The Good News and the Bad News Is the Same News

We trust you are well (enough) as the calendar turns toward fall, back to school (such as it may be), possible second and third waves of coronavirus infections (if we ever truly exited the first), continued racial and social unrest, economic tumult, a momentous election season, and a battle for a Supreme Court replacement for the inimitable “Notorious RBG,” a veritable tzaddik.

Insofar as we all carry personal and professional concerns about the intersectional impact of these issues, we are truly all in this together. To be helpful to our patients in navigating these issues, we need to recognize our shared struggles and yet also to have begun our own work in managing ourselves through these unprecedentedly turbulent times.

It is clear that the mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is hitting harder and sooner than expected, even before all the viral and medical sequelae have unfolded. Rates of anxiety, depression, drug and alcohol misuse, overdoses, and domestic violence have surged. We therapists ourselves are not immune. While most of us have adapted to treatment via various telehealth platforms, having to run home schools and home restaurants as well as home offices is very stressful. The usual routines of replenishment and socialization with friends and family are quite limited or foreclosed entirely. And the “endless coerciveness of precaution” required to live with the novel coronavirus is one of the foundations of all trauma (Walzer 2001).

Many of us still find ourselves frozen, personally and professionally, with the hypervigilance required of our slow-rolling, still-unfolding “disaster of uncertainty,” and many of our usual professional meetings have stalled (Everly 2020). Others of us have found inspiration, creativity, and ways to reconstitute projects and presentations. While AAPCSW made the difficult decision to postpone our most important event, the biannual conference, moving it from March 2021 to November 2021 (see page 4 for plenary highlights and watch www.aapcsw.org for updates), over the summer we presented “A Disaster of Uncertainty: Living and Working in the Time of Coronavirus,” a free Zoom series on the pandemic and our national reckoning with anti-Black racism.
I am hoping that this Newsletter finds you all well and healthy as we enter the fall season!

This intriguing issue opens with the prolific writing of our co-presidents, Teresa Méndez and Dan Buccino, who continue to have a finger on the pulse of our world and how we are trying to live and practice in it. We then traverse toward the wonderfully written and powerful inaugural column from the Diversity and Social Action Committee, whose members will continue to offer wonderful subject matter in a regularly published column here. An in-depth book review is presented by Valerie Frankfeldt, who highlights the work of Mary Anne Cohen and offers us a unique summary look into the experiences and treatment sector of those who struggle with disordered eating. Exciting plenary highlights are featured for the upcoming and highly anticipated 2021 conference, alongside a lovely recognition of a unique collaboration between the AAPCSW and the US Department of Veteran Affairs. And announcements from our members round out the issue, with emphasis on members’ recent accomplishments, contributions, and news.

It is always important to acknowledge the contributions shared and show gratitude to all who have contributed to each Newsletter, both directly and indirectly. Thank you to all members who submitted content for this edition, including Johanna Dobrich, Janice Berry Edwards, Valerie Frankfeldt, Linda Gross, Jonathan Lebolt, Faye Mishna, Penny Rosen, Judith Roseberger, and Golnar Simpson. Special thanks to Kelly Martin, Wendy Winograd, Barbara Matos, Dan Buccino, Teresa Méndez, and Bill Meyer, and to Penny Rosen for her ongoing efforts to ensure we are kept abreast of the goings on related to the 2021 Conference.

We look forward to highlighting many more members as we move forward with each edition. As always, please send us all your wonderful accomplishments, experiences, news, thoughts, and ideas so that we may fully represent the content that is most relevant, contemporary, and inclusive of subject matter that members are truly passionate about. We continue to seek area news, committee updates, film and book reviews, and member news; content with a focus on child and adolescent practice or on multicultural practice and social justice; and any other contemporary commentary, perspective, and/practice that highlights the mission and values of our organization.

Be well!

