

Minnesota Women in Psychology

Spring
2011

Networking and support for all women in the mental health professions.

Celebration of Women: Women as Healers

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. . . and much more

Minnesota Women in Psychology will have its annual meeting and program: "Celebration of Women: Women as Healers" on **Friday, April 29th** at Mayflower Congregational Church, 106 E Diamond Lake Rd, Minneapolis from **12:00 noon - 3:00 PM**.

There will be a short annual meeting, as required by our bylaws, and a luncheon followed by a program by **therapeutic harpist, Tami Briggs**. Tami Briggs is the author of "Women as Healers: Voices of Vibrancy" and "Grace Notes: Reflections on the Harp and Healing". She has a certification from the International Harp Therapy Program and has played harp at the bedside of hundreds of hospital and hospice patients.

Ms. Briggs will share with us new relaxation techniques for our clients and for ourselves. According to Ms. Briggs, "When the harp is played therapeutically, it promotes feelings of deep relaxation and inner peace, as well as encourages contemplation and reflection."

Through the program participants will:

- Explore research data and rationale for incorporating music in their psychology practices.
- Define specific benefits of harp and therapeutic music (comfort, pain distraction, relaxation, and anchoring).
- Learn musical principles and practical tips to apply to their everyday lives.
- Experience a musical journey and experientially feel music's healing role.

A Certificate of Attendance will be provided for 1.5 hours of continuing education.

The fee is \$25 for members of MWP and \$30 for non members.

RSVP to WmPsychlgy@aol.com.

- Connie Studer, M.A., LMFT



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Advertising Guidelines: Ads must be of interest to women psychologists, and MWP reserves the right to reject or edit advertising. Publication of any advertising does not constitute endorsement; advertising by psychologists must follow APA guidelines. Cost: Ads will be accepted in increments of business card size (2" x 3 1/2"); cost of one business-card-size ad is \$20, two—\$35, three—\$50, four—\$60, etc., up to \$100 for 8-card-size, equivalent of a full-page ad. All advertising must be prepaid. Procedures: Ads must be camera ready and fit the requirement of increments of business card size. Submit by the newsletter deadline to: WmPsychlgy@aol.com or MWP, 5244 114th Ave, Clear Lake, MN 55319.

2010-2011 Executive Committee

Dawn Brennan, Chair

Laura Tripet Dodge

Faye Foote

Asha Mukherjee, Newsletter

Connie Studer

Jennifer Nash Wright

Karen Wright

Barb O'Brien, Treasurer

Membership in MWP is available to women who hold either a Master's or doctoral degree in psychology from a regionally accredited institution or have been licensed as psychologists in Minnesota, and others who support its mission. Membership applications are available by calling the MWP office, 612.296.4060 or email at WmPsychlgy@aol.com or on the website at www.mnwomeninpsychology.org.

Notes From The Chair

Aloha! (*It doesn't hurt to pretend!*)

This persistent winter weather has not dampened the Executive Committee's energy and enthusiasm. Plans are in the works for our spring Celebration of Women/annual meeting on April 29th that will feature Tami Briggs, a therapeutic harpist who will be presenting her program, "Women as Healers". Look for more information to come but save the date!

We are welcoming Kim Carter to the Executive Committee. She came to us by way of Laura Nielson who has been busy recruiting newcomers to help the EC continue to grow and expand the organization.

Our Marketing and Communication committee is gaining steam as it prepares to polish the website to improve it's functionality and appearance. I'm continually amazed at the time and expertise it takes to build and maintain a website. They don't just magically update themselves! They have a long 'to do' list and would welcome anyone with time and interest to join them.

Conversations continue on the EC as we make plans for a 1/2 day workshop to be held in the fall of this year. We would welcome any who may have experience in putting together a small workshop. Feel free to contact any one of us on the EC.

Brown Bag lunches continue, a graduate student information night was held the last week of February, with another Brown Bag on the 3rd of March at the Midwest Trauma Center in Minnetonka.

So, as you can see, winter has not held us hostage. We look forward to seeing many of you either at the Private Practice Group, Book Club, the upcoming MPA conference or in April at our celebration.

- Dawn Brennan, LPCC



Professional Development Committee Update

The Professional Development Committee is in talks to offer a fall retreat to MWP members! We are very excited about this awesome opportunity to connect as a community! We are currently seeking interested members who are willing to donate their time on a short-term basis to help coordinate and plan such an event. While we welcome any support or time, we would love a few individuals who can commit to about 4 hours per month for the next 6 months. If you are interested please contact Kim Carter at kim@kimcartercounseling.com or 612.750.2918. Thanks in advance!

- Kim Carter, M.A.

Social Action Committee

Book-Group Book-Review

Little Bee by Chris Cleave

Consensus was not reached among our MWP Book Group members after reading *Little Bee*. It is a book which reveals the risks of a Nigerian girl who is in the wrong place at the wrong time in her own country and experiences trauma from violent and ruthless representatives of the oil company which displaces (murders) a village where oil had been located. Because Little Bee and her sister had escaped from the village and were witnesses to the wholesale murder of its inhabitants, her life is at risk. She stows away to England and is put into a detention center for illegal immigrants there.

After two years in detention, when Little Bee gets released (rather implausibly,) she goes to the one British couple she met on the beach of Nigeria. Her adventures connect her with Sarah, the woman of the couple, who had saved Little Bee's life at the cost of her own finger and her husband's self esteem, and, who is inextricably linked to Little Bee by their shared traumatic memory of what happened on that beach.

