

Psychotherapy E-Newsletter



Spring | 2022

Dear Colleagues,

We hope this E-Newsletter finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe despite ongoing challenges. Our need for personal and professional connection and support still remains the anchor to keep us grounded, productive and most of all connected. We have the opportunity to meet soon at the first in-person meeting in two and a half years at the Annual Meeting June 1-5 in Boston. Please see below for details.

We continue to provide you with informative and engaging information on our past and upcoming activities and programming. Please don't hesitate to contact us for contributions, reflections or comments, your feedback and participation is valuable!

Best wishes,

*Padma Desai, LPC, LMHC Editor, Psychotherapist Associates E-Newsletter
Jonathan Kersun, MD, Chair, Psychotherapist Associates Committee*



Padma Desai



Jonathan Kersun

What you'll find in this issue



- **A Note from the Chair**
- **Report from the Massachusetts Psychiatric Society**
- **Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN) Spring 2022 Update**
- **APsAA's In-Person 111th Annual Meeting, June 1-5, Boston On-Site Registration Begins June 1!**
- **Call for E-Newsletter contributions**

[A Note from the Chair](#)

Welcome to our Spring 2022 E-Newsletter. A thank you to everyone who makes these newsletters

possible from the Editor, contributors, APsaA staff and you the readers. As we look forward to the upcoming in-person APsaA meeting in Boston, Psychotherapist Associates experiences notes of positivity and hope, as well as some disappointment. The disappointment is due to COVID, which leaves nothing untouched. On the positive side, at the June 1-5 meeting, the APsaA community will be able to congregated in person for the first time in over two and half years. People can shake hands, give hugs, and speak to one another in the way humans were designed to interact, live and connected as opposed to virtual and disconnected. APsaA members can travel to Boston, stay in a lovely hotel, attend the meeting as the meeting is intended.

On another note, Psychotherapist Associates continues its relationship with Psychotherapy Action Network (www.psi-an.org). PsiAN is an advocacy group dedicated to “promoting psychotherapies of depth, insight, and relationship.” The values of this organization synergize with Psychotherapist Associates. In this issue, like our past and future issues, you will find an update on all that is going on with PsiAN.

On the negative side, there remain many who are too apprehensive to attend the meeting. COVID has left many traumatized and frightened. Traditionally, Psychotherapist Associates offers educational content – one or more discussion groups – at the meeting. Despite my best efforts, I was unable to find people willing or able to serve as presenter or discussant for a discussion group. As such, there will be a void in the program where ordinarily Psychotherapist Associates sponsors a discussion group. Similarly, Psychotherapist Associates usually sponsors a Dine-Around where participants can enjoy a dinner together at a local restaurant. This, too, is not happening. In fact, no dine- arounds will be occurring at the June meeting, as people remain anxious about group get togethers.

While the transmission of COVID may be down, effects of the virus remain. Like any trauma, healing will require time, work, and exposure to anxiety producing stimuli. There are clearly rays of hope, and one can be optimistic that at the next meeting and the meeting after that we will find ourselves increasingly back to a pre-COVID mental space.

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Report from the Massachusetts Psychiatric Society: Contemporary Psychotherapeutic Approaches to Social Traumas

I was honored to help plan and recently attend the psychotherapy conference, “Contemporary Psychotherapeutic Approaches to Social Traumas,” sponsored by the Massachusetts Psychiatric Society (MPS). This timely meeting addressed topics of intergenerational trauma and resilience, psychological impacts of racism, trauma-informed treatment of refugees, vicarious caregiver trauma and prolonged exposure therapy (PET). I will highlight presentations made by two psychoanalysts: intergenerational trauma and vicarious caregiver trauma, both of which are particularly relevant to the horrifying war in the Ukraine and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Dr. Alexandra (“Sasha”) Rolde, an adult and child psychoanalyst member of APsaA, provided a compelling personal account of her early childhood in Prague during The Holocaust and the factors enabling her to survive and ultimately thrive, despite that excruciating historical time. Moreover, how did those experiences translate to her understanding why “some traumatized patients do well, and others remain.... chronically disabled?” Dr. Rolde demonstrated the relationship between resilience and trauma as she described elements in her early life that facilitated sufficient psychological growth to achieve personal and professional gratification. Dr. Rolde said her loving family fostered her ability to make and implement plans, bolster self-esteem and solve problems - generalizable forerunners of triumph over adversity. Dr. Rolde said her Jewish mother and Catholic father were respectful of one another and conveyed that she was their “raison d’etre.” Because she was a blond, blue-eyed child with a non-Jewish name, she and her mother survived the war despite her father’s untimely death (from leukemia) and her mother’s extended family’s deportation. Dr. Rolde’s maternal aunt survived a concentration camp and later became a social worker who shared her horrifying memories with Sasha and the family. But because her mother credited Sasha “for saving her life”, Sasha posits that some of her own resilience emerged from her relationships with her mother and aunt, who, despite their losses and suffering, maintained hope about humanity.

