



# State-wide CLASP Representatives Join Hands

Karen Fox, PhD

Chairs and Representatives of state-wide chapters of CLASP, the Colleagues Assistance and Support Program, met in San Jose on February 4, 2007. Dani Beckerman, PsyD, and CPA CLASP Chair, stated that one of her major goals is to create a new focus for CLASP. The organization was originally designed as a sort of early intervention plan to help distressed and impaired psychologists. In addition to support after a therapist is already impaired, Beckerman proposed a new emphasis on prevention and wellness. Recognizing our own limits, boundaries and self-care needs are all part of early intervention and necessary to sustain wellness.

Beckerman encouraged creating collaborative communities of support, not just among psychologists but between different kinds of health care providers, resulting in a mutual process of growth and learning for members. Beckerman stated that collaboration can "enhance relationships, decrease isolation, open resources, address difficult situations from a more holistic stance, and create a positive and preventative standard of care." By establishing these connections before crises arise, we can more easily access support and resources.

Diane Bridgeman, PhD, presented her article "Strength Based Approach For Therapist & Client: Preventive & Coping Strategies." Bridgeman stressed the need for balance in professional, social, creative, physical, and meditative activities. Early warning signs of therapist distress, burnout or "compassion fatigue" include:

- Social withdrawal
- Frequent irritability, with both clients and friends
- Persistent fatigue
- Professional boundary problems
- Substance abuse
- Compulsive sexuality

Additional symptoms of an at-risk therapist that were discussed include:

- Not eating healthfully
- Not returning client phone calls
- Not taking good notes
- Stopping exercise

The executive committee of CPA's CLASP program has devised a survey to assess and address psychologists' needs across their professional lifespan and is currently distributing it. Other aspects of this collaboration include CPA workshops available to the local Chapters for CE credit on such topics as wellness & resiliency; exploring the balance between parenting & practicing psychology; financial health in collaboration with Morgan Stanley, and other topics related to CLASP and self-care. Anyone interested in these workshops, can contact either their local CLASP Chair or Dr. Beckerman (Dani\_Beckerman@yahoo.com).

CPA CLASP also had suggestions for local discussion groups. They are working on getting an internet list-serve up and running,

so that members can directly communicate asking clinical or self-referral questions. Eventually, providers for CLASP would be listed there, so that individuals could seek referral directly, and more anonymously, should they prefer this. Individuals who are interested in becoming providers need to be a member of CPA as well as their local Chapter. You can obtain an application by calling the CLASP information and referral line: 888-262-8293. Providers set their own fees, policies and treatment course.

CPA CLASP also has a webpage, [www.cpaclasp.org](http://www.cpaclasp.org), that offers bibliographies and articles about topics such as vicarious traumatization, stress management, mindfulness and resilience. At the local level there is much we can do to support the mission of CLASP:

- Utilize and help develop resources that will support us as psychologists (and graduate students) in maintaining and enhancing our general health and mental well-being throughout the developmental spectrum.
- Help destigmatize help-seeking and health-seeking behaviors and interventions.
- Reduce the occurrence, frequency, and severity of distress and/or impairment of California psychologists (and graduate students) through prevention, education, early identification, and referral.
- Encourage collegial understanding, support, and referral for California psychologists (and graduate students) who are experiencing distress and/or impairment.

*Karen Fox, PhD, is SDPA's CLASP Chair and welcomes any questions or suggestions San Diego psychologists might have for discussion groups or CEU workshops of interest, [k.fox-vance@worldnet.att.net](mailto:k.fox-vance@worldnet.att.net). Note: an expanded version of this article will be published in May, in *The San Diego Psychologist*.*

### Find Out More

- Call CPA's CLASP confidential I & R Line (888-262-8293) for materials on self care and resiliency, educational programs, and information. Referral to a psychologist or community resource available upon request. This service is available to all California psychologists.
- Check out our website for additional resources - <http://www.cpaclasp.org>.
- Join our I & R (no fee) and become a provider to work with other psychologists.