The story is told from their two perspectives in alternating chapters. Little Bee writes very much in the first person and describes a person with PTSD quite accurately. Sarah's account is more sophisticated but she is equally as honest as Little Bee. Sarah's husband Andrew reveals a severely depressed idealist. The entire story illustrates the journey of an undocumented immigrant who has fled for her life, but who cannot risk fighting for her rights legally.

Sarah's journey comes from privilege, but emerges from an ethical and active choice she made on the beach which began a ripening process of maturity in terms of understanding Little Bee's predicament. While her choices are not always "moral" in the narrowest sense, Sarah is able to see beyond her small world

and discern justice's call to action. What's more, she is able to act on that call.

The comedic presence of "Batman," Sarah's son, breaks up some of the heaviness of a surprising and fast-paced plot. Batman insists on wearing his costume day and night and fights the "baddies" in his own way and in his own imagination. He forms a tight bond with Little Bee and becomes the hope for the future for Little Bee and Sarah.

One of our group members was very distressed that the male author, Chris Cleave, spoke for a girl and then young woman, Little Bee, who was also from another culture (Nigerian.) While the author did spend some time in West Africa as a child, she felt that he was stretching his abilities to write about a different

gender and different culture in this book. Some of us talked about how we essentially suspend judgment while reading a book, and then think critically about it after the reading. However, many of us have had the experience of not trusting an author, and this was definitely her experience.

I would recommend this book which moved very fast and was exciting. Little Bee is capable of expanding our knowledge of the larger world and of one kind of immigrant experience. Sarah's process addresses some of our choices as privileged women. Whether you like it or don't, you will not be bored or disappointed because of some mindboggling (and horizon-expanding) features.

- Gail Anderson, M.A.,LP

**The Social Action Book Group
meets four times a year.
Check the web site at
www.mnwomeninpsychology.org
or read the weekly *EBlast*
for the next selection to read.**

Spotlight on New Members

This Year's New members as a Group

At the time of this newsletter submission, there are 31 new members in MWP for this membership year. Of these, 12 have one of prevalent licenses (e.g., LP, LPC, LICSW, LMFT). Of these, 4 are LP's, 3 are LPC's, 2 are LICSW's and 3 are LMFT's, as per current records (it is possible that our records are not complete as yet for the last few recently enrolled members). There are 11 among these with an MA degree, 2 Psy.D's, and, 3 PhD's. It is impressive that 3 of the articles in this newsletter are by new members and one new members has joined the Executive Committee. It is exciting to note the enthusiasm among the new members. We welcome all of them and look forward to active participation in MWP activities and further contributions to the newsletters. Those of you who are warming up to contributions have 3 months until the next deadline for newsletters submissions on June 1, 2011. In the meantime, we hope to meet you personally at some of the MWP events.

(Editor's note: Please look for spotlight on individual new members in a future newsletter).

Welcome to New Members

Carri Anderson

Jennifer M Bennek

Jo M Gulstad, Psy.D.

Jodi Holden

Denise A Kautzer, M.A., LPC, CPA

Elaine J Lyman, M.A., LPC

Kara D Moen

Danielle J Pierce, B.A.

Sue M Sexton, M.A., LP

Annie M Simmons

Lisa A Wilke

Professional Personalities

An Interview with Janet Thomas, PsyD, LP

Janet Thomas is a past president of MWP, has been on the MPA ethics committee for many years, and, as we all saw in the last newsletter, she had recently authored a book on ethics. Further to that, she has been elected a member of the APA Ethic Committee. The following is an interview with her for the perusal of the MWP membership. My sincere thanks to Dr. Janet Thomas, for taking time from her very busy schedule (including travelling for work and other commitments).

1. **In writing your book on Ethics, what did you see as the most challenging ethical issue to address?**

Perhaps the most significant challenge for me was in attempting to identify the confluence of theoretical approaches with the ethics and practice of clinical supervision. I wanted to apply concepts from personality theory and theories of professional development and psychotherapy to clinical supervision. And then, with those links established, I examined them with an overlay the ethical standards and guidelines of 11 different mental health professions. So, the challenging part for me was to extrapolate from existing literature and conceptualize the ideas and applications in novel ways.

2. **What do you see as the trickiest issue for mental health providers?**

One of the greatest related challenges for mental health professionals, I believe, involves the need to recognize supervision as a unique competency, requiring a specific skill set. Experience as a psychotherapist or evaluator, for example, is necessary but not sufficient preparation for providing effective clinical supervision. Thus, prospective and current supervisors must ensure that they have training in both the areas of practice they will be supervising and in the theory and techniques of supervision itself. Up-to-date knowledge of ethical standards and standards of practice is also essential.

3. **Do you see specific ethical issues that students / new psychologists would need to keep in mind?**

There are several important measures that new professionals can

benefit from attending to. Self-care is critical. On the personal front, it is important to have a solid support system in place as well as other resources needed to maintain physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Professionally, I feel strongly that we all need to maintain connections with colleagues. Supervision or consultation, in some form, is critical for ensuring that we are staying aware of current standards of practice. Subscribing to journals and newsletters, attending continuing education programs, and being active in professional associations are other important ways of staying connected and up-to-date.

4. **What are the most important issues for female providers?**

Counselors and psychologists are drawn to this profession for many reasons. For women in particular, a significant component of this motivation seems to be a genuine desire to be caring and helpful to others — generally, an asset to us in maintaining our enthusiasm and motivation for our work. Yet, these abilities to care, convey empathy, and offer help can sometimes compromise our judgment about what is and is not actually helpful. What is most gratifying for clients is not always the most therapeutic course of action, and dealing with a client's anger or dissatisfaction is challenging. Sometimes, our desire to avoid actions that can result in a client's disappointment can lead us to transgress boundaries — with the best of intentions. These lines are not always easy to discern, and consulting with colleagues or a supervisor is often helpful in gaining clarity when we are uncertain.

