

NWPPA

Northwestern Pennsylvania Psychological Association
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President's Message

I hope we all have moved through the past fall and winter seasons well. As an organization we have moved quietly and steadily through the seasons. We have had three meetings to date: A primer on the political process and psychology-offering insights into the process of communicating with our elected officials and the importance and influence the political process has on our profession. We had the Academic Panel in November-there were three presenters and a number of student posters presented. The program was again quite informative and well received by those who attended. The third meeting this past February with US representative Dahlkemper which proved to be quite pleasant and informative for all in attendance. Ms Dahlkemper was quite accessible and candid in her presentation. Also in attendance at the meeting was the director of professional affairs for PPA Sam Knapp, who drove from Harrisburg for the meeting.

We have a fourth meeting set for May 27-two three-hour CE programs: A Training in Technology and Cybersex issues presented by Dr. David Delmonico. He is the director of Internet Behavioral Consulting Company and an Associate Professor in Counselor Education at Duquesne University. Dr. Delmonico comes recommended to us by members who have attended his programs in the past.

Some comments for the organization:

At this time NWPPA is in a re-growth period. We have a good membership as it reflects both membership and talent. However, we require assistance to move the organization to a more active association. We continue to need increased attendance at meetings. This attendance affords us the few opportunities for us to reacquaint ourselves with others in our local professional community as well as to become more familiar with the variety of disciplines within our psychological community. These meetings are often the only place where we interact among academic, school, and clinical/counseling/consulting psychology. The meetings are also a place where psychology students can have exposure to people in the various facets of psychology in one room allowing us to nurture the next generation of psychology.

We need increased individual participation by members to assist with the development of future meetings and in the ongoing function of the organization. We are still taking nominations for executive board positions (including president, treasurer, and newsletter editor). Please search your thoughts (and calendars) to consider being more active in the organization.

If you have not paid for your 2009-2010 membership, please renew now. Membership renewal forms for 2010-2011 will be mailed out in August with a November due date.

As we think about our active involvement with NWPPA please remember that many hands (and minds) make light work. I look forward to seeing you all at the meeting/program on May 27. Please feel free to contact me or any of the executive board if you have questions.

Bruce Kobal
President--NWPPA

NWPPA Executive Board

President	Bruce Kobal <i>brucekobal@verizon.net</i>
President-Elect	<i>position open</i>
Past-President	Victoria Kazmerski <i>vak1@psu.edu</i>
Secretary	James Shaw <i>james.shaw.psyd@gmail.com</i>
Treasurer	Kathleen Siepel <i>kathleen.siepel@verizon.net</i>
Liason to PPA	Bob Nelson <i>nelsen001@gannon.edu</i>

The Website for the NWPPA is:
<http://www.papsy.org/nwppa/Index.htm>

Send your submission for inclusion in our next newsletter to:
Victoria Kazmerski, Newsletter Editor
vak1@psu.edu

The next newsletter will be sent out in August 2010. Deadline for submission: August 1, 2010.

Late winter meeting with Congresswoman Kathy Dahlkemper

At our February 17, 2010 meeting we had as our guest Congresswoman Katy Dahlkemper. The gathering occurred on the heels of the US senate passing their version of the health care bill and our elected officials were in a transitional period attempting to determine how they were going to reconcile the US house of representatives bill with the US senate bill. Ms Dahlkemper was introduced and then took about 40 minutes to present her experiences and concerns regarding the health care legislation. She noted that we needed to address the burdens placed on society by the current payment system to get health care and supports for accessing healthcare. She discussed the issues from her position as an elected representative as well as a small, family business owner that provides health insurance for their employees. She lamented that healthcare for young adults in their 20's is not easily obtained-offering a personal anecdote her young adult daughter who is no longer covered by her insurance.

As it was unknown at the time how decisions would be made for getting the healthcare bill to law she discussed her hope for "calmer cooler committed heads" working for the development of a good reform effort. She discussed the conflicting emotions that this issue has evoked for all the stakeholders over the last year, noting that there is nothing wrong with passion in the debate. However, the spinning of the many issues created some tension and frustration at times.

Later in the evening the program transitioned to question and answer. She offered her thought on the challenges of her first year in the US congress. It continues to be a great demand on time and effort. The process of politics has been quite an education given her transition from a business owner, dietitian, mother and wife. She noted that because the population of Western Pennsylvania so diverse she has to be diligent in listening to her constituents who can have many different perspectives. Her perspective was that it is very important to listen in this position and she feels it would be very difficult to serve this district unless done in a balanced considerate way.