Having social support, educational opportunities and role models, in addition to being able to compartmentalize some of the surrounding anguish, allowed her to “pay it forward” by later adopting a daughter from a Russian orphanage, earning her medical degree, complete psychiatric residency and ultimately become a psychoanalyst. She keenly observed how the current situation in the Ukraine triggers her own and her daughter’s memories, but her daughter’s ability to communicate via social media and obtain support from peers has been helpful. Dr. Rolde observed, since this is the first “WIFI” war,” perhaps judicious use of online contact can also build resilience due to the shared experience - despite the instantaneous, heinous vivid war images. One of the moderators, Dr. Margaret Tuttle (member of the Psychotherapist Associates committee and APsaA’s Teachers’ Academy) drawing from observations of her young adolescent son, commented perhaps the impact of social media at a time like this depends on the adults in a young person’s life - much as Dr. Rolde’s triumphant trajectory was heavily influenced by her immediate and extended family.

Dr. John Bradley, the MPS President, psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, retired combat veteran and military psychiatrist, presented on secondary traumatic stress and professional burnout. In the context of pandemics like Covid-19 and deeply ingrained institutionalized racism, therapists are painfully familiar with the occupational hazard of human suffering especially since it is our job to “help people understand and transcend” the emotional tolls of bereavement, natural and man-made disasters, community violence, torture, war, etc. He identified professional casualties of compassion fatigue leading to cynicism, vicarious trauma (VT) and secondary traumatic stress (STS) in response to specific traumatic experiences patients share. Dr. Bradley discussed risk factors for VT and STS, including having a personal trauma history, seeing large numbers of traumatized patients, intellectualizing about patients’ struggles, a reduced sense of safety due to societal upheaval, low self-efficacy, clinical pedagogy and the misguided belief that we therapists are the primary agents of change. The endpoint, burnout, is more likely when leadership is unsupportive, work demands are excessive, the therapist is perfectionistic and feels a lack of autonomy in one’s career; other factors are inadequate work-life balance, social isolation (i.e. from lockdowns, quarantines, social distancing, masking) and vulnerability to self-doubt. Recognizing burnout before it occurs is crucial because it can result in emotional exhaustion (worsened by the pandemic), helplessness, hopelessness and potential suicide. Dr. Bradley underscored the importance of therapists acting as “containing vessels” (per Winnicott) by processing the patient’s projections before returning them in a less destructive form. By recognizing and addressing countertransference via training, supervision and personal therapy, therapists can minimize the risk of over-identifying with or detaching from the patient and his/her/their struggles. He emphasized how essential it is to accept, “trauma changes thoughts, feelings and behavior” in order to tolerate one’s own and others’ intense feelings, utilize and model self-soothing and self-compassion to avoid the destructive sequelae of vicarious trauma, secondary traumatic stress and burnout.

Dr. Bradley’s “common sense” recommendations **for post-traumatic growth**, gleaned from his personal/family history, military service and psychiatric career include self-affirmation, mindfulness, dark humor (i.e. MASH or similar TV shows) and physical self-care. When witnessing or hearing about horrifying events and human suffering, it is easy to forget to “reach for the oxygen” and “fortify oneself for the emotional battlefield.” His guiding principles: set priorities, (family/personal life supersedes serving others; prioritize tasks at work); respect oneself, others and institutions; act with honor and integrity; leave work at work by engaging in self-nurturing activities and setting boundaries between professional and personal lives.