5. **As a past president of MWP, what do you believe to be the most important material in your book for the MWP members?**

What I said above about women in the helping professions is pertinent for MWP members. Building connections through associations like MWP can offer a powerful antidote to isolation and can go a long way to helping us staying clinically sharp, ethically informed, and personally fulfilled in our work.

- Janet T. Thomas, Psy.D., L.P.

Barbara O'Brien, M.Ed, LICSW

Barb O'Brien is a member of the Executive Committee and is involved in several other committees as well. She is also the Treasurer for MWP. My impression of her is that she is very diligent, sincere and extremely hardworking. She is so conscientious that when legal information and/or issue need to be explored from various agencies in the community, Barb's reply-emails come in an unusually prompt manner. It is also mindboggling (to some of us who qualify as 'Math Morons') how she manages and remembers all about the financial angles and management of community resources. She is clear spoken, straightforward, very fair and kind. A lot of effort from Barb went into both planning and man-

agement of the last Wine and Chocolate event and some Brown Bag lunches offered by MWP. Barb is always ready to pitch in with extra amounts of her time as well as never being at all hesitant about the offers of many of her personal resources to enhance MWP's financial status. For example, Executive Committee meetings are hosted in her office building without charge to MWP. Barb works from her Plymouth office serving also Maple Grove, Minnetonka, and Rockford areas. She obtained her M. Ed in Guidance & Counseling from North Dakota State University in Fargo.

Dawn Brennan, LPCC

Dawn Brennan is the current president of MWP and the chair of the executive committee. My first contact with Dawn was when I started working on the newsletter in the Fall of 2010. Dawn was warm, welcoming, very encouraging and supportive of me as well as every other members in the EC (I was feeling “very new” which in my case meant very ignorant about the procedures and very inadequate). As the meeting progressed, I noted that she was extremely well informed for her position of chair of EC and was very thoughtful and thorough. She listened with full attention to all matters, and came up with very practical suggestions. She seemed like a great democratic leader as the meeting ran smoothly, with her being mostly in the background but, she came up with constructive ideas whenever the group needed it to reach a final decision. She conducted the meeting very smoothly and was empathic. Everyone in the group seemed very relaxed with her and free to speak her mind. The discussions were all very congenial. Dawn

showed a calm attitude and a sense of humor. To some of my questions, she gave answers including clear history, professional rationale and a view of the goals of MWP as an organization in relation to the community. Needless to say I have been impressed with her abilities and her professionalism. Apart from my own impression of being amazed with her work as Chair of the Executive Committee and MWP President, Dawn serves the North metro areas of Cambridge (where her office is), East Bethel, Isanti and North branch. In her attitude, Dawn is interpersonally receptive, warm and supportive even when she is not in the therapist role and I am sure that her clients feel lucky to have her. She received her Masters in Professional Psychology from the College of Great Falls, Montana, in 1992.

Laura Tripet Dodge, MS, LP

Laura is a member of the Executive Council and the chair of the membership committee, which in no way limits her contributions to MWP. She had a major role in the Wine & Chocolate event as well as in promoting the Brown Bag Lunches. She is a very active member of MWP, with great enthusiasm and abundant cheerfulness. She has an extremely positive attitude, and is very dedicated to the MWP cause. An example of this is that she arrived to attend the EC meeting straight from the airport after her international trip! My experience with Laura has also

been in the past, in a Clinical Consultation Group and I had found Laura very insightful and tuned into her clients. Laura is very intuitive and original. She is very aware of the total situation and not limited by inflexibility.

Laura got her Masters in Clinical Psychology from North Dakota State University.

- Asha Mukherjee, Ph.D., LP

Pennie Bucilla R.N., B.N., L.L.B., M.A. (Ed.), M.A. (Psych): *A Self Portrait*

I completed a Diploma in Nursing, which is the equivalent of the Associates Degree, in 1989. I worked in pediatric nursing, and while doing so, completed a Certificate in Neonatal Intensive Care, and subsequently, started working in the NICU. While working there, I finished a Bachelor of Nursing Degree, and applied to Law School. I completed a law degree, the equivalent of the J.D. I was elected to the presidency of a local group of the Alberta Nurses Union, and represented approximately 3500 nurses at a large teaching hospital. I also undertook to learn about dialysis, and after my presidency, accepted a position in an outpatient hemodialysis unit in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

My children, all grown-up and busy with their lives, I decided to make a huge change in my life, and moved to Minneapolis, where I had been offered a job at The University of Minnesota Hospital. It was a challenging and exciting experience. While working at the hospital, I returned to school and completed a Master of Arts in Education. Shortly after completing that degree, I accepted a position in the Transplant Office, and worked with post-transplant kidney patients. Always interested in Psychology, I again returned to school and completed a Master of Arts in Counseling and Psych Services. My internship was completed at The Neighborhood Involvement Program,

where I did individual and group therapy and worked in their sexual assault program.

With degree in hand, I opened a private practice in Apple Valley, providing a low cost alternative for individuals south of the river. Recognizing the need for prescriptive authority to truly meet my clients' needs, I have again returned to school and am currently working on a Doctorate in Nursing Practice. Due to being a full time student and the current school and studying demands, I am not taking new clients at this time.

