Mission Statement
The Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration (SEPI) is an international, interdisciplinary organization whose aim is to promote the exploration and development of approaches to psychotherapy that integrate across theoretical orientations, clinical practices, and diverse methods of inquiry.

A Word From the Editor
Jeffery Smith

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SEPI 32nd Annual Meeting, Dublin, Ireland, June 16-18

Dear SEPI members and friends,

It was break time the first day in Dublin. The seminal article was back home, sitting on my desk, and there, in front of me, were two of its authors, Richard Lane and Lynn Nadal. The article, entitled “Memory reconsolidation, emotional arousal, and the process of change in psychotherapy: New insights from brain science” is a landmark. In it, they offer a bold and unifying explanation, down to a neurophysiological level, of what psychotherapy really does. We chatted and I explained why I am sure that reconsolidation plays a major role in clinical work, as evidenced by rapid and permanent healing, without the need for repetition, when dissociated memories of trauma are reactivated in a context of connection and safety.

Why is this so important? For the 100+ years history of psychotherapy, the missing link that could have brought opposing schools together was a fundamental understanding of how therapy works. In this issue Miriam Finnegan quotes

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President’s Column
Beatriz Gómez

Dear SEPI colleagues:

What a wonderful meeting we had in Dublin! It was in so many ways exciting and truly special. Every annual meeting has the unique characteristics and flavors of the particular event. Our 32nd Annual Meeting in Dublin in the magnificent venue of Trinity College was fueled with the warm atmosphere provided by the Local Host Committee and the kindness of the Irish people that we will all remember and cherish.

The encounter of presenters, experienced and novice, from 31 countries was extremely enriching and rewarding. We had two very well attended and exciting Pre-Conference workshops and a wide array of topics in a program of plenaries, seven parallel sessions, workshops and a lively poster session. A fruitful meeting with our past and present Journal and Newsletter editors and productive Research and Practice Consultations, where there was something for everyone, and we all experienced at some point the wish of being in more than one room at a time! The Awards Ceremony and the Regional Network Meeting bringing together Regional Network Coordinators and colleagues interested in starting new groups, completed a full time activities schedule.

The welcome reception, the poster reception and the nice coffee breaks gave the meeting a friendly flavor and delicious

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Reflections of Three Senior Therapists on their Careers as Psychotherapists

Miriam Finnegan

Reflections by Marvin Goldfried, Stanley Messer and Arthur Bohart was a date not to be missed at the 2016 SEPI conference in Dublin. My decision to attend this breakout session was an easy one based on the knowledge I already had of these three clinicians. The audience was treated to over an hour of quality discussion, banter and fun all wrapped up in the context of psychotherapy. What struck me most about this session was the ease with which the therapists delivered their experiences. They were comfortable in their own skin, with each other and with their audience. …truly a joy to experience.

The session commenced with a relaxed, informal introduction regarding the session content between the therapists. The session plan was discussed as the audience witnessed solid friendships which seemed to date back as far as early college years. It was noted that the meaning of life’s problems today when compared to long ago has changed tremendously. Goldfried talked about the difference between a map and the territory. Telling us how we might look at a map to try to find our way around, then after finding our way, come back to the map, Goldfried then highlighted how different the map looks after viewing the territory. I was reminded of the little nuggets held in old notes from my first years of graduate training. The learning pre training and post therapy was flagged as significant at this early juncture in therapist training. Noting that this is something that happens to all of us in various aspects of our lives prepared me for my day’s learning.