Newsletter articles are opinion articles representing the authors’ viewpoints and are not statements of any positions of AAPCSW itself. AAPCSW is not responsible for the accuracy or content of information contained in the articles.
“Freedom is not a state; it is an act. It is not some
enchanted garden perched on a distant plateau
where we can finally sit down and rest. Freedom is
the continuous action we all must take, and each
generation must do its part to create an even more
fair, more just society.” —John Lewis (8)

The coronavirus pandemic, racial inequality, eco-
nomic and political upheaval, catastrophic climate
events, and their resulting impact on mental health
have all opened traumatic and toxic fault lines in our
history (past and present) at the individual, familial,
and societal levels. An important consequence of
this state of affairs is the continuing, heightened
threat of potential loss of what we hold dear in our
lives, involving essential elements of our fundamen-
tal human rights, including our freedom. As psycho-
analytic clinical social workers, with a long history
of commitment to social justice rooted in our profes-
sional values and ethics, we must respond anew to
the urgency and nowness of what is happening in
our country. Accordingly, the Diversity and Social
Action Committee of AAPCSW is embarking on a set
of new projects, including the establishment of a
permanent column for the Newsletter.

This initial column introduces our committee—
its past, present, and future activity—all within
psychoanalytically oriented clinical work and un-
derstandings. The goal of establishing a permanent
column in our AAPCSW Newsletter is to provide ad-
ditional opportunities for expanded conversations
among our members regarding the critical
importance of focused attention to diversity/
otherness, intersectionality, antiracism, and
other related social justice issues. A cen-
tral component of our

committee’s mission—the promotion of excellence
in psychoanalytic clinical social work practice—
involves recognizing the consequences when diver-
sity and “othering” sets the stage for potential bigot-
ry, abuse of power, and marginalization of individu-
als, families, and communities based on one or more
social identities.

In the past decade, we have worked toward
actualizing our goals in various ways, including par-
ticipation in the Conference Committee’s work se-
lecting diversity-focused plenary speakers and
specific Diversity Panel presentations by the com-
mittee members at each AAPCSW national confer-
ence. The committee, at the association’s request
and through its own initiative, has developed posi-
tion statements (see www.aapcsw.org) during inter-
mittent social justice crises. For example, the com-
mittee was responsible for AAPCSW’s public state-
ments related to the recent, horrific acts of police
brutality, as well as our association’s concerns re-
grading violence against immigrants. The commit-
te has also collaborated with other committees
such as the New Professionals / Student Outreach
Committee to promote increased awareness and in-
tegration of diversity matters into clinical work.

This year, given the seemingly endless cascade
of tragic events that have galvanized segments of
society and touched every professional organiza-
tion, our committee’s focus is on antiracism, equity,
and intersectionality, animated by our shared con-
viction that “silence is not an option.” The commit-
te especially seeks and
welcomes member input
in this matter. Mindful
of contextual realities
(financial, legal, and the
volunteer nature of a
professional membership
organization), the com-
going...
2021 Conference Plenary Highlights

Penny Rosen, MSW, BCD-P

Overshadowed by the pandemic, 2020 is the year in which we are also confronting and combatting the socioeconomic/racial systemic inequities and inequalities. In such tumultuous and uncertain times, we have continued planning for the 2021 conference, for which the dates were changed to November 4–7, 2021. To keep you engaged with us, here are highlights of four Plenary sessions, divided into themes.

**Cultural Trauma & Diversity**

*Fanny Brewster, PhD, MFA, LP, presents*

**Unknown: Fear and Courage in Times of Uncertainty**

Our fears allow us to develop a larger sense of our deeper selves, as we are moved into the Unconscious. Through the ego’s dreams, personal disasters, and anxiety, we can learn self-compassion and the quality of weathering life storms. We bring the personal to the collective when we are faced with cultural and collective trauma. This paper investigates how best to join and engage the deeper knowledge of the Unconscious Self with the strength of the ego including cultural factors.

*Barbara Berger, PhD, BCD, presents*

**On Being a White Therapist: Countertransference, Color, and Culture in a Diverse Psychodynamic Practice**

Using a language and current sociological concepts, this paper applies psychodynamic theory to case illustrations. The complexity of interracial and cross-cultural therapeutic relationships is illustrated, including ruptures and repairs.

