or Kevin (nmpaoffice@gmail.com).

Nominations Committee

The Board Wants You!

Deborah Okon, Ph.D., Nominations Committee Chair

Feel isolated? Want to connect with colleagues and influence the direction of psychology in New Mexico?

Consider joining the NMPA Board.

We meet once a quarter on Saturdays for two hours around lunch (provided), and we make important decisions. We have openings and want to meet you. If you live outside of Albuquerque, we have technology so you can participate via video or phone conference. We’d love to involve more psychologists from across the state and heartily welcome early career members. If you are interested or know of a colleague who would like this opportunity.

Please Contact Me!  dmokon@comcast.net or 505-861-3894
Continuing Education Opportunities

SATURDAY SEMINARS

Spring 2019 showcased an outstanding set of Saturday Seminars and Dr. Sims is working on outdoing himself for next Fall. Do yourself a favor and keep an eye on the listserv and our website for details.

Here is a small sampling of participants’ comments about the Spring 2019 Saturday Seminars:

“Powerful”
“More of this!!! More, More, More!”
“Thought-provoking and informative”
“Compelling presentations from people who know their stuff”
“Superb group of presenters”
“Provocative”
“Fascinating”

NMPA FALL CONFERENCE

Science-Based Practice and Advocacy in an Anti-Science Era
Featured Speaker: Scott Lilienfeld, Ph.D.
Friday, September 27, 2019

Dr. Lilienfeld is an internationally recognized speaker. He promotes evidence-based practice and boldly assaults common myths surprisingly endorsed by many in the field of mental health. His publications are widely acclaimed, and his scientific work has been cited close to 30,000 times. Learn more on his Wikipedia page: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scott_Lilienfeld

This conference is expected to sell out quickly.

Mark your calendars and register beginning July 15 (members) or Aug. 1 (nonmembers) to ensure a seat!

NMPA ONLINE CULTURAL DIVERSITY CONTINUING EDUCATION

Category II credits

Cultural Diversity Credits (3/course unless otherwise marked)
- New Mexico History and Culture, Part I
- New Mexico History and Culture, Part II
- Health Equity in New Mexico: A Report on Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities
- New Mexico Substance Abuse Epidemiology Profile, 2013
- 2016 County Health Rankings
- The State of Health in New Mexico, 2013
- Multicultural counseling competencies/research (2 credits)
- Awareness-based articles

Ethics Credits (3 per course)
- Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists
- Psychological Treatment of Ethnic Minority Populations

Knowledge-based articles
Skills-based counseling articles

Link to online cultural diversity courses
Myths About Psychology: 
How Legendary Are They?

Morgan T. Sammons, PhD, ABPP  
Executive Officer of the National Register of Health Services Psychologists

Earlier this month, my hometown newspaper (The Washington Post) published an opinion piece by a young associate professor of psychology at the University of Kansas, Dr. Stephen Ilardi. Titled “5 myths about psychology,” Dr. Ilardi cast light, as well as some shade, on various aspects of our profession and myths surrounding it, much to the consternation of numerous psychologists on professional listservs. The efficacy of psychotherapy was taken to task; not surprising as the opinion piece was subtitled “No, talking about difficult things isn’t always helpful.”

In fairness to Dr. Ilardi, authors of opinion pieces usually do not write the titles for their submissions. Editors, in constant search of eyeballs, both electronic and organic, try and come up with attention-grabbing titles designed to enhance readership. But whether Dr. Ilardi wrote the title for the article is somewhat beside the point. Keeping in mind that the opinion piece was written for a lay audience, not a professional one, let’s take a dispassionate look at what he says and see how well the mythological shoe fits.

To give Dr. Ilardi credit, he is hardly publishing a dissertation on the efficacy of psychotherapy. In the 1,000 words or so he was allotted, he dealt with five common misconceptions, with only three short paragraphs dedicated specifically to psychotherapy. He started with Freud and ended up with Critical Incident Stress Debriefing, wise choices if one’s point is to illustrate the shortcomings of talk therapies.