As each therapist shared thoughts on their particular home theory, the learning offered to the audience was all embracing. Listening to the background each gave of their professional journey alongside a personal journey—their passion for what they do was evident. This passion must truly transfer to the listener in any given context. It was refreshing to hear discussion at such a senior level trace their journeys through a single theory approach and how the influences of multiple theories shaped them as therapists. While a home theory underpinned practice, the expectation that one must stick to a single approach was removed. Stanley Messer coined it when he said “I became more relational over time both in terms of the theory of Psychoanalysis…the drive towards bistructural theory was more prominent but also in terms of my attitude. I feel I now relate more personally to my patients, more warmly, more informally, I am more relaxed and also more willing to self-disclose.” Arthur Bohart shared his view of therapy as ‘a fundamentally responsive process system where I am not the expert’ while Marvin Goldfried highlighted his interest in research by querying process and what gets people to “come around.” Challenging us all to think about the change process Goldfried said “I think one of the issues over the simile of a model which is a good beginning is that it doesn’t really help in understanding the change process.” This seemed to almost stun us all into a silence of deep thought. Goldfried continued by highlighting the use of techniques because “they seem to work but we don’t know what the underlying process of change is.” Goldfried then wondered if we fit our original models of change to the client rather than getting a true picture of change. What struck me was how difficult it is to explain or describe that process and I found myself wondering how I might actually recognize or describe those moments of change in both myself and in clients. This gave me real food for thought, thoughts I have continued to entertain since the conference.

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Storytelling was used at times to convey messages to the audience as each therapist shared a little of themselves. Cultural resources such as the Iguazu Falls in Argentina took me on a moment’s flight of fancy as I registered a deep breath of fresh air, combined with the thundering backdrop of the falls. The momentary ‘assault on the senses’ was most welcome.

The struggle between accepting self as a professional or an expert was acknowledged by the many heads nodding in the audience. Time and experience were talked about as impacting positively, shaping the therapist’s identity while on the journey of discovery. It would seem most therapists maintain a foothold in the particular tradition they originally train in as they tend to have a “continued great regard for that way.” As I sat listening to the discussions I was awe struck on being taken back to the early 60s on a voyage of discovery, learning and friendship; the type of learning I never quite seem to get from books. These clinicians were therapy in motion as they covered topics such as supervision, training, spirituality and research in response to questions from the floor.

How therapy has developed over the years is not least of all evident by the ever-growing presence of insurance providers. It was noted that in the US insurance providers will not reimburse a client whereas they will a patient. This was flagged as being likely related to which profession is considered appropriate to deal with people who have mental health problems and was too broad a topic to be further discussed. The meaning of the word client was however given by a member of the audience who told us “it comes from Latin, the Roman cliens; who is the dependent person, who is not entitled to defend his rights or cause or defense; it is really the opposite of the idea.”

What I particularly enjoyed about this breakout session was how the therapists used their home theories in conjunction with years of further professional development in a playful demonstration of therapy practice with each other, intriguing the audience into a zone of great learning. Psychoanalysis, psychodynamics, Person-Centred, Bi-structural theory, Behaviour therapy, Assimilative Integration and CBT were all mentioned during exchanges which quickly refreshed my memory to various features of each. Experienced therapists are seen to have more hyperlinks which takes us back to how we use our experience in a situation. This resonated with me as I regularly see therapists reaching deep into their data base of knowledge to come up with the goods for ‘this particular case.’ The idea of the client having more experience of therapy than the therapist brought a chuckle from the audience as they realized that the therapist is the one more likely to change in that instance. This got me thinking about the experience of students and the important learning supervision ought to provide alongside peer support in that context.

In conclusion I would say, I came out of this session feeling energized and excited. I am at a bit of a loss as to how to get my experience across to you other than to say, I was immersed in learning like I have rarely experienced. These therapists had no point to prove, there was no sense of any competitiveness or lack of respect for the others ideas. Rather there was an energy in the room which embraced the audience (which incidentally spilled out onto the corridor) in a profound experience of therapy education through storytelling, banter, sharing of knowledge and questioning.

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“The Gala Dinner was a delightful moment with Irish music, dance and a good dose of humor. The attendees even had the opportunity to practice Irish dance and showed a very laudable performance!”