**Community Engagement**

*Deborah Anna Luepnitz, PhD presents*

**Jane Addams and Donald Winnicott: Psychoanalysis, Community Engagement, and “Insight For All”**

Jane Addams and Donald Winnicott were ground-breaking figures in social work and psychoanalysis who continue to inspire contemporary efforts that combine action and reflection. This paper will describe their influence on the presenter who, in 2005, launched a program to connect psychoanalytically oriented therapists with homeless and other socially excluded individuals in free treatment.

*Elizabeth Ann Danto, PhD, presents*

**Why Freud Asked Social Workers to “Mobilize a Corps and Battle the Neuroses”**

From the early history of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud included, the profession has shared with social work a mutual commitment to social justice and community-based treatment for people from all socioeconomic classes. Blending archival and oral history research, this descriptive overview shows how the core values of humanism and democracy have undergirded a common set of theory and practice principles.

**Trauma & Dissociative Disorders**

*Harold Kudler, MD, presents*

**Trauma and Trance: Why Does the Door Swing Both Ways?**

Recent interest in psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy for PTSD prompts review of the intertwining history of trauma and trance. Traditional healers have long relied on trance states and modern psychotherapy is rooted in Mesmerism and hypnosis-induced cathartic treatment. Successful treatment of neuropsychiatric casualties in World War II with hypnosis or sodium amytal assured the dominance of psychoanalytic thought and practice over the next four decades. Ketamine is now provided for a variety of mental disorders, and the US FDA has granted Breakthrough Therapy status to MDMA and psilocybin. Less obvious is the role that psychotherapy plays in the effectiveness of these compounds. This presentation will review historical, biological, psychological, and cultural aspects of trance states in the treatment of psychological trauma to elucidate the role they have played over the centuries and make recommendations for new theory and practice.
Richard P. Kluft, MD, PhD, presents

**Toward Effective Treatment for Dissociative Symptoms and Dissociative Disorders: Optimizing Interventions and Avoiding Unhelpful Misunderstandings**

Most approaches to the treatment of dissociative difficulties and conditions have been imported from established therapies originally developed to address different conditions. Consequently, clinicians applying these approaches frequently find themselves desksilled, frustrated, and stalemated in their efforts to help such patients. This presentation offers a model derived from fifty years’ experience with dissociative patients, built upon pragmatic “Bottom-Up” rather than “Top-Down” premises. Most of its components can be applied unobtrusively in the context of psychodynamic trauma therapies.

**Social Activism**

Under the direction of Bill Meyer, MSW, chair of the Film Committee, we will view *Crip Camp—a Disability Revolution* (directed by Jim LeBrecht and Nicole Newnham; produced by Barack and Michelle Obama; winner of the Audience Award: 2020 Sundance Film Festival). Disability rights activist Judith Heumann will be the Discussant, and Edward Ross, MSW, LCSW, will serve as Moderator.

*Crip Camp* starts in 1971 at Camp Jened, a loose, free-spirited summer camp in New York for teens with disabilities. The documentary focuses on the evolution of those campers over the years as they waged a war for disability rights for all Americans.

“This camp changed the world, and nobody knows this story. Crip Camp offers something we could all use more of—hope for the future.” (RogerEbert.com)

“Crip Camp has a universal message: Inspirations that begin in youth can lead to radical, world-changing results.” (*New York Times*)

Ms. Heumann, a protagonist in the film and the author of *Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist*, is a disabled activist in the forefront of the disability movement for five decades. Her advocacy work changed the lives of every disabled person worldwide.

The educational program will soon be on the web. The conference will showcase contemporary thinking on a variety of topics by many presenters. We are hopeful that the conference will enrich the professional community, in light of the current challenges. Join us in 2021.

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**A Time to Think, A Time to Act**

**Caring about the known and the unknown**

How do we hold in mind the tension between thinking and acting, at the conscious and unconscious levels? Whether it be the unknown of our inner world, the unknown of the world around us, or the unknown embodied in those from whom we feel different, we grapple with the dilemma of what is and isn’t known. We know about the mind in conflict and meaning-making in various ways. We know about injustice. We place high value on introspection while also addressing activism. Now, as in all times of global change, we are also called upon to explore the impact of societal factors in clinical encounters through a fresh lens. Given the complexity of the human condition, this conference will ask us to reflect on such matters from multiple psychoanalytic perspectives.