Let’s Take Our Own Look at These Shortcomings

Although some tenets of Freudian practice live on in the form of psychoanalytic and psychodynamic treatment, Freudian theory itself has fallen victim to numerous debunkers. The most cogent debunkment is provided by Richard Webster whose exhaustive— and at almost 700 hefty pages, exhausting—critique was provocatively entitled Why Freud Was Wrong (Basic Books, 1996). It goes without saying that Webster’s take on Freud fell somewhat short of total adulation, as did a fairly contemporaneous, well-publicized popular critique: In the Freud Archives by Janet Malcolm (Penguin, 2002). But Freudian theory and practice created a tectonic shift in medicine, if not the most significant medical movement in the whole of human history” as Webster described it. Clinical psychology was a fledgling, if purely laboratory-based profession when Freud published Studies on Hysteria in 1896, and psychiatry, then usually known as alienism, had existed as a recognized specialty for nearly 100 years. Asylums were burgeoning in the 19th century, though generally filled with the victims of tertiary syphilis, the most prevalent form of madness in those times.

Talking cures have existed for millennia. Mentioned in classical philosophy and by Robert Burton (writing as Democritus Junior) in The Anatomy of Melancholy (1628), the benefits of unburdening oneself to an empathetic other of fears, secrets, and perceived shortcomings have long been known. With the advent of systematic investigation and the mid-20th century development of the randomized clinical trial, its benefits have been quantified. We all know the hazy guesstimate known as the “rule of thirds”: about a third of participants in psychotherapy get better, about a third remain the same, and a smaller number get worse. As Bruce Wampold has often reminded us with his famous “Dodo-bird hypothesis,” any active, credible form of psychotherapy (including psychoanalysis and psychodynamic treatment) is as good as any other credible, active form of psychotherapy. But it took Freud, and arguably more importantly Carl Rogers, to lay the foundations of a systematic psychotherapy with acknowledged benefits. We also know that the benefits of psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy are roughly equivalent, at least for depression and anxiety disorders. Effect sizes are modest for both treatments, but regardless of which treatment is received, about the same proportions of patients get better, stay the same, or deteriorate. An important aside here is provided by Totura, Fields, and Karver (2018) who performed a meta-analysis of studies that looked at the therapeutic relationship as a covariate in pharmacological treatment and found an overall average weighted effect size of z = .30—indicating that the therapeutic relationship in treatment with medication has a significant, albeit modest, influence on treatment outcome. So whether it’s psychotherapy or psychotropics, the quality of the relationship predicts who gets better.

As to the treatment once known as Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD), and later called Critical Incident Stress
Xavier: If the age of the Universe was represented by a football field (13.8 billion years across 100 yards), Earth’s creation is 67 yards down field, 33 yards (4.543 billion years) away from the goal line. The first humans, now estimated to have emerged 2.8 million years ago, would be a tad over 2 inches away, and the first *homo sapiens*, “us,” just a quarter inch (about 320,000 years) from pay dirt. “We” are the last quarter inch on the football field of the Universe’s history.