All this was made possible by the collective work of many people in different parts of the world. Special gratitude to Marcella Finnerty, as Chair of the Local Host Committee, and to its members: John McLeod, Ladislav Timulak, Mary Creaner, Evelyn Gordon, Rosaleen McElvaney, Triona Kearns, and to Laura Pierce and Andrew Monaghan for their hard, efficient work and great hospitality. Thank you very much to the Program Committee: Ladislav Timulak, Nuno Conceição, Catherine Eubanks, Kevin McCarthy, Stanley Messer, Abraham Wolfe. A big thank to Catherine for her advice and support based on her excellent work in our previous annual meeting. A special acknowledgment goes to Doménica Klinar, Dome! for her competent and tireless work as assistant of the Program Chair in Argentina. Thanks to Brad Smith for his excellent and friendly online program technical support. Also, relying throughout the conference on the assistance of the energetic volunteers provided the kind of essential help with the details that make a conference run smoothly. And thanks to Tracey Martin our Conference Coordinator, who makes all threads efficiently and harmoniously come together.

We had six wonderful sponsors this year. We would like to recognize them and thank them: Three Platinum Sponsors: The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, The Turning Point Institute and the Institute for Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy. Our gold three sponsors: the American Psychological Association, the European Association for Psychotherapy and the Irish Council for Psychotherapy.

And finally, thank you to the entire Executive Committee members for their invaluable advice and ongoing kind and warm support.

This event reflected an important part of our organization’s commitment to connecting colleagues from different cultures and promoting dialogue between therapists of differing theoretical orientations. We thank you all for a great conference!

Beatriz Gómez

“A Word from the Editor, continued from page 1

Marvin Goldfried on current techniques: “they seem to work but we don’t know what the underlying process of change is.” As with medicine in the middle ages, we have been limited to metaphors not much better than “black bile” to explain pathology and therapeutic gains. Like a donut, the field of psychotherapy is a ring filled with rich psychodynamic, experiential and cognitive knowledge, but missing its center.

With work like Lane, Nadal, Ryan and Greenberg’s we can begin to fill the hole. With an understanding of how words can activate neural networks and how a context that disconfirms the terror of trauma can bring about reconfiguration of synapses, we have the beginning of a complete, neurophysiological explanation of change in psychotherapy.

Then on the last day, in the plenary, both Nuno Conceiçao and John Norcross said the same thing: What SEPI and the field need is a universal framework, a single umbrella under which all the traditional orientations and theories can fit.

Dublin convinces me that SEPI, the place for therapists who think outside the box, should be the source of such a framework. The time is now and we are the ones to do it.

Jeffery Smith
DUBLIN 2016, A PHOTO REMINISCENCE

Jeffery Smith

Some arrived early. Abe Wolf hired a local guide to find the best spots and took this lovely shot:

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On Thursday afternoon, we all convened at Burke Theater

With a wee bit of tension and anticipation,

Marcella Finnerty, Institute of Integrative Counseling and Psychotherapy, Local Host Committee Chair

and

Beatriz Gomez, President and Program Committee Chair

Opened the Conference.

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Beatriz, Franz Caspar, John McLeod and Bruce Wampold set the tone on the topic of The Therapist in Integrative therapy.

Then off we went to the many symposia, workshops, and panels. I went to the one on “Predictors/Moderators of Change in Mechanism Variables, Alliance, and Outcome in Cognitive and Dynamic Therapies for Depression.”

Mary Beth Connoly Gibbons, Seohyun Yin, and Caroline Diehl presented and Paul Crits-Cristoph was the discussant.

I learned that the lowest functioning patients made the most progress. The highest functioning ones formed the best alliance, and the addicted ones did best with more structure.

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At the break, two Dubliners, Miriam Finnegan and her friend Dorothy charmed me with their accents. Miriam agreed to write the excellent piece included above, on the memorable session with three senior therapists.

Susan Warshow said, “Enormously gratifying” of her experience at SEPI Dublin, 2016. “The atmosphere of collegial support, connection and true openness to the ideas of one another was touching and invigorating.” She also contributed a number of photos.

In the evening, we convened in the historic Main Dining Hall for the Welcome Reception. David O’Regan took this.

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Giorgio Alberti observed that “this year’s convention was well balanced in its clinical and research (both qualitative and empirical) contributions… and there was a good mix of founders (Messer, Wachtel, Goldfried, Norcross) and new and younger participants, a sign of continuity and future duration.

