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Upcoming CE Programs

Mental Health Professionals in Transition: Clinical, Ethical, and Practical Considerations when Life Changes
March 9, 2012

Ethics and Ethical Decision Making for Rhode Island Psychologists
May 4, 2012

A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Caring for Adolescents with Eating Disorders
May 18, 2012

Adventures on the Electronic Frontier: Ethics and Risk Management in the Digital Era
October 19, 2012

Update on Psychopharmacology
December 7, 2012

Go to www.ripsych.org for more information

State Advocacy

Peter Oppenheimer, Ph.D.

The Legislative Committee continues to address concerns created by the new law that mandates private insurance plans include benefits for people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders and the effort of Applied Behavior Analysts to be designated as the provider of those services. RIPA members who currently provide intensive treatment services to ASD children continue to express concerns that the law as passed will disrupt services for some children. In December RIPA presented a proposal to Representative Polumbo's Autism Commission that would have prevented this from happening while a long-term solution was worked out. Unfortunately, due to the fixation of some advocates for credentialing ABAs the Commission was not able to address the issue at that time.

We just participated in the next meeting of the Commission (January 17). At that meeting we made significant headway towards resolving both the short-term and long-term issues. Hopefully, there will soon be a compromise that provides for coverage and continuity of care for people with ASDs, and respects the professional interests of psychologist and ABAs. We are working on this as this article is being written.

President's Message

Dear RIPA member:

Happy New Year! I am both honored and excited to begin my year as President of the Rhode Island Psychological Association. RIPA is an energy-filled and forward-thinking organization that I am proud to be a part of. As I begin my tenure, I first want to recognize our past-president, **Dr. Leslie Feil**, who has worked tirelessly on RIPA's behalf, and from whose leadership we have all benefitted tremendously. In addition, I have learned so much from being a part of the Board of Directors for the past year as President-Elect, and feel very fortunate to be working with such a skilled and committed group of individuals, all of whom have made lasting contributions to RIPA.



Please know that participation in RIPA is an extremely rewarding and satisfying experience, and I strongly encourage all of you to consider becoming more involved in our organization. We are specifically looking for members who are interested in helping to organize a Graduate Student Committee and who are interested in working with

our Membership Committee. However, we have many very active committees (see the website for descriptions and contact information for committee chairs), all of which would welcome your participation.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our mid-winter Meet and Greet, which will be held at the Waterman Grille on Thursday, February 16, 2012 from 6:00pm to 7:30pm. Please feel free to bring anyone who is a psychologist or psychology student as a guest, and remember that as part of our membership campaign, if you bring a new member to RIPA, you will receive 25% off of your dues for the year.

Feel free to contact me with your questions, ideas, or comments, or to express your interest in becoming more active with RIPA.

I welcome your involvement and feedback and look forward to hearing from you.

Lisa M. Rocchio, Ph.D.
RIPA president
lrocchio@drlisarocchio.com

A Job Well Done!



Outgoing president Leslie Feil, Ph.D. is presented with a commemoration of her very successful tenure as RIPA President by incoming president Lisa Rocchio, Ph.D.

APA Update

Federal Advocate Report

Wendy Plante, Ph.D.

Thank you to everyone who has been responding to the information alerts I have been sending about the anticipated Medicare psychotherapy reimbursement cuts and contacting their legislators.

◆ I participated in a phone briefing with **Peter Newbould**, the Director of Congressional & Political Affairs and **Jeff Cook**, Director of Field and State Operations at the APA Practice Organization (APA PO) on the two-month delay of anticipated cuts to Medicare psychotherapy payments. Since **Senator Jack Reed** has been appointed to the 20-person committee negotiating a longer-term bill, I have contacted his office to request to speak to a member of his staff about the impact of the upcoming negotiations on RI psychologists.

◆ In March, I will once again make the trip to DC to meet up with the other APA PO Federal Advocates and to visit our Senators and Congressmen to brief them on psychology issues. Please contact me with any issues you would like me to take to the APA Advocacy staff or to our Congressional representatives.



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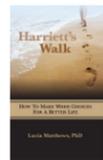
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RIPA Member Achievements:

Lucia Matthews has just published a book! **Harriett's Walk: How to Make Wiser Choices for a Better Life**, written in novel form, describes the psychotherapy process using a fictional character and her psychologist, along the way teaching nine independently promoting the psychologist, or therapy skills. The book can be used as a self-help book, can aid in process of working with a can be used by therapists to teach See her website www.harriettswalk.com for more information.



Disaster Response Network Growing

Congratulations to our latest Red Cross trained Disaster Mental Health volunteer, **Dr. Ann Porto**. The RIPA DRN is now up to 12 trained volunteers. **Mary Moore** attended an APA DRN Coordinators meeting in Dallas in November. Psychologists in attendance had participated in major national disasters such as 9-11 and Katrina as well as international disasters such as Haiti. They were a high-spirited, adventurous and fascinating crowd. Hot topics included fostering resilience, understanding and implementing factors which promote cultural awareness, and using timely MH interventions to mitigate the psychological complications of disaster.

In addition, we discussed expanding the APA-DRN role beyond our original partnership with the Red Cross to reflect federal and state disaster plans, as well as collaborating with state agencies involved with disaster response and developing new and potentially more rewarding partnerships. We are working on networking with these agencies and looking for ways to contribute to the state disaster response efforts. We are also exploring the idea of developing a multidisciplinary DRN for Rhode Island, an idea proposed by several of the smaller states. Volunteers are always welcome!