I enjoy reading and travel. My travel focus is to see the sites of America. That feels important after having recently gotten American citizenship. I am a member of three book clubs and truly enjoy the discussion and fellowship particularly the Minnesota Women in Psychology's Book Club. I believe in helping others and mentor a little girl through Kids 'n Kinship, knit scarves for Operation Gratitude, and lend money through the microfinance group.

- Pennie Bucilla, R.N., B.N., L.L.B., M.A. (Ed.), M.A. (Psych).

(Editor's Note: As the above indicates, Pennie is truly Multidisciplinary and a valuable member of the Social Action Book Club)

Remembering Your Oxygen Mask: Thoughts on Therapist Self-Care

We are all familiar with the oxygen mask analogy when it comes to remembering to take care of ourselves before we take care of others- an act of which many of us as women and therapists tend to neglect. In honor of that concept, allow me to introduce you to MWP's new regular column on therapist self-care: Remembering Your Oxygen Mask. I will be happy to write most of the articles, but welcome guest writers at any time! If you have thoughts or topic ideas, feel free to forward those to me as well at kim@kimcartercounseling.com.

I was recently at an MWP event introducing and welcoming new students to the organization. I was chatting with a fellow therapist when a couple of students asked us why they should join MWP- what could they get out of it? And the answer to me was immediate: it will give you sense of community. A sense of belonging is vital in a field of work that can often be very isolating.

Caring for yourself as a therapist requires you to have a community to which you can belong. Why is this? Well, community does many things for us and the research is there to prove it. Among other things studies have shown that belongingness to a community does three things:

1. Increases social capital.
2. Improves an individual's access to and use of social support.
3. Provides an individual with a social identity.

As many of you may already know "Social capital is the actual or potential resources that result from social connections" (Beaudoin & Tao, 2007). Social capital is reciprocal in nature, often positively affecting both the community and the individual. For example, a therapist who offers a free seminar in his or her spiritual community provides a valuable service to the community and at the same time may experience an increase in referrals as word of mouth spreads. Additionally, social capital is important to self-care because studies have found that an individual who has more social capital tends to experience a reduction in stress, increased access to medical services and protection from outside factors (Nikelly, 2003).

Secondly, belonging to a community provides us with social support. Social support is the expression of your relationships, which in the therapy world could mean anything from someone to call when you've had a tough client, to a therapist friend to meet for coffee when your day is lonely, or even a colleague you can trust to handle your professional will.

Lastly, community provides us with people we trust with whom we can share our feelings and an opportunity to create meaningful connections with other human beings. It gives us others with whom we can relate, and ultimately provides us with our own social identity. Haslam, et al found that a positive social identity means belonging to a group that provides "personal security, social companionship, emotional bonding, intellectual stimulation and collaborative learning" (2009).

While the research shows us belonging to a community is important, I think those of us who choose to belong to an organization like MWP

instinctively know this to be true. We also know that while MWP can be a great source of community for us, it may not be enough. Here are just a few thoughts on keeping and maintaining your sense of community.

- You get what you give. Invest yourself in your community and it will return the favor. Remember- social capital is reciprocal in nature.
- Don't put all your eggs in one community basket. It often takes us several places of belonging to really care for ourselves. Look into many places where you can feel a sense of community, including places of spirituality or worship, neighborhood organizations, professional organizations, volunteer groups, friendships, book clubs and numerous other opportunities. Connect yourself in lots of places and you will always have a place to belong.
- Nurture your relationships on an individual level. It is not enough just to simply join a community. What we really need is personal relationships within that chosen community. Make a point to remember names, seek out individuals with whom you share many commonalities and be intentional about caring for those relationships.
- Start seeing your belongingness to and participating in a community as self-care. Hopefully the more you honor the fact that belonging to a community helps you stay healthier, feel more support and handle stress better, the more you will invest your time in that community.

As women who work in the field of psychology we know the importance of social support and probably often find ourselves encouraging our clients to reach out to others- gently nudging them to participate in a community as a way to care for themselves. In the midst of our busy lives it can be easy to forget we need the same for ourselves. Hopefully this article serves as a reminder to us all to take good care of ourselves, so we can continue to take good care of our clients, families and communities.

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- Kim Carter, MA

(Editor's note: Kim Carter is a new MWP member and will be joining the Executive Committee in the near future.)

From Self-care to Client-care: Multicultural Matters

The Attributes of RESILIENCE

(As quoted by Mary Pipher in her book *In The Middle of Nowhere*)

The following are the features of resilience recognized by author Mary Pipher based on her contact with people of many different cultures. She found these as common factors among the well adjusting new immigrants from many cultural communities struggling (in the face of everything new and in addition, their involuntary immigration) to settle in Nebraska. They seem to make sense from both interpersonal (social –emotional) and intrapersonal (motivation related self- esteem) adjustment aspects.

- Future orientation
- Energy & good Health
- The ability to pay attention
- Ambition & initiative
- Verbal expressiveness
- Positive mental health
- The ability to calm down
- Flexibility
- Intentionality
- Lovability
- The ability to love new people
- Good moral character

- Asha Mukherjee, PhD, LP

References: Pipher, Mary (2002) *The Middle of Everywhere: Helping Refugees Enter the American Community*. New York, Harcourt, Inc.

(Editor's note: This was one of the books read by the Social Action Committee Book Club of MWP. We all found it very enlightening and useful.