November 4–7, 2021 • DoubleTree by Hilton Philadelphia Center • 237 South Broad Street, Philadelphia • www.aapcsw.org/events/conference
We are all presently afflicted by externally imposed deprivation and restriction because of the coronavirus pandemic. These unprecedented times informed my thinking about Mary Anne Cohen’s latest contribution to the study and treatment of eating disorders. The pandemic’s context is noteworthy on two levels. On the one hand, the eating disordered sufferer subjects herself to a lifestyle of deprivation and restriction that shows itself in eating habits even when realistically unnecessary. On the other, the “joke” going around regarding “COVID-19” referring to the number of pounds people have gained during lockdown further illuminates the premise of the book, which is to understand how food is a coping mechanism when under stress. Disordered eating exists on a spectrum from that of being primed by early relational trauma resulting in a compulsive characterological problem to that which is triggered by a variety of situationally imposed forces that engender a temporary regression.

Cohen is the director of the New York Center for Eating Disorders. She has worked in the field for more than forty years and is a preeminent eating disorder specialist. Her insights are essential for those who treat eating-disordered patients as well as those working with patients who are temporarily using food to cope.

The book focuses on the therapeutic relationship as the catalyst for change and self-acceptance. There is something in it for the casework-trained social worker and the psychodynamically oriented practitioner. Cohen’s toolkit of treatment approaches is comprised of behavioral, psychoeducational, and transference interventions.

She has written extensively on eating disorders in her previous books. Treating the Eating Disorder Self adds to knowledge in the field by exploring the following: the connection between sexual identity and eating disorders; a multicultural perspective on eating disorders (including discussion and case examples of African American, Latinos, Asian, Orthodox Jews, and Muslims); the role of social media as a double-edged sword, which both promotes eating disorder behavior but also offers online recovery support; the current role of medication in the treatment of eating disorders; how attachment theory explains eating disorders; and the transference and countertransference issues with eating disorder patients.

Her two hundred case examples demonstrate her belief that everyone’s eating disorder is as unique as a fingerprint and requires an individualized, comprehensive treatment approach. She includes a theoretical overview of eating patterns as both defense and symptom stemming from management of feelings and early relational trauma.

Patients present with primitive coping skills and limited ability to tolerate discomfort. The practitioner needs to keep in mind that for the person immersed in an eating disorder, trusting food is safer than trusting people. They will need the therapist’s help to establish sufficient trust to be receptive to her wisdom and guidance. Developing trust takes time.

At the outset, inculcating hope is crucial. The patient will have experienced repeated failure in efforts to curtail their compulsion. The shame involved in having the compulsion makes it even more difficult for the patient to ask for help. Hopelessness has bred either paralysis and a worsening of the condition, with increased reliance on food, or drastic changes doomed to failure. Shame comes up again and again. Having needs and being shamed for them only leaves food as an invisible, controllable private
substitute for parental soothing. Unavailable or shaming parents result in an obvious second choice of making food and its regulation the soother.

One of Cohen’s tenets is contained in the acronym “HOPE”—Hold on, pain ends. Feelings pass. People can and do recover; the relationship with food can entail less struggle. Therapy will help reduce the need for perfection especially concerning eating. One must change one’s relationship with food, which is so overdetermined, in order to master the problem.

Cohen is a prolific writer. Her generosity of self, her dynamism, and her ability to relate jump off the page. She can accept all communications, even those conveyed by smells—sweat, perfume, lingering cigarette smoke, and the occasional fart. She shares in her writing her own distinctive, at-times quirky, and mischievous ideas, opinions, and formulations.

The healthy, nurturing attitude Cohen conveys to patients comes through in the prose. The work involves comfort with the oft-presented observations and suppositions of patients about their bodies, jewelry, breasts, sexual orientation, and even hairstyles.