Colleague Assistance Committee –Update

The Colleague Assistance Task Force had asked and received approval from the RIPA board to formalize our role within RIPA to a Colleague Assistance Committee, with continued emphasis on education and outreach. Psychologists and psychology graduate students who are interested in becoming more involved in colleague assistance are encouraged to contact Dr. Spencer for information about upcoming meetings and opportunities to participate in our committee. All are welcome!

The colleague assistance committee (CAC) is excited to announce a co-sponsored event with the RIPA Ethics Committee on Friday, March 9th 2012 entitled: Psychologists in Transition: Clinical, Ethical, and Practical Considerations when Life Changes Occur. Details will follow soon on the RIPA website (www.ripsych.org).

The CAC has also continued efforts to facilitate the formation of peer consultation groups for interested RIPA members. Consultation groups serve as a rich resource for case consultation, self care, and professional and clinical skill development. Early efforts have already resulted in matching several psychologists in the community with groups. We are also now maintaining a database of existing groups and psychologists who are interested in collaborating with other professionals in their community. Please contact CAC chair, **Megan Spencer, Ph.D.** at megans80@hotmail.com, and include your name, location, and areas of practice (i.e., child, trauma, substance use, etc.). The CAC will work to connect interested RIPA psychologists with one another. Interested in opening an existing peer consultation group to new members? Please contact Dr. Spencer and provide information regarding the focus of the group and your contact information.

Ethics Corner

What is a Professional Will?

Perhaps the name is misleading. A professional will is not just something that applies to the end of life or end of one's practice, although that is one aspect of a professional will. A professional will is basically an emergency plan for any disruption in one's practice. If you are suddenly unable to work, whether due to illness, accident, or death, what will happen to your practice? How will clients be notified or your unavailability if you are sick and unable to contact them personally? What would happen to your records if you suddenly died?

A professional will is a plan for what happens if we die or become incapacitated without warning. Perhaps the most important aspect is the designation of a Professional Executor, a mental health professional who will respond to client needs, attend to business issues, and provide information and guidance. Another important issue involves communication and coordination between one's family with Personal and Professional Executors. A professional will should include information about client records, billing

and financial records, appointment and patient contact information, e-mail and voice mail access codes, keys to the office (and all file and storage cabinets), notification to one's malpractice carrier. Typically there is compensation for the Professional Executor. Your family and Personal Executor should know who is designated as your Professional Executor, since the Professional Executor typically needs to be notified and to begin working immediately upon your unavailability, such as to notify clients.

The APA website provides information about writing a professional will in "Practice Central," the APA Practice Organization's section. Other resources to consult are Kenneth Pope's website (www.kspope.com/therapistas/will.php). To learn more about creating a professional will, come to the half-day RIPA CE program entitled "Psychologists in Transition: Clinical, Ethical, and Practical Considerations when Life Changes." Presented by the RIPA Ethics and Colleague Assistance Committees, we will discuss various transitions psychologist face in

practice, such as maternity leave, illness, retirement, and untimely death. Strategies will be discussed to help you face these challenges, including the topic of professional wills.

What is the RIPA Ethics Committee? Our committee responds to questions by both RIPA members and the public regarding ethics issues faced by psychologists. Anyone can receive a consultation by accessing the member "on call" through the RIPA office. Your consultation question will be considered by members of the Ethics Committee, and you will receive educational assistance to help you make ethical decisions in your professional behavior. Our committee does not provide legal advice, but offers educational consideration based on the APA Ethics Code. During 2011 the RIPA Ethics Committee responded to 13 calls on a wide range of issues.

Leslie A Feil, Ph. D.
RIPA Ethics Committee Chair

APA Update

Council of Representatives Report

Peter Oppenheimer, Ph.D.

I have some good news to report: In December we received confirmation from the Practice Directorate that the Organizational Development Grants for the Small and Very Small State Associations (that's us) will be funded at the same level they were last year. Last year we learned that the grants were at risk of being cut and potentially phased out. These grants are critical support for some of the small and very state association for supporting our infrastructure and advocacy programs and were identified as a core purpose of the Special Assessment when it was created in 1985. Through the intensive efforts of SPTA leaders and Council Representatives (organized in part by Past-President Leslie Feil and myself) the APAPO BOD was urged to reconsider the proposal. The "done deal" was undone. Thankfully, they have chosen to maintain the

grants this coming year. Our dues do not cover all of our operating costs. With this support from the national organization SPTAs such as RIPA are able to maintain active advocacy programs that address important issues on the federal and state levels that affect psychologist in Rhode Island. Working together with the APAPO, we are able to collaborate to address these issues. Currently RIPA and the APAPO are addressing issues of relevance to psychologists across the country including Rhode Island. The issues include the implementation of mental health parity on the federal and state levels, threats that would undermine the Medicare rate system and psychology's role in healthcare, and the efforts of Applied Behavior Analysts to get licensed and exclude psychologists from providing a

service that is within our scope of practice. Your support of RIPA, and the APAPO through the Practice Assessment is essential towards our ability to address issues of concern to psychologists within Rhode Island.

Still more good news: the results of the 2013 Apportionment Ballot are in. The SPTAs will have one additional seat on Council in 2013. California, New York and Pennsylvania will keep two seats. New Jersey and Massachusetts will earn a second, and unfortunately Illinois loses their second seat. Our apportionment vote increased from .22% in 2012 to .30% for 2013. Thanks to everyone who voted and for your support of RIPA. These results will support the efforts of the SPTAs to have a greater voice in APA Governance.