Community Concerns

The Value of Mentoring & the Kids n' Kinship Program

Every day as we arrive at our offices or other places of employment, we know we are going to hear stories of lives in crisis, of souls that have been crushed, of paths that have gone astray. How often do you reflect and wonder how the person you've just seen developed into the person they are? How often do you find that the problems started in childhood, whether it was early trauma, inadequate coping education, lack of good role models, lack of stability or lack of trust? What if you had an opportunity to make a difference in a child's life, and perhaps prevent some of these issues from developing into adult issues? We have that opportunity through mentoring.

Many children experience disruptive lives as a result of experiences their parents face. Some children have parents with mental illness, some have parents who are incarcerated, and some have faced homelessness and destitution. For whatever reason, many children are left in a position where they could significantly benefit from having a stable, responsible, dependable adult role model in their lives. Resilience is a learned skill which can be acquired with the help of a supportive and

concerned adult mentor.

Adult mentors, aside from preventing an "at-risk child" from making poor choices, receive the benefit of sharing experiences with a child and from a child's perspective. Adults are treated to the joy and innocence of children as they explore and discover new opportunities. Sometimes we need that refreshing perspective to make our lives more alive.

Personally, I mentor through a program called Kids n' Kinship which matches eligible mentors with children referred to the program through their school, various social agencies or their own parents. If you are interested in mentoring, or supporting the program through a financial donation, you can contact Kids n' Kinship at 651.686.0990, speaking to Rita Younger the Program Coordinator, or through their website <http://www.kidsnkinship.org/default.aspx>.

- Pennie E. Bucilla R.N., B.N., L.L.B., M.A. (Ed.), M.A. (Psych).

Contributors to This Issue

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Connie Studer, M.A., LMFT

Janet Thomas, PsyD, LP

Self Care Workshop

A \$79 Workshop with 6 CEU's on May 5th in Bloomington and on May 6th in Roseville titled

Compassion Fatigue:

Recapture your sense of purpose

hope and joy

To register: www.cmieducation.org

Adult ADD Book Review

Attention Deficit Disorder in Adults; A Different Way of Thinking by Lynn Weiss, Ph.D.

In a business where one of our main tasks is helping clients reframe thoughts and experiences, author Lynn Weiss, PhD. does just that in her book *Attention Deficit Disorder in Adults: A Different Way of Thinking*. She effectively creates a new lens with which to see the attention deficit disorders by taking a disorder that is often stigmatized and casting a positive light on it.

Weiss sees ADD as a “brain style” that is neither wrong nor disordered, but simply different than our more common linear brain style. She contends that the ADD brain is instead one that tends to be non-linear, less structured, less detail oriented and one that functions on a big-picture level. Weiss acknowledges that ADD can cause problems when one does not learn effective ways of coping with the more problematic traits- such as excess energy, interest in many things or tendency to learn kinesthetically. However, throughout the book, she refuses to see ADD as pathological. In fact, the very first thing she does is to provide a list of 29 positive attributes of ADD- obviously a very different approach than the DSM IV-TR.

Weiss seems to draw from personal experience and clinical observations, as well as combine theories to explain her beliefs about ADD, including pieces

Experiential Essence

Traveling Home

“Oh, where are you going on your vacation? Somewhere warm?”

“Actually, no. We’re headed to Montana.”

“Oh! You must be a skier.”

“No, actually. We’re going home.”

This is how many conversations went as I prepared to head west via Amtrak to Whitefish, Montana this past month. Struggling with grief after the loss in May of my father, my daughter’s grandfather, she and I decided to honor his memory by traveling west to revel at the Whitefish Winter Carnival. This same trip was one my father repeated yearly while my husband, myself and our two kids lived our lives to the fullest in the land of the Big Sky.

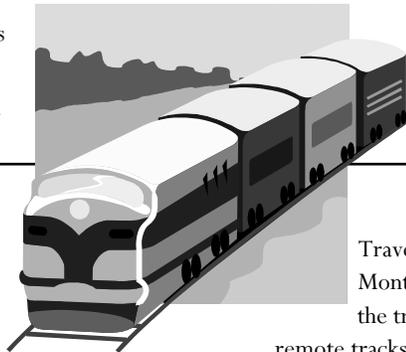
We climbed on board our Amtrak coach in St. Paul after several weather related delays and a bomb scare outside of Milwaukee. Despite our frustration with these delays, we boarded happily and settled in for our twenty-one hour journey.

If you have traveled by train, you know well the laziness that can settle in if you allow. Despite your best effort to prepare for what seems like endless miles of travel, eventually you find yourself looking, staring out the window taking in brief snapshots of your journey as it steadily rolls by. Inevitably you will begin to notice roads that appear to lead to nowhere, line fences that disappear over the horizon. Abandoned homesteads, oil wells, cattle and antelope all make regular appearances as the train makes it way west.

from Choice Theory, Positive Psychology and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Her writing style is easy to read and the structure of the book approachable for ADD folks. She uses plenty of personal stories, simple activities, and ADD friendly lists and bullet points (making it more accessible to your clients who tend to get bored easily). For the professional - Weiss offers a simple outline for a small group skills training curriculum, as well as some useful activities you could do with an ADD client.

As a therapist who specializes in working with ADD clients, I would recommend this book to both my clients and other therapists. It is well written and provides a great explanation of the more traditional medical model as compared to Weiss’ reframed understanding of ADD as a “different way of thinking.” Clients who read the book will surely feel a sense of healing from early childhood trauma that can occur from being a round peg who never quite fits in the square hole. Additionally, therapists who struggle to understand the nuances of how ADD can affect an individual will gain great insight from Weiss’ considerable clinical experience as well as her compassionate and grounded perspective.

- Kim Carter, M.A.