She demonstrates the attunement needed to notice and work with the signals patients convey with their bodies. For example, Justine always comes to sessions displaying ample cleavage. Cohen wonders to herself whether there is a message here about seduction, competition, or perhaps a longing for mothering? She stores these questions while juxtaposing them with her knowledge of the patient’s bingeing style, history, and hunger for physical and emotional feeding.

Cohen emphasizes the therapeutic relationship’s special role in the treatment of eating disorders. Eating disorders stem from the earliest stage in life. The therapist’s behavior, attitudes, stance, and connectedness with her own feelings—her very being—have more of an impact on the patient, especially early on, than cognitively oriented interpretations. The approach needs to be calibrated to a pace and intensity that is attuned to the patient’s readiness.

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**Book Reviews**

Psychoanalytic social workers are writing more and more books! Following is our new system for handling reviews:

- When you have written a book you wish to have reviewed or have read a recently published book that you feel would be of interest to our members, please send the book title and a sentence about the subject of the book to the Book & Film Review Editor, Wendy Winograd (wendywinograd@gmail.com).

- Copy Barbara Matos, our administrator, on the email (barbara.matos@apcsw.org) and send the book to her. She will keep records of all books received. Once she receives the book, we will choose a reviewer, and Barbara will send the book to the reviewer.

- If you have a colleague in mind as a reviewer of your book, please let us know. We are always interested in adding reviewers to our list.

- Reviews should be four to six double-spaced pages. The book title and publisher should appear at the top of the page followed by the reviewer’s name. At the end of the review, the reviewer should include a sentence or two about themselves.

- The review should then be sent to Wendy so she can read it. She will then send the review to Newsletter Editor Christie Hunnicutt (christiemhunnicutt@gmail.com) for publication in the Newsletter. We review only books; we do not review book chapters or articles.

- On some occasions, a film relevant to our field may be reviewed, and if you see such a film, and would like to review it, please write directly to Wendy.

We thank all the authors and reviewers who have made such excellent contributions to the Newsletter over these many years.

Wendy Winograd, DSW, LCSW, BCD-P • Book & Film Review Editor • wendywinograd@gmail.com
In another case, Sally, an anorexic, presents with loneliness and emptiness as the problem she wants to work on. Cohen notices that when she offers compassion and understanding, Sally withdraws, a counterintuitive response. In her past Sally had had to “swallow” the words her father forced on her. Cohen pulls back and titrates her verbiage. Sally slowly begins to emerge from her shell, developing more agency as the therapist deliberately becomes more passive.

Cohen asserts the special importance of staying informed by the frame. Our natural therapist impulses can lead us to go over time or respond at length to calls, emails and texts in between sessions in response to a patient’s neediness. Keeping the structure while allowing for room to adapt is curative as it creates a boundaried experience that models the patient’s potential ability to be at the locus of their eating. Otherwise they are driven by it in a chaotic, impulsive manner.

Cohen’s colorful vignettes of her interactions with patients serve as teaching tools for the practitioner. As anyone who has dealt with the treatment of people with compulsive behaviors knows, it is easy for feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and impotence to take over in the therapist just as it is for patients.

Cohen also explicates the theoretical underpinnings of why she has done what she has and how and why it has had the resulting impact. Getting a clear sense of being in the room with her and her patient allows the reader to incorporate theory and technique seamlessly. When we are subsequently confronted with similar problems in our own practices, these vibrant examples are likely to spring forth into our own minds to guide us.

Cohen works with people to help them exercise their own power within a harm reduction approach. Clients may be shored up by adopting substitutive behaviors less damaging than their old, habitual ones. Progressively, self-reinforcing old repetitive thought processes and behaviors begin to diminish and to shift into more constructive ones. Clients learn and internalize the use of words instead of action, a felt understanding that feelings will pass, adoption of self-care rituals, and a message that they are not here to engage in self-sacrifice.

Cohen explains what to expect in treatment, helps the patient identify triggers, strategizes small behavior changes together with the patient, and instills an interest in creating self-enhancing habits.