During the question and answer period, we had the opportunity to help her understand how Psychology can be an integral and critical part of the reorientation of healthcare delivery. Other issues discussed were the inclusion of psychology in the loan repayment programs for graduates who participate in National Health Service loan repayment programs. The federal monies for graduate medical education was also discussed in that psychology pre doctoral and post doctoral internships were not included as recipients for these funds. She indicated that she has not heard much regarding psychology being discussed for these monies and added that this is a place where we as a profession need to better understand and utilize the political process to further our positions. It is very important that we as individual professional as well as our professional organizations communicate with our elected officials so that they are aware of our concerns.

We discussed the communication process with her and her office. She welcomed the opportunity to communicate with any of her constituents. Some suggestions offered for expressing our concerns were to make a phone call, email or snail mail. Her staff reviews emails continuously and are a good way to offer your issues quickly. If we are inclined to "snail mail", the letter gets to her sooner by sending it to her local office rather than her congressional office in Washington DC.

In conclusion, the meeting was beneficial to all in attendance. We had a pleasant and informative opportunity to talk with our US Representative. Ms Dahlkemper indicated that she would be receptive to meeting with us again in the future, so that we can keep her up to date on the concerns of psychology as well as her keeping us current on issues that would be of concerns to psychology.

We would like to thank Janet Pawlowski for coordinating the process that made this meeting possible, and thank-you to Sam Knapp for braving the element to drive from Harrisburg to Erie for this meeting. Also, thank you all who attended; please tell your psychology friends how good the meeting was and encourage them to come to future meetings. Finally, thank-you Representative Dahlkemper for making the time to meet with us we look forward to future opportunities to meet with you.

Bruce Kobal

MEMBERS NEEDED

We need more members to become involved. New officers are needed to replace the outgoing Executive Board: President for 2010-2011, President-Elect (who will become President in 2011-2012), Treasurer, Secretary, and Newsletter Editor. Our organization is small. It takes each of us to take a turn to be take on a leadership role. Members also needed to assist in organizing future events.

Nominate yourself today! Contact Bruce Kobal or any of the current executive board.

Consultation to Religious Groups: Cuidado!

Kathleen E. Siepel, MA
Private Practice

Some words sound more like their meaning than others, and for that reason I prefer the Spanish “*cuidado*” to the English “watch out”. *Cuidado* begs to be whispered, accompanied by a warning look or tone, whatever it takes to fully convey the meaning that danger lies ahead and one must take heed. In light of the as yet unending revelations of sexual abuse of minors by clergy, primarily Roman Catholic, the elaborately choreographed coverups that followed, and the exposure of a shocking lack of ethics regarding child protection laws by religious leaders, it is time for psychologists to examine how we ought to position ourselves in regard to consultation with organized religions and religious groups in general. The word that leaps instantly to mind is *cuidado!*

In thirty years of practice, I have often consulted with various religious groups, including the Roman Catholic and the Episcopal Dioceses of Northwestern PA, and all the local women’s religious communities, as well as out of state religious communities and treatment centers. I have also had many clients whose primary identity derives from their religious affiliation, as well as some individuals who have been victims of abuse by clergy of various faiths, and some who have been abusers. I have also offered consultation and training to church leaders in Guyana, South America, and Trinidad, West Indies. I list these groups not to implicate any of them in the problems described below, but rather to establish my credentials as one who knows this terrain well, including the most common potential pitfalls. For the benefit of other psychologists, I would like to offer a few observations, and suggest three guidelines for the practice of Psychology in religious circles. It is not just the current revelations of abuse that inspire my caution about such consultations, but the fact that the present state of things suggests that, in such cases, particular factors often converge that put well meaning people well off track. We are not implicated in this crisis, but we are peripheral to it. I believe that henceforth we need a more refined consciousness when offering consultation to religious groups.

The first caution is to remember that there are no special rules that apply to the practice of Psychology when consulting with religious groups. While this is obvious on the face of it, due to the level of influence that religions exert on all, including psychologists, it is quite possible to be pulled into a particular mystique rather than to stand one’s ground as a professional psychologist where there are areas of difference or conflict. While there are many reasons why one may be tempted to view religious groups as “special cases” and thus deviate from ethical practice, the fact is that there are, and ought to be, no exceptions to one’s standard of practice. Mandated reporting laws, for instance, apply whether the perpetrator is a priest, a minister, or the guy down the street. Also, our professional mandates about confidentiality apply, whether the fees are paid by a high ranking religious leader, an insurance company, or any other third party. Fees do not buy information, no matter who pays, and there ought to be no exceptions to confidentiality violations beyond the usual: imminent threat of danger to self or others. First caution: in all instances, the same rules apply to all.