Traveling across the northern tier of North Dakota and Montana leaves little in the way of interruption. It often seems the train barely stops long enough to allow passengers along the remote tracks to board or jump off. The rhythm is hypnotic, soothing.

Our travel delays prevented us from attending any of the Carnival festivities. Lucky, instead, we arrived an hour before a women’s gathering in our honor to celebrate our return home.

The next few days were filled with reconnecting with old friends, driving through the town and surrounding countryside remembering our earlier life, recalling memories of my Dad’s many wintry visits to Whitefish.

It was bittersweet to hear the conductor yell, “All aboard”, mount the train and make our way to our seats where we would nest for the next twenty plus hours. We now found ourselves headed east, doing our best to stay ‘in the moment’, not fast-forwarding to what would be waiting in our separate lives when we once again stepped off the train in St. Paul.

It seemed, at times, my Dad was seated next to us on the train, taking in the same miles of prairie and snowy peaks of the Rocky Mountains. I could hear his voice telling his tales of his many adventures west. In the end, it was a winter getaway but not to the usual warm weather and sunshine. Instead, my daughter and I returned home.

- Dawn Brennan, LPCC

Experiential Essence

What Can Happen Here?

You sit down for the first time in the space we may share for an undefined number of hours ahead. You are a young woman in your 20's, 30's, 40's or more. You are a man approaching thirty, forty, fifty, or beyond. My six decades on earth have widened my lens considerably but some days it seems I've only scratched the surface.

Perhaps I have nothing to offer you. Perhaps you will not touch my heart on any level. I am quite tired, "bone-tired" on some days, wretched out of sleep by residual tensions from the stories each day. And this is, of course, the nature of the work. I choose this.

Today in this moment, this possible beginning, you have truly set the record for Kleenex use. You take them not one at a time but in wads or 5 or 6. I wonder if I have another box.

But mostly I wonder how you have contained this much pain and sadness until now. You said, "I never cry", and then this torrent found itself and broke free. You have in you the dynamic flow of a river and the rigid freeze of a deer caught in human sightline. River- Deer- River, Deer- River- DEAR,

In my sightline in this room, you are small, delicate, feminine, against the black fabric, mahogany wall, and Tibetan mandala just above your left shoulder. You are blocky, male, silver-tinged against the black fabric, mahogany wall, and Tibetan mandala just above your left shoulder. You seem engulfed in your fear. You are appalled by the injuries you have inflicted. With certainty you believe you can't face the pain and emerge alive on the other side. You have tried to grow beyond your revenge fantasies but they consume you. You cannot endure sending those tiny ones to their father's unsafe house beyond the reach of your protection. How can this have happened? There is no justice. THERE IS NO JUSTICE.

So seriously, my vacation arrives just in time. Planned many months in advance and the first in several years, I face Montreal with hope for something different. Neuro-plasticity is nourished by novel experience. The class I am taking, "French and Jazz", is a little gem embedded within the Montreal International Jazz Festival. This is so easy. I am a learner with a wealth of information already in my brain. I remember this way of speaking, this way of thinking. I am not on hold, edit, rewind, or fast forward. This is PLAY.

Day two has free time to explore with new friend Jackie from San Francisco. Things are getting good now. Let's find the fabric district

and the oldest outdoor market. She knows this urban world of fast moving trains. We navigate the gates, find the right line, get the last seats before the doors close. Lucky. The motion of fast, the sound of loud, people packed in and holding onto poles for balance in their private worlds.

Then, above the metro din, I hear it. The unmistakable sound of a human in crisis. Beyond weeping, past sobbing, this is terror spewed out, oxygen gulped in towards survival.

Finally I glimpse her through the forest of bodies between us. Short gray hair, one hand on a pole, the other clutching her handbag. As she continues to wail, tears cascading out of panicked, wildly searching eyes, an amazing thing does not happen. People near enough to tend her, do not. They look exactly NOT AT HER.

Jackie whispers, "Remember, you're on vacation."

This was not an invitation to look elsewhere. Entirely not an option. I had a clear visual sightline now, wide and clear enough to extend a smile, to shape clear words on my lips "It's O.K., it's O.K., it's O.K.", head-nodding "Yes", and patting my own shoulder tenderly. If I could hold her gaze her mirror-neurons might begin to activate and diminish the chemical flood producing the panic. Keep it up, that's right, it doesn't matter how silly I may look, keep her gaze, hold her gaze Honey, I'm beaming you all this light.

And she settled. The train slowed and stopped, she took my extended hand, as we exited the metro. The tears never stopped completely but she was able to tell her story to the station agent in highly emotional French which he seemed to comprehend with solid assurance.

Ready or not, vacations end. I had been concerned that my resonant frequencies were jammed and my compassion was fatigued. What if I had exhausted my capacity to sit calmly with people in their worded and un-worded realities, not yet mentionable, not yet manageable? Gratefully, I find myself renewed and restored not in spite of the call to action in Montreal but because of it.

And here we are again, sitting together in this place wherein something can happen. Such an honor it is to meet with you here in this fertile space with black fabric, mahogany wall, and Tibetan mandala just above your left shoulder.

- Nancy Ruppenthal, LICSW, LMFT

Member Announcement

Midwest Meditation and Psychotherapy Institute presents:

Finding Freedom from Difficult Emotions: an Experiential Workshop for Psychotherapists

with Phillip Moffitt & introduction by Henry Emmons.