Ken Barish was his usual thoughtful and deeply warm hearted self, reading instead of using Power Point.

Jennifer Davidtz, Associate Editor of this publication (third from left), chaired a panel on the Therapeutic Alliance, and brought a great group of students.
Rhonda Goldman, Richard Lane overcame technology issues to galvanize the group with their mini-workshop on the change mechanism of reconsolidation.

Some attendees played hooky and found that Dublin was celebrating Bloomsday in commemoration of James Joyce’s Ulysses. Abe Wolf and Art Bohart both partook.
On Friday, a Structured Discussion was organized by Hector Fernández-Alvarez entitled “Psychotherapists training around the world. A multi-dialog between trainers and trainees.” The discussion was excellent, but the most memorable part was the extraordinary Power Point by Marketa Fialova of the Czech Republic. She produced the most charming and enlightening images showing the path she followed in becoming an integrated therapist.

Georgio Alberti said, “One thing that impressed me happened while listening to Paul Wachtel’s speech on procedural learning on Saturday. It was when he said he had been interested in behavior therapy inasmuch as it appeared to him as a way not to speak about things, as psychoanalysts mainly tended to do, but to directly experience things. If I remember well, he said he considered the BT approach to lead the patient to change his behavior as an ‘experiential’ approach.”

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On Saturday, attendees got to meet face to face with the SEPI editors, Golan Shahar, who is handing off the editorship of the Journal to Jennifer Callahan, and myself in the middle, for The Integrative Therapist. Photo by Giorgio Alberti.

Samuella Vercelli spoke from her heart:
“I hope we can make the difference towards a world where more and more people can connect empathically ‘I see you see me, I feel you feel me’” (see photo below, from one of the posters).β

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I got a chance to see Dublin on Friday night. The Irish do know how to have a good time.

Kevin McCarthy took video of much of the conference.

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Ken Critchfield and Abe Wolf agreed to be Honorary Judges of the first ever, Integrative Therapist Photo Contest.

The winning image was this beautiful panorama by Paula LiVecchi.

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Second Prize was awarded to Marian Durao for her shot of Trinity College.

And third prize to David O’Regan for his candid image of John & Marv.

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And suddenly, it was time to board buses for the Gala. Susan Warshow contributed these two.

Wishing everyone a great summer and looking forward to SEPI Denver, May 18-21 2017.

Jeffery Smith

PS: My apologies in advance for people and events that were missed, and for any errors. Uncredited photos mostly by the author.
The Integrative Therapist is
Timely, Accessible, Relevant. SEPI’s new newsletter is here now, with brief, conversational pieces that get to the heart of what SEPI is about: Integration across theories, between clinicians and researchers and between cultures around the world.

Jeffery Smith, Editor
Jennifer Davidtz, Associate Editor

Theme for the October Issue Is:
Research. Researchers and those interested in the topic are invited to submit articles. The deadline is September 15. Remember, 1250 words, conversational language and no (or almost no) references.

Call for content
The Integrative Therapist wants you to be an author. We are seeking brief, informal, interesting and actionable articles in conversational language. Think of the way you would talk to a colleague over lunch. Please limit references to those that are really important. Our bias is towards articles relevant to SEPI’s three missions: integration between researchers and clinicians, integration across cultures, and further development of psychotherapy integration.

Contributors are invited to send articles, interviews, commentaries, letters to the editor, and announcements to Jeffery Smith, MD, Editor, The Integrative Therapist.

Submission Deadlines and Publication Dates
December 1 deadline for January 15 Issue
March 1 deadline for April 15 Issue
June 20 deadline for July 15 Issue
September 15 deadline for October 15 Issue

Formatting
• Block style with one space between paragraphs, no paragraph indentations
• Use subheadings and bullet points freely
• Single spaced
• No page numbering
• No headers or footers, unless footnotes
• References should be single spaced, in APA-style format

All submissions should be sent in the body of an email to jsmd@howtherapyworks.com with the subject line “Contribution to Integrative Therapist.” Photos should be submitted as separate, attached JPEG, TIFF, GIFF, or BITMAP files, not imbedded in other documents.