She and her patient will parse to what degree the structure of a diet program or food plan is in the best interest of the individual. While rigidity can feed into the problem, adapting an all-out intuitive eating plan may feel too scary and overwhelming. Cohen maintains that the goal of recovery, contrary to patients’ usual expectations that weight loss is the “be all, end all,” is flexibility with food. That may mean enjoying a dessert without freaking out or feeling guilt and compensating by undoing with purging or starving. It is okay to take pleasure from the food and tolerate imperfection.

Working to improve behaviors goes hand in hand with understanding and dealing with the emotional components of the problem. Cohen imparts curiosity to supplant self-flagellation. Baffling compulsive behaviors give way to self-awareness, as buried feelings and memories are put into words. A few examples:

- a patient who inexplicably married a man in jail who had shot her twice;
- a bulimic patient who felt that after one month her feelings about her father’s death should be “done”—she could not let herself digest the feelings, which was exemplified by not letting herself digest food; and
- a patient who vomits instead of crying, so that the control of her stomach parallels the need to control tears flowing unbidden.

The therapist’s model of patience, self-control, thoughtfulness, and gentle inquisitive interest enables the treatment to go forward to make sense of the patient’s actions.

In her chapter on multicultural perspectives, Cohen points to the conflicts posed by acculturation. There is higher risk among those who feel pressure to conform to Anglo ideals of beauty. The omnipresence of social media further exacerbates this dilemma. Asians trying to assimilate are further hampered by their own social norms, which dictate that going for help defies a mandate of obedience to hierarchy and patriarchy. For a therapist to have a broad understanding of forces impacting their patients, cultural competence is a must.

Prevailing societal intolerance for non-gender-conforming individuals imposes a perfect storm of self and body hatred that readily feeds into the de-
development of an eating disorder. The prevalence of eating disorders in this population is much higher than the norm. Cohen addresses the multidetermined and unique stressors on these patients in the chapter “Gender, Sexual Identity, and Eating Disorders.” The need for such patients to find their own voice is an uphill battle that calls for therapists to provide gender-affirming treatment. Cohen provides a template of specific questions to help therapists ease the way for the patient to verbalize safely.

Mary Anne Cohen’s new book is a modern, relevant infusion into the literature on eating disorders. It will serve as a welcome text for anyone looking to deepen and upgrade their knowledge in the field.

Valerie Frankfeldt, PhD, is a psychoanalyst practicing in New York City. She is a faculty member, supervisor, and training analyst at the Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Study Center. She writes and presents on analytic work in addictions and most recently on the impact and foibles of digital communication in psychoanalysis.

The Therapeutic Relationship with Survivors of Psychological Trauma

AAPCSW Co-sponsorship with the Department of Veterans Affairs

Following a successful first webinar on burnout co-sponsored with the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in May 2018—“Managing Clinician Burnout: An Inter-professional Case Presentation and Discussion”—Harold Kudler, MD, and I were able to plan a second program with the VA for Wednesday, November 4, 2020. The panel discussion is titled “The Therapeutic Relationship with Survivors of Psychological Trauma.” Through a case presentation and roundtable discussion, this webinar will show how the concept of the therapeutic relationship provides useful and applicable ways to work with survivors of psychological trauma. This concept enables us to link the internal with the external phenomena affecting patients’ lives while enriching the ability of clinicians to reflect on their professional use of self. Concepts of transference, countertransference, the working alliance, and the real relationship will be reviewed through a clinical case. Justin Johnson, MD, will present a case, followed by discussion with the following panelists: Kathryn Basham, PhD, LICSW; Harold Kudler, MD, DLFAPA; William S. Meyer, LCSW, BCD; Michele Rivette, LMSW, BCD; and Penny Rosen, MSW, LCSW, BCD-P. We are grateful for the opportunity to coordinate the program with VA social workers Lorn Gingrich, LCSW, and Laura Taylor, LSCSW, who is also the VA National Director of Social Work, as well as other VA staff.

—Submitted by Penny Rosen, MSW, LCSW, BCD-P

**New Professionals** provides an opportunity for AAPCSW members who are seasoned professionals (eight or more years post-license) to work with new professionals, giving guidance and direction to help with career development and career enhancement.