Saturday, April 2nd, 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM

submitted by MWP Member: Merrra Young, LICSW, LMFT
<http://mindfulnesstherapy.weebly.com/>

Cross Cultural Conclusions by a Therapist

The Russian Community in the Twin Cities

A few thoughts went through my head when I agreed to write on this topic. First, I for several days I had seriously doubted whether anyone really needs to know about this not so hot topic and not so typically “therapeutable” population. I then questioned myself: even if I write and someone reads this, can one really learn anything meaningful and useful from a brief – no matter how smart – article in a newsletter? The third line of questioning, of course, - do I have anything smart and original to say on a subject? Finally, and globally, as I kept thinking, with current magnitude of globalization, from cooperation to crises, and with current intensity of multiversity, does this really make sense anymore to study any particular ethnic or racial, or linguistic group in isolation? Then, several weeks through this multilayered examination of the topic, a sudden realization: Oh my God, this will be a lot of writing, and I will never meet the deadline!

Aside from what Adlerians term “private logic” which should be very apparent for those of you who appreciate Adlerian way of interpreting the self, others, and the world, the paragraph above can be a very good illustration to what I see a typical Russian (and I mean cultural Russian) way of approaching life phenomena and tasks. So, here it goes – a stream of thoughts, minimally edited for style, so – if nothing else - you will get a taste of Russian type of creative writing, albeit in a certain stage of recovery.

What is that about us you, a thoughtful explorer and curious helper, may want to know before disembarking?

We ‘over-think’ ourselves to death, we question unquestionable, and doubt what may seem pristinely clear – torturing ourselves continuously and methodically even though – on a surface - we may appear super-confident. You may say: what a perfect therapeutic material! Not so perfect, as you will see if you are not bored to keep reading! We don’t trust from the first sigh, we expect the worst and we really truly see it coming quite chronically, we don’t readily open to strangers, in a real deep way, longing instead for long gone Soviet kitchens where the best of the folk therapy had taken place. What else? We love good literature, and we have a long list of what qualifies as good literature. We love good argument, and it is as important to us as breathing. When inspired, we write – long and passionate, yet very logical - essays, being a product of famously rigorous Soviet secondary educational system, where algebra and geometry are taken by all starting the 6th grade and Tolstoy and Dostoevsky are required reading for 16 year olds.

I can write this way more but will spare you of reading this Russian prose and will attempt, in a good faith and appreciating your patience so far, to deliver more economical dos and don’ts in providing mental health services for native Russian speakers who also identify themselves with Russian culture. The following is definitely not an all-encompassing “how to” therapeutic guide, but simply a reflection (including many clicks of self-reflections) of my many years of working with Russian-speaking clients and even more years of being a cultured Russian myself - hopefully, a good start for many other conversations.

THREE DO’S

1. Study Russian and Soviet history, at least from the early 20th century. History (especially when it is concerned cross-national, cross-ethnic, cross-denominational relations) is extremely important to most of the first generation Russian-speaking immigrants. Keep in mind, that many, if not the most of the Russian-speaking immigrants in MN are refugees carrying with them unique and often traumatic stories. What makes these individual stories even more significant is the fact that many multigenerational families will have living family members who survived more than one involuntary relocation – whether from victorious Soviets in 1920s-1930s and again in mid-1940s, from advancing Nazis in 1941, or from ruthless nationalistic extremists in late 1980s-early 1990s. This may – in some cases – create a pattern of multigenerational instability and compromised social ties, of disrupted familial loyalties and disintegrated attachments. At the same time, this may bring on new roles and new actors, new rituals, may create new strengths and enhance new – healthier - flexibilities.
2. Make sure you are aware whether your client is a native Russian speaker and identifies him/herself as an ethnic Russian, or a native Russian speaker and does not want to be identified as Russian. From my early days within the Soviet educational system, one of a few well-remembered numbers is a number of nationalities that resided in the FSU (former Soviet Union) – 130. Assume that some immigrant families may have representatives of different (at least two) groups. For many so called Russian immigrants, this is a huge and psychologically very loaded distinction, especially during emotional crises. It impacts the ways families and individuals perceive others in their lives, see the ways to survive and succeed, or attribute their own and others’ losses and failures.
3. As a group, older generation of Russian-speaking immigrants generally has poor vascular health. A lot of times, this will be presented as a primary concern. Because of that poor vascular and general physical health and different health system, the average life expectancy in Russia and other former Soviet republics is much lower than in the US, and so is retirement age. First generation immigrants who are now aging in the United States were not socialized into working and living longer. With no role models here and thinning age-related peer group back in the old country, people find themselves lost and disoriented. Physical concerns thus provide not only for a very tangible measure of well being, but may give a person a sense of much needed, much anticipated and relatively fast control over that well-being. With non-assimilated Russian-speaking immigrants, learn the patience not to label the person as ‘somatizing’, to have many educational conversations about health in general, and to be more directive (think medical doctor) than a traditional Western talk therapy would prescribe doing.

THREE DON’TS

1. Don’t expect a Russian speaking client to fully trust you just because you are a professional and he or she came for help. As a professional, you are in a position of authority, and Russians (former Soviets) have

Cross Cultural Conclusions by a Therapist continued

a long history of mistrust toward authority. If needed, keep telling yourself that this reaction of theirs is not personal, because it is really not. To help the process, revisit where your boundaries are and learn to self-disclose without violating these personal boundaries. Many Russian-speaking immigrants would like to know a little bit about you, would feel this being a prerequisite of trust, and may feel offended if brushed away.