The second caution is the need to learn as much about the religious context into which one is invited as possible. For instance, if there is a “need to know” about sexual orientation of candidates evaluated for further training as religious leaders, one ought to ascertain how this information is to be used before accepting the role of examiner. It is quite possible for a psychologist to unwittingly become a co-conspirator in a type of profiling based on information obtained during a comprehensive evaluation. If the psychologist shares that prejudice, he or she may not look critically enough at the use of the information provided to a system. Even though the client/subject signs a consent, the ethical psychologist needs to know how that information will likely be used. Candidates seeking acceptance for higher training ought to give only free, fully informed consents, and transparency must accompany the transfer of personal information obtained by a psychologist.

If one is invited into a situation as simply an examiner and not a consultant to the system, I believe there is still an ethical obligation to know how the information will be used, or at least to not cultivate ignorance about this aspect of one’s work.

The same is true of accepting a role as a consultant to a religious group. The psychologist ought to know everything possible about that group before accepting such a role rather than risk becoming window dressing on a shady operation. While every group to which a psychologist consults has its own culture, subtleties, and nuances which demand respect, in light of recent sex abuse revelations, the professional must exercise due diligence that nothing in a religious subculture runs counter to child protection laws or that in no way will his or her professional services be misused to serve the group in a manner harmful to its members.

The third caution is to not let one’s own religious beliefs override professional ethics. If the third party payer, whether insurance company or religious leader, occupies that third invisible chair in our treatment rooms, when consulting with religious groups, be sure that a fourth one is also in place, occupied by no less than “God”. This fourth occupant will likely be the object of many projections by the client or client system, but the psychologist needs to maintain professional objectivity. Though prejudice is by nature hidden, and therefore the psychologist may not know what he or she “just knows” to be true and right, our professional preparation requires us to find our own blind spots and turn the light of consciousness on them. For instance, if one is a “good” Catholic, there may be a tendency to see allegations of clerical sexual abuse as anti-Catholic strategies, and to loyally align one’s self with a coverup in defense of one’s religion. Religious over-identification could take other forms, too, such as not being fully available to the client searching for language to articulate his or her religion-related abuse, believing that prayer and penance are sufficient “punishment” for a clerical perpetrator, becoming complicit by failing to report, or endorsing religion-based treatment guidelines one knows to be inadequate for a sexual aggressor.

The “*cuidado*” stance is one of constant vigilance and objectivity, believing no one and everyone, particularly when people at any level of the system begin invoking the occupant of that fourth chair as a reason to do something of questionable morality. To put it even more simply, parents who lock their daughter in the basement to save her from “sin” need investigation as much as parents who do it for any other reason. Similarly, ordained perpetrators both need and deserve full treatment, not a reassignment to a new environment as part of a scandal-free cover-up based on magical thinking. One can always hope for a miracle, but in the meantime, put a robust treatment plan in place.

Finally, if one is repeatedly engaged for “clean up” work while knowing that the original problem remains permanently unaddressed for religious reasons, a psychologist ought to raise questions about where the problems are coming from and offer remedies, even if those would not be supplied by the psychologist him/her self. We ought to picture ourselves potentially on the receiving end of those two penetrating questions: What did you know and when did you know it? We ought to be at least curious about other aspects of any system to which we consult, much as the professionals who offered consultation regarding torture ought to have questioned the ethics of their particular application of psychology.

Ideally, the first intervention, when one senses a problem, should be the education and development of the religious group, helping them to endorse standards in keeping with the law and with sound ethics. Sometimes the relationship between Psychology and religion is tense and mistrustful, and other times there is not enough tension and a group may become more psychological than religious. Locally I have seen continued growth over the years, particularly in women’s religious communities, in the mutually respectful collaboration between Psychology and religion. I have rarely seen conflict between the ethical practice of Psychology and any form of healthy spiritual/religious practice. Significant conflicts are likely diagnostic of dysfunction in either one party or the other.

In religious groups, one finds all types of people, in both leadership and members. I have found it extremely rewarding to work as a consultant to religious leaders who are basically healthy and sincerely interested in working with people who search for meaning in life through religion. As one priest recently remarked: “I prefer to work with those who are searching, who are on a journey, rather than those who may be more “religious” per se, but who feel they have all the answers, and thus are closed to mystery.” The transcendent function is part of the whole, healthy personality, and religions throughout the ages have developed in response to the need people feel to reach for and grasp meaning beyond the ordinary and mundane aspects of life. Religion itself can be both a force for good or for evil, but we are justifiably shocked when one who purports to help people find their souls instead corrupts and degrades their innocence.