Though I have presented a mere fraction of the “pearls of wisdom” gleaned from this conference, it is a testament to the importance of psychotherapeutic principles and practice to our patients, therapists and the world at large.

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Update from The Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN)

PsiAN published its first journal, [Advancing Psychotherapy for the Next Generation: Rehumanizing Mental Health Policy and Practice](#). We are so grateful to our contributors -- Nancy McWilliams, Farhad Dalal, Enrico Gnoulati, Santiago Delboy, Linda Michaels, Susan G. Lazar, Oksana Yakuskho, Thor Cornelius -- and our editor Tom Wooldridge. PsiAN Co-Founders Janice Muhr, Linda Michaels and Nancy Burke also wrote an introduction and epilogue, framing the journal articles. Here is a direct link to PsiAN’s original research, [Going Beneath the Surface: What People](#)

[Want from Therapy](#), and if you'd like full text access to any of the other articles, just drop me a line.

As part of the recent SPPP/Division 39 Annual Meeting, PsiAN Co-Founders Linda Michaels and Janice Muhr, and co-leader of the Community Collaboratory @ PsiAN, Jane Hassinger, presented at an Invited Panel. Their topic was *Advocating for Therapies of Depth, Insight and Relationship*. They discussed the current state of psychoanalysis and the factors contributing to its marginalization, as well as outlining reasons why the field needs to come together to help make treatments we offer relevant once again. Outlining a path forward for the field, they outlined the recent regulatory and legislative changes, such as the Department of Labor's intention to close loopholes that compromise parity, and new state laws in California, Illinois, Oregon and Georgia, that make explicit insurance coverage for intensive and extended therapy.

Several important additions to PsiAN will help take advantage of this forward momentum. First, **Amy Kennedy** joined PsiAN as an Advisor. Amy brings a wealth of experience in mental health, advocacy and especially the needs of children and families. Amy is the Education Director of The Kennedy Forum where she pursues partnerships and collaborations that emphasize evidence-based research and programming to facilitate policy change in the areas of education and mental health.

PsiAN also received generous gifts and grants. First, the **Robert & Virginia Shiller Foundation** awarded PsiAN a very significant grant. They have funded PsiAN in the past, and not only have they made a repeat gift, but they have more than tripled their previous grant. In addition, the **American Psychoanalytic Foundation of APsaA** awarded PsiAN a grant to help support PsiAN's efforts to help people engage with depth therapy. A cornerstone of these efforts, building on PsiAN's research with the general public, is the creation of a new public-facing website to help educate and inform the public about mental health, therapy and their treatment options, and to provide treatment resources for those of all socioeconomic levels. PsiAN plans to feature the analytic clinics that serve communities around the country – so we may be reaching out to you and your institute to gather more information about the work you do.

The PsiAN Forum

As part of our Forum Live events, we hosted a panel discussion, [A Psychotherapy for the People](#), featuring representatives from established and emerging community mental health centers from around the country. Our panelists have found creative ways to offer depth therapy in under-resourced communities, and with the help of moderator Bevin Campbell, PsyD, we enjoyed a wide-ranging, fascinating discussion of providing therapies of relationship, insight, and depth to underserved communities. Panelists included Carlos Padrón, MA, MPhil., Ida Roldán, Ph.D., LCSW, Angela Sedeño, Ph.D., Tracy Sidesinger, Psy.D., Annika Sridharan, MSW, Psy.D.

