

President's Column

*Julie Meranze Levitt,
President, PSCP*

Much is going on and it is good. We welcome our new board members, Gail Karafin, President-Elect, Members-at-Large Cindy Arial, Harry Orenstein, and Lori Romano, and our new PSCP members.

Presently, the PSCP board is carefully reviewing existing PSCP organizational structures and considering what we need to do to increase our organization's membership and create an even more vibrant psychological community in the Delaware Valley.

In this issue

President's Column-1

An Update on the American Psychological Association-1

Classifieds-5

Call for Submissions-5

Time to get connected!-6

We on the PSCP board are working on developing a strategic plan for the next 3-5 years and committees will be formed in the next month. This planning should help us become a stronger

organization with greater understanding of and responsivity to member needs. If you would like to serve officially on a committee or help in a more limited way with some part of the research and planning, we welcome your identifying your interests and will facilitate your participation. There will be four areas of inquiry that we will consider during the next year:

Financial Solvency

(Chair, Nina Cummings,
ninabcummings@gmail.com)

Training and Education

(Harry Orenstein,
hamjeds2@aol.com, and
Richard Ivins,
rgivins1945@gmail.com),

Referral Service

(Carol Gantman,
cgantmanphd@gmail.com),
and Public Relations (Robert Naseef,
robert.naseef@gmail.com).

Please email me or the chairs with your interest.

The fall CE programs already will be underway when this column goes to press. From my review, the programs offer perspectives in a wide variety of clinical areas and I know these programs will be of high quality and informative. Please share our offerings with prospective

members and other mental health practitioners in the community. Especially because of the reorganization going on in the American Psychological Association and in these times of scrutinizing the field of psychology, ethics, and practice, PSCP provides an opportunity to examine some of the issues and is the go-to organization that strongly supports good practice and offers the opportunity for self-study and group discussion about the place of psychology and community responsibility in our work and personal lives.

(cont. on pg. 2)



An update on the American Psychological Association: What PSCP members should know

*Julie Meranze Levitt, Chair,
Public Policy*

At the August American Psychological Association (APA) Convention, the Council of Representatives (COR), voting almost unanimously, passed a resolution to disallow
(cont. on pg. 2)



President's Column

cont. from pg. 1

In the fall we plan another dinner get-together for members and prospective members as well as other opportunities to mix and mingle among psychologists and other mental health professionals who are members of the PSCP. We'll link attendance at the dinner to a non-profit providing needed mental health service for underserved populations.

Our new CE chair, Richard Ivins, is working on spring CE offerings and welcomes your interest in presenting or suggestions about other content areas and/or presenters you think we should showcase. He is reachable through email at rgivins1945@gmail.com.

The newsletter continues to be a vehicle for sharing information. The next submission deadline will be November 30, 2015. Please consider submitting an article.

Robert Naseef is working on YouTube to better describe what we are doing and with whom. Through this technology, we'll be able to share interviews and events. We're on Facebook and welcome your participation there. Our spring dinner, although months away in April, will be another opportunity to be together with good food and great conversation.

We welcome your participation as a volunteer psychologist for low fee clients who have extreme economic difficulty meeting their insurance deductible or lack insurance entirely. Our pro bono services for refugees continues to provide needed service. Carol Gantman at cgantmanphd@gmail.com, chair of the Human Services Committee, welcomes hearing about your interest in participating in these two programs.

Please reach out to me with your interests and suggestions. PSCP, sixty years old in 2016, is a special and unique

organization, offering service to psychologists and other mental health practitioners and to the public. We invite your participation in the initiatives mentioned above or on other committees. See PSCP Committees, our listing and description of committees, on our PSCP website:

www.PhiladelphiaPsychology.org.

And, of course, we encourage your inviting others to apply for membership. In numbers there is strength for public policy initiatives and legislative issues that we believe are important to consider.

Thanks! Julie Meranze Levitt, PSCP President
Julie.levitt@verizon.net;
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APA, cont. from pg.1

psychologists from participating in national security interrogations, regardless where these interrogations are held. American psychologists are allowed as APA

members, under this new policy, to be involved in general policy consultation regarding humane interrogations. Also, the new policy is not relevant for domestic law enforcement interrogation or domestic (within the boundaries of the United States) situations because in these settings detainees are under the protection of the U.S. Constitution. In addition, the resolution aligns APA's position on cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment with the U.N. Convention Against Torture.

These challenges facing national psychology have important implications for local Philadelphia psychology. Because of all that has happened within APA, it is important that we in PSCP continue to examine our own practices and decide how best to project an accurate, positive view of how we see the discipline of psychology, our roles as clinicians/teachers/scientists/consultants, the value of our services, and ethics. We are a significant, respected voice of

psychology and psychological practice at the local level and need to join the discussions.

This clear policy is relevant to us as psychologists because it clearly presents psychology as a discipline and practice that presses for the welfare of those under U.S. government control, even if a governmental location is outside the jurisdiction of the U.S.A. and even when detainees do not fall into the prisoners of war category. The inclusion of the U.N. Convention Against Torture is more specific and wider than the U.S. definitions of abuse and therefore, puts APA in line with international law as well as the lesser standard, domestic law.

The step to complete the process of protecting inmates under U.S. control in sites such as "black hole sites," prisoners considered "enemy combatants" and not prisoners of war" is important because it emphatically states that the APA will not allow its members to in any way become complicit with

practices that are viewed as demeaning and tortuous.

In way of background, this resolution is a first step in a series of reforms proposed for APA. Changes in APA are being put into place after David Hoffman in the law firm Sidley Austin LLP concluded that some APA officials "colluded with important DOD (Department of Defense) officials to have APA issue loose, high-level ethical guidelines that did not constrain DOD in any greater fashion than existing DOD interrogation guidelines." Especially problematic, according to the report, were the actions of the then Director of Ethics Stephen Behnke, The report, referred to by the press and others as the Hoffman Report, is available at www.apa.org/independent-review/index.aspx.