I have also seen how vital and how different the role of religion is in developing countries, such as Guyana, where there are very few priests, compared to here, in the US. There the church is often the only vehicle for development for the poor, and in particular for women. For instance, a lay leader in the church in Guyana has great responsibilities and often church work is his or her only chance, through training and experience, to develop personally, whereas a lay leader here in Erie may be primarily engaged in a nominal role, assisting the clergy in keeping an established operation running smoothly. The psychological needs of religious groups in less developed countries are quite different from here, but in both circumstances there is a need for accountability by religious leaders to their members, and for professional consultations of the highest standard. The ethical professional takes the “*cuidado*” stance in all his or her work, but for the reasons outlined above, it is particularly urgent now that we hold this attitude when we enter today’s complex religious scene.

Undergraduates Share Their Research Projects

The 38th Annual Western Pennsylvania Undergraduate Psychology Conference was held on Saturday, April 17, 2010 at Slippery Rock University. The keynote address was presented by Dr. David Baker, Director of the Archives of American Psychology at the University of Akron. Dr. Baker spoke about the history of psychology from the perspective of the academic institutions of psychology. He shared many anecdotes and photos from the Archives of the History of American Psychology. About 200 undergraduates shared their research projects in poster sessions and oral presentations. It was an impressive showing by the regional academic institutes.

Membership renewal forms are available at: <http://www.papsy.org/nwppa/Join.htm>

If you would like to have your agency or course featured here, please contact the Newsletter editor: yak1@psu.edu

Are You Ready for the DSM-V?

Don't throw out your copies of the DSM-IV-TR just yet. The fifth edition of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) which was scheduled to be published in 2012 has now been pushed back to May 2013 (www.dsm5.org, 2010). There are many proposed changes, but nothing is written in stone yet. A major change being proposed is the use of the five axis system for classification that we are all accustomed. Currently under review involves the combining of Axis I, II and III as simply Psychiatric and General Medical Diagnosis. There are currently many other changes under review.

Several changes are being proposed for Disorders First Diagnosed in Childhood. Among the new proposed diagnoses are PTSD in Preschool Children, Temper Dysregulation Disorder with Dysphoria, Callous and Unemotional Specifier for Conduct Disorder, and Non-suicidal Self Injury. Rett's Disorder is on the list to be removed while Asperger's Disorder is proposed to be reclassified under Autism Spectrum Disorders.

There are some new disorders being proposed by the committees. A new mood disorder may be Mixed Anxiety Depression Disorder. New anxiety disorders may include Skin Picking Disorder, Hoarding Disorder, and Olfactory Reference Disorder. New Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders may include Hypersexual Disorder, Paraphilic Coercive Disorder and Sexual Interest / Arousal Disorder. Many new sleep disorders are being proposed including Kleine Levin Syndrome characterized by too much sleep.

Some familiar terms may be eliminated and become part of our academic history. The term dementia may be replaced with Major Neurological Disorder. The terms hypochondriasis and factitious disorder may be eliminated and become part of Somatoform Disorder Not Otherwise Specified. The term dissociative fugue may not have a classification of its own in the DSM-V. Finally, the category of Adjustment Disorders may be eliminated and incorporated under the specific categories.

Although the proposed list of personality disorders appear familiar, diagnosing these disorder may become more complicated with the proposed change to have five severity levels. For a complete list of proposed changes, visit www.dsm5.org. The DSM-V may still seem futuristic, but we will eventually have to learn a new method of diagnosis.

James Shaw, Psy.D.

Future NWPPA Meetings and Events of Interest

Thursday, May 27, 2010

Training in Technology and Cybersex Issues: Two 3-hour continuing education workshop for Psychologists, Educators and Certified Counselors, Presented by: David L. Delmonico, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Counselor Education—Duquesne University, Director—Internet Behavior Consulting Company. Contact Bruce Kobal brucekobal@verizon.net for more information. *Registration form enclosed in this newsletter.*

Renaissance Centre, 1001 State Street, Erie, PA

Online Sex: Keeping Up with What Your Clients Know and Do

8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Registration

8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Workshop

Assessing, Managing, and Treating Problematic Online Sexual Behavior

12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. Registration

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Workshop

June 2010 - Planning meeting for the 2010-2011 calendar, contact Bruce Kobal brucekobal@verizon.net for more information.

Fall 2010 - Academic research panel. Submissions for presentation - contact Victoria Kazmerski vak1@psu.edu by Aug. 1, 2010.

Spring 2011 - Continuing Education Workshop. Ideas for topics and speakers are welcomed. If you would like to coordinate this event, contact Bruce Kobal brucekobal@verizon.net.

NWPPA

c/o V. Kazmerski
PSU Erie, Psychology
47011 College Dr.
Erie, PA 16563-1501