Olivia: So we’re the Johnnies- and Joanies-come-lately?
X: Precisely.
O: Well, if we’re the last quarter inch, no telling where, and if, we’ll be a quarter inch from now.
X: We were a long time coming, and our future is unpredictable.
O: What matters?
X: What do you mean?
O: Across the football field of the Universe’s life, if we are but the final quarter inch, our future uncertain, and your and my lives infinitesimally small (1 hair width = ~0.07 mm = ~3500 years), what matters?
X: Well, less than a tenth of a hair’s width ago, I think Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) said it best:
   Something to do...
   Someone to love...
   Something to hope for...
O: It seems a beautiful sentiment. However, if we become centenarians and thereby become but a thirty-fifth of a hair width on the Universal Football Field, does it matter what we do, who we love, or what we hope for?
X: It may be a uniquely human foible to attempt to be “matterful,” to be meaningful in our pursuits, to imbue life with purpose, but surely it is not folly.
O: I wonder. Across this Universal Football Field, it is possible, indeed probable, that for all but the most recent quarter inch, or perhaps for just a few hair widths of time, the enterprise of life examination had never occurred, and the Universe got along just fine, thank-you-very-much. Beyond the Kantian quote, there is another tack to take to “What matters?”
X: What is that?
O: Do you recall the “Magic Video” idea I shared with you a while back?
X: Yes, imagine a video of our lives, including all sights and sounds recorded like any other video, but magically adding closed captions that spell out all our thoughts, either in blue or red letters. Thoughts associated with feelings of happiness, calmness, or neutrality would appear in blue captions, while thoughts associated with sadness, anxiety, anger, or fear would be in red.
O: Exactly. Independent of thoughts, whether blue or red, I wonder if “What matters?” can be reduced to simply adding up the amount of time we devote in that video to doing A, B, or C.
X: I need to disagree. One might, for example, be awake, say, 16 hours a day, 7 days a week, and devote an inordinate amount of time to working two jobs, just to make ends meet and to put food on the table for one’s family. “What matters” to this worker is not the tasks related to the jobs but the worker’s family.
O: I’ll concede that what we actually *do*, no matter how many hours we devote to it, does not necessarily *matter*. On the other hand, a character like the slothful Oblomov in Goncharov’s 19th century Russian novel by the same name, questions, “Why even leave bed?” Returning to your example of the more energetic person with two jobs, how do you determine if it’s the worker’s family that matters?
X: By asking.
O: Self-report?
X: Yes, as in the simple question, “What matters to you?”
O: But the respondent may give the “socially desirable” or acceptable response.

(Continued on page 12)
Our Visit to the Hill

In March, our Legislative Committee Chair Dr. Taryn Goff, our Executive Director Kevin Kinzie, and I headed to Capitol Hill to advocate for psychology. We have two new Representatives for New Mexico and every office presented us with new staffers so much of our time was spent helping them understand what a psychologist does. (In 11 years as your FAC, this rates as one of the tougher years!) Educating politicians about psychology is a task made much easier with personal connections. Please, if you have any connections to our Representatives or Senators, particularly Deb Haaland or Xochitl Torres Small—are related, live in the same neighborhood, have a friend of a friend, once touched their hand—please let me know. They need to know what psychologists do, and your connection with them will make it more likely they will hear us. Whether large or microscopic, I can help you cultivate that connection.

Our Mission & Your Contribution

The APA Practice Organization’s primary mission is to convince legislators to cosponsor and pass the Medicare Mental Health Access Act (HR 884) which would add psychologists to the Medicare physician definition. There are currently 30 cosponsors in the house and APA is looking for bipartisan champions to introduce it in the Senate. I wish Representative Lujan would express interest as he sits on the powerful Health Subcommittee where the bill has been languishing. If you have a connection with him, please use it or let me know!

Our secondary mission is to pass H.R. 1301, the Mental Health Telemedicine Expansion Act. This would allow Medicare beneficiaries needing teletherapy to receive it in their homes (current law only allows this for substance use disorder treatment). Given their past support, I anticipate that Senators Udall and Heinrich will cosponsor after we flood their emails. I am less optimistic about our representatives simply because they are not connected with psychologists. We really do need to change that!

Farewell & Welcome

At the end of this year I will step down from this Federal Advocacy Coordinator role to focus on my new role as NMPA Nominations Committee Chair. Taryn Goff, our Legislative Committee Chair, has experience at the Capitol and great interest in federal advocacy. I’m pleased to report that she was approved by the Board to take over as FAC starting January 2020. She is going to be terrific!

Thank you for the thousands of emails you have sent to legislators over the years, and for your backchannel notes of encouragement. It is because of you that I have loved this job! Until Taryn takes over, I’ll keep sending updates.

Keep in Mind

Your elected politicians work for you. As any good boss knows, employees can only excel if you provide clear performance expectations. Whether you are most comfortable emailing, phoning, or writing, speak up!