APA has apologized for not looking into allegations of misconduct prior to this report. Complaints for many years from those now called "the

dissidents,” went unaddressed. See “APA Takes Strong Action in Response to Independent Review,” *Monitor on Psychology*, September 2015, which served as a point of entry for me when writing this paper and from which I drew information, for further detail on APA’s present plan of action.

There are limitations of the report, related to how information was collected and the suppositions used to draw conclusions, and not all within and outside of APA accept all the findings. The report, commissioned by APA Board of Trustees, is viewed by some as a document developed by non-psychologists who do not understand how closely tied psychologists are to a code of ethics and what motivations were related to leading APA officials and what steps those who worked with members of DOD entailed. APA has set up a Web page for individuals who take issue with the findings to share their narratives of events. This site can be found under the

independent review report mentioned above. Much of these observations come from APA division listservs, the leadership listserv, and personal communication.

In an additional action focusing on the ethical issues mentioned in the independent report, COR voted to establish a blue-ribbon panel that is to evaluate and make recommendations to the APA Ethics Office. The panel will be appointed by APA’s Board of Trustees and Council Leadership Team. Panel membership will include members of APA and non-member psychologists and other experts outside of psychology. The panel will report back to COR next August. See article in *Monitor on Psychology*, September 2015, pp.8-10.

From my perspective as an APA member attending the August APA Convention in Toronto, I found that there was much tension at the meeting as well as elation over the passage of the new resolution. People were divided about how they

interpreted the Hoffman Report and what should be the next steps with respect to further investigation of others. An APA town hall and other meetings were held to consider how APA is structured and how it must address avoiding conflict of interest and provide for greater accountability to members of the organization, including responsiveness to member concerns. The roles of a national association, the ramifications of the investigation of APA as a national organization, and how the public and press may view psychologists were discussed. In addition, the topic of transparency and how best to convey this was considered.

Time will tell how the efforts at restructuring are carried out and work. I think because of the enormity of the charges against APA’s high level leaders, based on the report, and the sweeping changes proposed, members will need time to think through the issues. And this thinking needs to take place away from a big

meeting such as the national convention. Introspection, thinking through what ethics means and where social justice fits into one's own work, and what each of us wants from a national association also will takes time. How psychology will be perceived outside of APA and the role of the media in conceptualizing the issues remain unknowns and will take time to understand.

Just as a caveat: Because this article is written at the end of August but will be published at the end of September, there may be newer developments I do not yet have knowledge of. This complex set of issues I will continue to discuss in future articles. Earlier articles on the various resolutions and the issues involved were discussed in previous PSCP newsletter articles. For further discussion and questions, please write me at julie.levitt@verizon.net



Classifieds



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Call for Submissions



Have something to say? The PSCP Quarterly Newsletter wants your articles. PSCP members, and PSCP student members, are invited to submit articles and essays. All articles should be relevant to the professional practice of psychology. While articles may address any subject, or any issue of current interest, it is essential that the focus be on the role of

psychologists, psychology as a discipline, or the impact on psychologists of the topic addressed. These articles are by psychologists, for psychologists, by psychologists.

In addition to articles relevant to psychology, students are invited to submit the abstract of their approved dissertation, along with a brief biographical note. Please contact Ian Douglas Rushlau, editor, with submission guidelines and requirements for inclusion:
idrpscp@gmail.com



Time to Get Connected!



Research shows that psychologists who participate in a peer consultation group are less likely to become involved in a lawsuit, less likely to describe feelings of burnout, and rate themselves more satisfied with their career.

PSCP sponsors a range of peer consultation groups, and we invite you to join!

Diversity Group

This group meets on occasional Fridays from 10am-12pm, via Skype. The group discusses culturally informed, responsive and adaptive ways to treat individuals, couples, and families of diverse cultural backgrounds. Groups of focus include: race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual traditions and beliefs, disability, those with socioeconomic challenges, and more. Issues can be relating to, but not limited to acculturation stress, cultural identity formation, interracial marriage and families, intergenerational issues, discrimination, etc. Participants are asked to bring a case to discuss. Student members are welcome. Group leader is Dr. Takako Suzuki; she can be contacted at suztakako@gmail.com or 610-526-2928.

Mindful Therapist Peer Consultation

Group in Melrose Park, PA

The Mindful therapists peer consultation group is for mental health professionals, and those in training, who integrate mindfulness into their professional work for self-care and/or client care. A personal daily meditation practice is required of all participants – this can be from a variety of wisdom traditions, including but not limited to, the Buddhist traditions from which MBSR/MBCT are derived. Participants in training must be currently enrolled in a graduate program with a focus on mental and/or physical health. We meet in Melrose Park, PA on the first Tuesday of each month from 10am to noon. We begin with a sitting meditation practice.

For more information please contact Chris Molnar, Ph.D. at Chris@MolnarPsychogy.com or 267-287-8347.

Autism Spectrum Disorders Group

This group will meet monthly on Wednesdays from 9-10:30am at the offices of Drs. Cindy Ariel and Robert Naseef, in Old City, 319 Vine Street, #110. The focus of the group is on the treatment of autism and related disabilities in children and adults, as well as on treatment strategies and support for families/caregivers. Interested participants should contact Dr. Cindy Ariel at cariel@alternativechoices.com or 215-592-1333.



Peer Consultation Group (Media, PA)

This is a general consultation group that meets in the afternoon on the last Friday of every month, at the office of Dr. Greg Milbourne in Media, PA. Please contact Dr. Milbourne at 610-348-7780 or e-mail him at Milbourne@gmail.com