2. With Russian-speaking immigrant clients, do not try to encourage imperfection by aggressively validating good enough grades at school or good enough English. The key word here is “aggressively”. Russians in general are known for their high academic expectations, high standards in work performance, and general perfectionism in everything concerning achievement. Even though you may believe that perfectionism is not the healthiest trait, remember that old habits (especially those reinforced by history of survival and the need to perfect as a matter of survival) die hard.
3. Do not assume someone’s fluent speech and mainstream appearance for true bilingualism and biculturalism. Many Russian-speaking immigrants both enjoy and suffer from being an invisible minority. In a provider’s mind, this may create an illusion of sameness. As therapy progresses, the illusion may be either fully supported by a client who is set to fully assimilate, or vigorously rejected by one who feels marginalized and rejects the host culture. Things get more complicated with language (and this is not just with Russian language). Fluent bilingualism (an optimal prerequisite for unassisted cross-lingual therapy) requires a full integration of both languages, with both languages being age-appropriate, with fluent grammar and rich vocabulary. To give you an idea of how beautifully complex

linguistic matters are, I will share that I don’t consider myself bilingual. On matters that I have studied and keep using professionally, I may not sound really bad (at least in writing, as my accent will irritate your senses the minute I start talking). In fact, in professional writing and my online teaching, I rarely use spell check. Yet, I am terrified when I need to describe something to a salesperson in let’s say “Bed, Bath, and Beyond”, as my kitchen equipment vocabulary may well be at a 3rd-4th grade level. To sum this up, in a best case scenario, with first generation adult immigrants and starting few years after immigration, we may talk about semi-lingualism and semi-culturalism versus bilingualism and bi-culturalism. I use these “semi” terms to describe one’s state of cultural development in which two or more cultures (including languages) are advanced enough to be considered functional but not advanced enough (yet) in acculturation and language usage to match native or host culture/ language, with respect to its contemporary development or the carrier age, social, or professional cohort. To illustrate this point, I often tell people that my vocabulary may appear rich, but this is the richness within a limited assortment of the words I happen to know, and in no way fully representative of what I may say, had I no linguistic handicaps.

With this, of course, comes another Adlerian topic of compensation for perceived handicap, but remembering that this article is not about the Individual Psychology and that I have earlier hinted trying to become a more economical, American style, writer – I will stop here, hoping for more dialogues in a future.

- Marina Bluvshstein, PhD LP; MA LMFT

Protecting Partner Relationships

Guilty of Financial Infidelity? Here’s How to Redeem Yourself (*Previously Published by Goodtherapy.org*)

Do you find yourself spending secretly? Hiding bills from your spouse? Opening bank accounts or credit cards without informing your partner? You may be guilty of financial infidelity and your actions can damage your relationship.

What is Financial Infidelity?

You commit financial infidelity when you keep financial secrets from your spouse or partner. These secrets may be small such as lying about buying something on sale when you actually paid full price. Or, they can be big like running up a large balance on a credit card without your spouse’s knowledge.

How Often do Partner’s Lie about Money Matters?

A 2005 survey that was commissioned from Harris Interactive found that the majority of the survey participants (96%) felt that both partners should be totally honest about financial matters (1). Despite this, one in three admitted that they lied to their spouse about money matters and one in four said they have kept financial information from their partner. The most common things people said they lied about were personal spending and spending on children.

What You Can Do to Redeem Yourself?

Deception can damage a relationship by creating suspicion and distrust.

It can compromise your integrity and make you feel guilty about your actions. Here is what you can do to help improve the situation:

- Come clean. Be open and honest with your spouse about the dishonesty.
- Commit to financial transparency. Add your partner’s name on hidden bank accounts and provide access to your password.
- Share financial responsibilities. Pay bills and reconcile the checkbook together.
- Establish spending limits. Agree that neither of you will spend over an agreed upon limit without consulting the other partner.
- Talk about finances. Discuss assets, expenses and goals for the future.

If distrust and arguments continue, it may be time to seek the help of a marriage counselor. A licensed mental health counselor can help you and your partner discuss relationship issues. Remember that no matter how big the secrets are, committing to change is a necessary first step.

References: Pulliam Weston, L. (2009). Financial infidelity is rampant. Retrieved from [http:// articles.moneycentral.msn.com/CollegeAndFamily/LoveAndMoney/FinancialInfidelityIsRampant.asp](http://articles.moneycentral.msn.com/CollegeAndFamily/LoveAndMoney/FinancialInfidelityIsRampant.asp)

- Denise Kautzer, M.A., Licensed Professional Counselor

(Editor’s note: Denise is a new member for this year of MWP membership.)



5244 114th Ave
Clear Lake, MN 55319

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Dated Materials: April 1, 2011

Mark Your Calendar

Saturday, April 9

Private Practice Group

9:00-11:00 AM

Black Bear Coffee House, (upstairs)

1360 Lexington Pkwy N,

St. Paul

FFI: Karen Wright

karen@benevolentjourney.com

Friday, April 29

Celebration of Women/Annual Meeting

Noon-3:00 PM

Presenter: Tami Briggs

Mayflower Congregational Church

106 E Diamond Lake Rd

Minneapolis 55419

RSVP: WmPsychlgy@aol.com

Saturday, May 14

Private Practice Group

9:00-11:00 AM

Black Bear Coffee House, (upstairs)

1360 Lexington Pkwy N,

St. Paul

FFI: Karen Wright

karen@benevolentjourney.com

Wednesday, June 1

Deadline for the Summer Newsletter

Email submissions to Asha Mukherjee

Dr.Asha.Mukherjee@gmail.com

Saturday, June 11

Private Practice Group

9:00-11:00 AM

Black Bear Coffee House, (upstairs)

1360 Lexington Pkwy N,

St. Paul

FFI: Karen Wright

karen@benevolentjourney.com