Deb Haaland: 202-225-6316 | # 1237 Longworth HOB. Washington, DC 20515
Ben Ray Lujan: 202-225-6190 | 2323 Rayburn HOB, Washington, DC 20515
Xochitl Torres Small: 202-225-2365 | 430 Cannon HOB, Washington, DC 20515
Tom Udall: 202-224-6621 | 531 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510
Martin Heinrich: 202-224-5521 | 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510
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As NMPA’s 2018 president, I spent last year thinking a lot about the organization, why I joined, and why I remain. In addition to professional benefits, membership has connected me to interesting peers with whom my path would otherwise not have crossed. This human smorgasbord has been an unexpected delight. With this column, I hope to translate listserv names into delightful humans with whom you may want to have a chat.

If you would like to recommend someone (including yourself) for our next peek, email me at blwolfe@swcp.com.

A Peek Behind the Diploma: Kathryn Lenberg, PsyD
By Brenda L. Wolfe, PhD

“Get an education … go to school as long as you can … when [not if] you go to college …”

This was the theme song of Dr. Kathryn Lenberg’s childhood. Her memories are laced with her grandmother’s teaching that education confers self-sufficiency and self-sufficiency is important. The message was also not lost on Kathryn’s mother who returned to school following divorce, and graduated from college when Kathryn was eight years old—old enough to appreciate the effort and the impact. In fact, it was one her mother’s school papers that started Kathryn on the path to becoming a Clinical Psychologist.

Currently, Kathryn is Manager of Behavioral Health Services at Truman Center (UNM) where she supervises seven clinicians and spends 50%–75% of her time on direct patient care. However, she claims she is “an accidental psychologist.” In fact, at the outset of her university studies, Kathryn made a conscious decision to avoid “the building that had the kooky professors”—in other words, the Psychology Department. Intrigued by her mother’s college paper about the HIV epidemic, Kathryn followed her BA with a Master’s in Public Health (MPH) at Emory University. She wanted to understand how people make choices about their health and she wanted to learn how to help. By the time she completed the MPH, it was clear she would have to embrace the “kooky professors” and pursue a doctorate in Clinical Psychology. She completed her PhD at UNM in 2011 and has been an active member of our clinical community ever since.

But this is supposed to be a peek behind the diploma, so who is the person Kathryn? As she tells it, she is many people: “a mother [of three incredibly cute children!], a wife, a sister, a friend, a colleague, …”. When asked what presents the biggest challenge in her daily life (I win for dumbest question), her response is, “Feeling like I do each role sufficiently” and with so many roles, it is easy to become overwhelmed. Kathryn copes with those moments by taking a mindful stance and asking herself what is possible with the available time and energy. She then does the best she can and gives herself credit, “I showed up, took the high road, acted with kindness.” She knows that she comes from “tough stock”—her mother’s independent strength and her grandmother’s directive to “put on my face” and meet the day.

Along with raising children, working fulltime, nurturing relationships, and supporting the PTA (with money—she draws the line at more meetings!), Kathryn has been a volunteer with Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority for 12 years. While an undergrad, she opted for this particular sorority because of its focus on developing women for leadership roles. The training she received has helped shape her career and inspired her to take on leadership roles within the sorority. She travels to Kappa Kappa Gamma campuses where she educates sorority sisters about building resilience and mental wellness, supporting one another, and working to de-stigmatize mental disorders. Kathryn also provides the women with leadership training, including how to engage “the middle of their organization”—in other words those members who are not particularly motivated for involvement. No doubt, some of the training from those kooky professors comes into play as she teaches strategies for mobilizing individuals’ engagement.

Despite the fullness of her life, the thing Kathryn most focuses on is the welfare of her children. Her hope for them is that they live good lives and share in the resilience and toughness she learned from her mother and grandmother. When the fullness of her life fuels maternal worry, Kathryn takes the ACT-like perspective of recognizing her worry as evidence she is a good mom.