From our PsiAN Speaks series, there are new interviews featuring the following individuals:

- [Rich Shulman, PhD](#) - For over 20 years, Volunteers in Psychotherapy's innovative approach has allowed community members to access free or low-cost psychotherapy outside of medical institutions and managed health care.
- [Meiram Bendat, JD, PhD](#) - Dr. Bendat discusses his advocacy work to promote patient access to meaningful psychotherapeutic treatment. Dr. Bendat outlines the significance of the Wit vs. United Behavioral Health case that he worked on and discusses the magnitude of the impact of the ruling on the accepted standards for effective psychological treatment.
- [Karen Foley, MBA](#) - CEO of the Juvenile Protective Association (JPA), an organization in Chicago, Illinois whose mission is to improve the social and emotional well-being and functioning of vulnerable children through research, consultation, and counseling. In this conversation, Karen shares the importance of building and nurturing relationships in the community, at home, and in classrooms to help vulnerable children feel and function better, as well as some of the deleterious effects of toxic stress on child development, and problems related to mislabeling children's behaviors that often miss the story behind the "symptom."
- [Felecia Powell-Williams, EdD](#) – Well-known as an active member of the APsaA community, Dr. Felecia Powell-Williams discusses discovering Freud in 6th grade, how working in community mental health led to her interest in therapies of depth, insight, and relationship, the importance of play in therapy for children, her experience working as a psychoanalyst in Texas, and her new role as the Chair of the Diversities Section of the Department of Psychoanalytic Education of the American Psychoanalytic Association.

Finally, three articles that garnered a lot of commentary and circulation on the internet that we urge you read:

- [Making Therapy Harder: When Corporate Forces Interfere with Therapy](#), by Lee Keyes, PhD - Every therapist is familiar with therapy-interfering behavior (TIB). Historically the literature has focused on TIB in the client or patient, such as when a client misses a session, shows up late, sits silently, or even refuses the treatment altogether. However, “What we may not typically frame in this way are behaviors from other entities that clearly interfere with the therapy and may even be more damaging and pernicious than the TIBs already discussed. A prime example of such “corporate TIBs” stem from the interference from insurance companies and administrative entities that represent attempts to control, constrain, or direct therapy, at times to the point where such individuals or groups are actually *practicing without a license*.”
- [The Good, The Bad and The Depraved – Embracing your inner life through therapy](#), by Irene Yancher, PsyD – Dr. Yancher writes about those TV sitcom characters that we love to hate: “George Costanza, Michael Scott, and Liz Lemon: the most beloved sitcom characters are highly flawed. They are selfish, greedy, lazy, and of course, self-destructive. And we love them for it.” She then goes on to explain how identifying, understanding and ultimately accepting our inner depravities is one fruitful goal of analytic treatment, and one way for people to ultimately come to love all of themselves, the good, the bad and the depraved-
- [Why Choose Dynamic Psychotherapy?](#), by Steven Reidbord MD – In an excerpt from the article, Dr. Reidbord writes that, “The simple answer is that nothing has replaced it. Dynamic psychotherapy (and psychoanalysis) help relieve the very problems many people struggle with such as long-term patterns of self-defeating attitudes and behavior that “make no sense,” yet are hard to shake without help. It’s an approach that sees you as an individual, not merely a member of a diagnostic category. It’s the ultimate in customized treatment; everyone’s therapy is one of a kind.”

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[111th Annual Meeting](#)

June 1-5, 2022.

For more information visit
apsameeting.org

Are you interested in contributing to the next Newsletter?

Are you interested in writing a summary of one of the panels, symposia, discussion groups, or workshops at the upcoming 111th Annual Meeting in June? Do you have any other contributions in mind that you think might be of interest to fellow Psychotherapist Associates, such as articles about books or movies, talks or research reports?

Please contact Padma Desai, LPC, LMHC (padmadesaillc@gmail.com) with suggestions, inquiries, or regarding contributions to the Psychotherapy E-Newsletter.

Information: Please click on the link for information about joining APsaA's [Psychotherapist Associates](#). Benefits include a discounted meeting fee. Or contact APsaA's Associate and Membership Services Coordinator, Bronwyn Zevallos (membadmin@apsa.org).

You are currently on APsaA's list to receive the [Psychotherapy E-newsletter](#). If you do not wish to receive future issues, please let us know by sending an email containing your name to Bronwyn Zevallos at membadmin@apsa.org and we will remove you from our e-newsletter distribution list.

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<https://apsa.org/content/psychoanalytic-psychotherapy> (scroll to the bottom of the page)

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