**Student Outreach** helps AAPCSW members to connect with MSW students on the topic of psychoanalysis in clinical social work.

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Wendy Winograd, DSW, LCSW, BCD-P, Co-Chair • wendywinograd@gmail.com
Janice Berry Edwards would like to share the following press announcement regarding her recent book release: *Empowering Clinical Social Work Practice in a Time of Global Economic Distress*. Please refer to www.naswpress.org or the direct link, www.naswpress.org/product/53639/empowering-clinical-social-work-practice-in-a-time-of-global-economic-distress for additional information. [This is corrected content. The Newsletter regrets the errors in this announcement in the previous issue. Our apologies to Janice Berry Edwards. Also, the direct link is updated from the print version of this issue.]

Johanna Dobrich, MA, LCSW-R, announces the publication of “An Elegy for Motherless Daughters: Dissociation, Multiplicity, and Mourning,” *Psychoanalytic Perspectives* 17, no. 3 (2020): 366–84; doi.org/10.1080/1551806X.2020.1801053. “Interweaving autobiographical narrative with clinical material, this essay examines the generative impact of an enactment initiated by an analyst who shares a history of early maternal loss with a group she led for motherless daughters. It invites readers to conceive of mourning from an intersubjective and multiple self-state perspective, where the boundaries of our inner object world meet the loss of an actual other, in a shared ‘third’ space. Dissociative process will be examined as both a protector and inhibitor of mourning, both then and there and here and now, as it unfolds in the group process.”

Linda Gross, LCSW, is honored that her “Reflections on a Therapeutic Milieu” will be published in “Beyond Dogmatism: Papers and Essays in Honor of Gerald Schamess, MSS,” a special issue of *Psychoanalytic Social Work* (vol. 27, no. 2, forthcoming). The paper reflects on a therapeutic day program for adults affected by persistent mental illness, where the shared ethnography among clients presented itself as an additional therapeutic variable facilitating a sense of identity, connection and healing. Linda was a clinician in the milieu for ten years.

Jonathan Lebolt, PhD, is a relational psychoanalyst and group therapist. He earned an MSW from Hunter College in 1991, a certificate in group therapy from the Eastern Group Psychotherapy Society in 1995, a PhD in clinical social work from Union Institute in 1997, and a certificate in psychoanalysis from the Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Study Center (PPSC) in 2001. He published “Gay Affirmative Psychotherapy: A Phenomenological Study,” an article based on his dissertation, in *Clinical Social Work Journal* in 1999. It was the first study of the client’s experience of gay affirmative therapy. “Pandora’s Box: The Effect of Diagnostic Disclosure on a Depressed Patient,” based on his final paper at PPSC, was also published in the *Clinical Social Work Journal*. Jonathan has taught graduate social work at the following universities: New York, Columbia, Fordham, and Adelphi, as well as Virginia Commonwealth, where he also served as assistant professor of psychiatry. He has presented at the Virginia Psychoanalytic Society; the Richmond Academy of Clinical Psychologists; the Virginia Society for Clinical Social Work; and the New York City, Virginia, and Maryland chapters of the National Association of Social Workers. More recently, Jonathan has served as newsletter editor and continuing education chair at the Institute of Contemporary Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis, where he has taught in the psychoanalytic program and leads the Relational Perspectives Study Group. Jonathan also served on and continues to work with the steering committee of the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity, and Culture at the Washington School of Psychiatry. He has a private practice with individuals, couples, and groups in Bethesda, Maryland.

Faye Mishna, MSW, RSW, PhD, co-authored a paper with Betsy Milne, MGA, and Marion Bogo, OC, LLD, MSW, RSW, titled “Paradigm Shift in Social Workers’ ICT Use with Clients: Examining the Effects of COVID-19 on Social Work Practice, Education, and Research.” It is based on the paradigm shift in social work practice during the COVID-19 pandemic. For several years they have been conducting research on social workers’ informal use of information and communication technology (ICT) in
their formal face-to-face practice. They have been conducting phase two of a study on this, comprising interviews with staff and clients in several agencies. When social distancing was required, they received ethics approval to change the study—to re-interview social workers interviewed prior to COVID-19. The full paper may be accessed by contacting Faye at f.mishna@utoronto.ca.