As if Kathryn needs more to do, she is also a loyal member of her book club where she is happy to report that not a single member is a psychologist, “It’s good to have friends who don’t do what you do all day long.” Perhaps she feels that way because she finds the variety stimulating, or perhaps because she doesn’t want to be mistaken for one of those kooky professor types!
Open Mike — cont’d

(Continued from page 8)

X: True. But can some people mean what they say?

O: Sure, so breadwinner A says what really matters to her is her family. Still, I wonder. This “delectable tease” we call “Life” is delectable because of the enormity of the sky, the gurgling of the currents in a bend on the Rio Grande, and the sweetness of the touch of a newborn baby’s cheek. But it is equally a “tease” to lure, seduce, and lull one into the belief or hope that such sights, sounds, and touches—such joys—can continue beyond this present moment.

X: The transience of it all?


X: Every “Why?” can have as many answers as there are people on this orb, or as many grains of sand as there are in the desert.

O: In seeking to answer, “What matters?” I do an end-run around, thinking the answer to “Why life?” will get me there, but it does not.

X: Let us put our money where are mouths are. It was reported that one billion dollars recently were raised in two days to rebuild Paris’s Notre Dame Cathedral. How many millions in this world who are malnourished could be fed for that two-day sum? France’s 1.7 million malnourished could eat for two years—assuming, of course, they exclude cordon bleu and escargot. In those two days, however, “What mattered” more, at least to those donors, was rebuilding a 674-year-old building. Perhaps “What matters” can be measured by where we spend our money.

O: In 2017, each family in the United States contributed about $5,690 toward the Defense budget, and only $682 toward the Education budget. Arguably, Defense “mattered” over eight times more than Education. But I daresay this number crunching of monies spent by individuals and governments may be leading us astray from answering “What matters?”

X: If “time and money” devoted to activities are insufficient, what, then, should our yardstick be?

O: I am not sure. Answers to “What matters?” may ultimately be as individualistic as answers to “Why life?” Countless…. Let me take a new tack. Let’s return to that 100-yard football field representing the arc of the Universe’s history. But now, instead, let us focus on one human life, with yard markers 0-to-100, and we’ll allow each yard marker to represent one year of one’s life, with the centenarian’s 100-yard marker to be, literally, the end zone.

X: So, instead of one-thirty-fifth of a hair’s width, you have the entire football field?

O: Precisely.

X: So it’s an order of magnitude?

O: Yes, and perhaps more. Looking at 100 years places us in the present and perhaps foreseeable future. In contrast, when looking at the last quarter inch or part of a hair width, we can be overwhelmed by the felt insignificance when compared to the 13.8 billion years that preceded us.

X: Are we any closer to answering “What matters?”

O: Without looking at the arc of history, the sweep of millennia, we can personalize it.

X: Walk right up to your own yard marker: to the 15-yard, 38-yard, 84-yard marker, whatever age you are presently.

O: Or, if inclined, stand by previous or future yard markers and remember, if you can, what it may have been like at

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times (especially when serving as an NMPA board member) the author wants me to do something! I get nervous and want to run away when I realize that I don’t have a clue about how to actually, “Fix it!”

NMPA often receives member email about legislative issues, insurance matters, professional recognition, and fees. They send good information on the background and consequences of specific problems. Clearly, resolving the problems would be a boon to our patients, communities, colleagues, and society at large. Yet, just like therapeutic interventions, recommended actions are most likely to be completed when they consider the opinions, resources, experience, and skills of whoever is expected to act. Member emails do not always consider those things and include sufficient detail about how to achieve the desired outcome. Hence, my recurrent nightmare.

In case you ever find yourself with influence over someone sending a “You Should” message (especially to NMPA), here are some questions the answers to which will help NMPA be more effective with collaborative advocacy:

- To whom should we speak?
- How do we contact that person or office?
- What should we know about past interactions between the member(s) and the point of contact?
- Who opposes the proposal and what are the counterarguments?
- What, specific outcome shall we pursue?
- Can you provide a draft communication (letter, presentation, other)?
- Are there timelines we should know about?
- Other details?

When there isn’t time for the full NMPA Board to meet, the Executive Committee reviews proposals for action. There are only five Executive Committee members and all are volunteers who may be unfamiliar with important details of a problem. Please help me banish Oscar Rodgers from my sleep. Help our volunteer members by providing clear guidance about how to, “Fix it!”

NOTE: If you are aware of something that needs ‘fixing,’ you can find the NMPA Advocacy Form on our website:

https://nmpsychology.org/page/A1
(NMPA members only—login required)

It downloads as a Word document that you can fill in for submission.

Win a free subscription to our No-Charge New Mexico Psychologist Newsletter by correctly identifying the saying depicted below.
Management, among other less savory things, well, perhaps the less said the better. CISD was ardently promoted as an effective intervention in the military and among first responders in spite of the total absence of an evidence base supporting efficacy. Particularly in its earlier, more aggressive manifestations, it had real power to do harm in that the model mandated verbalization, in group settings, of individuals’ behavior and subsequent psychic responses to traumatic events. Although the model was later modified to do away with the mandatory disclosure component, decompensation was a known risk of CISD. Parenthetically, CISD presented a nightmare scenario for accident investigators. Because the model called for it to be conducted on-site, and as soon as possible after an incident, group disclosure of an individual’s actions in responding to the crisis irretrievably contaminated post-incident investigation.

It is important to ask why an unvalidated intervention mandating potentially involuntary disclosure became so popular in the early 1990s. While aggressive marketing certainly had a role, I suspect it is more likely that agencies were becoming increasingly aware of the cumulative effects of involvement in traumatic events on first responders, and in the absence of validated alternatives readily adopted this apparently credible intervention. Caveat emptor.

Returning to Dr. Ilardi’s Article

So how should we judge Dr. Ilardi’s reference to a claim that only 50% of patients improve with talk therapy? Given what we know, I think he is fairly generous in his estimates. Talk therapy is not a panacea, and unproven treatments and unskilled practitioners can do real harm, so there is no cause to fault his iteration of this conclusion. Where Dr. Ilardi does err, I believe, is his apparent belief that psychotherapy failures result from ignoring evidence-based techniques. As noted above, all active, credible psychotherapies are of generally equal efficacy, and as the lifelong student of psychotherapy—Professor John Norcross—reminded us in a recent National Register webinar, it is the quality of the relationship, rather than any specific technique, that accounts for most of the variance in psychotherapy outcome. Professor Ilardi addresses several other common popular misconceptions in his op-ed piece. There is no truth to assertions that humans only utilize 10% of their brains, that patients with OCD are by nature hyperorganized neat freaks rather than essentially paralyzed by their obsessive thoughts or compulsive rituals, or that pharmacotherapy works by correcting chemical imbalances in brain. But these are public misconceptions and not professional ones, and Dr. Ilardi provides a service by addressing them in a forum aimed at seekers of psychological services rather than those who provide them.

So let’s not rush to Lawrence, Kansas with buckets of hot tar and sacks of feathers. Professor Ilardi has accurately pointed out some common misconceptions about mental health and psychological treatments, and in doing so has provided a service to the public. Our treatments don’t work for everyone, and we often don’t know the active components of the ones that do. As credible scientist-clinicians, we should readily endorse these shortcomings while at the same time strive to improve our knowledge and its application. Let’s recall what André Gide suggested more than a century ago: “Believe those who seek the truth. Doubt those who find it.”

References


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To submit a classified ad, send your copy to NMPA Executive Director Kevin Kinzie at: nmpaoffice@gmail.com

Deadlines for copy submission and payment remission are below. Payment can be made by clicking “Online Store” on the NMPA website.

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You may not know ...

NMPA has a Facebook page where we share news of our activities as well as those of other organizations relevant to our membership.

We have been slowly increasing our Facebook presence over the past year or two so if you are a Facebook user, please ‘Like’ us!

If you have suggestions about how we can make stronger use of our page, or want to get involved in making that happen, contact our Public Education Campaign Committee Chair Laura Lundy.