Judith B. Rosenberger, PhD, LCSW, has been busy teaching and working in practice and is now conducting courses for Silberman MSW students (clinical practice), the Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Study Center (transference and counter-transference), and a bit later for the HeGuang Psychodynamics Consultant Training Program in China (ego psychology). She is the primary program person for WMAAPP (Western MA and Albany Association for Psychoanalytic Psychology) and is continuing to collaborate to organize exciting get-togethers, thanks to Zoom: Jim Gilligan, MD, discussed shame and guilt in late September, and Susan Kolod, PhD, will focus on seduction/coercion in November; three more presentations are on deck. All are welcome; see wmaapp.org/programs/category/wmaapp-programs.

The Psychoanalytic Center of the Carolinas (PCC) has created a new Distinguished Teaching Award in honor of our colleague and member William “Bill” Meyer. He is the first recipient of this award and was recognized as an outstanding member of faculty who “conveys the heart of psychoanalysis with clarity and passion.” The award was presented on June 28, 2020. The following accolades were shared in the announcement circulated by the Psychoanalytic Center of the Carolinas, in regard to Bill’s wonderful achievement:

“Bill is the Director of Training for Social Work and an Associate Professor in the Departments of Psychiatry and Ob/Gyn at Duke University Medical Center. He practices in Duke’s high-risk obstetrics clinic and has taught and supervised social work interns and 3rd year psychiatry residents at Duke for over 30 years. Bill also holds faculty appointments at the Psychoanalytic Center of the Carolinas, the University of North Carolina, and Smith College. He has lectured and published numerous clinical papers on a variety of mental health topics and brought particular attention to the painful history of Psychiatry and the LGBT+ community.

Bill has received many prestigious awards for his teaching and clinical work, including Social Worker of the Year from the NC Society of Clinical Social Work (1998), the Heart of Social Work Award from the North American Field Educators and Directors of the Council On Social Work Education (1999), the Edith Sabshin Teaching Award from the American Psychoanalytic Association (2004), the Day-Garrett Award by the Smith College School for Social Work (2010), and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work (2011). No supervisor has had more interns from the UNC School of Social Work than Bill.

Bill has taught the introductory course in psychoanalysis through the Psychoanalytic Center of the Carolinas for more than 25 years. He is a past-President of the national American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work (AAPCSW) and founded the NC chapter of the AAPCSW. Through his collaborative leadership, three national AAPCSW conferences were held in Durham, NC. Bill is a former President of the NC Society for Clinical Social Work and was Secretary and Elected Distinguished Practitioner of the National Academies of Practice. He has served on the editorial boards of Psychoanalytic Social Work and the Clinical Social Work Journal.”

Congratulations to Bill.

What’s your news? We would like to acknowledge your professional accomplishments; feel free to provide a photo. New to AAPCSW? We invite you to introduce yourself. Contact Newsletter editor Christie Hunnicutt at christiemhunnicutt@gmail.com.
Distinguished AAPCSW members George Hagan, Carol Tosone, and Joan Berzoff each presented evocative reflections on dealing with crisis, trauma, and loss and offered hopeful thoughts on helping ourselves and our patients through these times. While we were sorry to not gather in person, this well-received virtual series offered great promise for our organization. Over one hundred individuals logged in to each event, many of whom were not (or not yet) members of AAPCSW, and we did attract some new members as a result.

We are planning the launch of additional online discussions in 2021 to sustain us until our conference in November. Meanwhile, the ease of access has inspired members and areas to launch series of their own—and we would encourage and support all members in considering what you may like to offer (or what you would like to see offered by others). We are happy to promote your efforts and assist with planning.

Alongside the COVID-19 pandemic, this country continues to struggle with a racial reckoning, an uprising sustained in ways not seen since the civil rights movement of the 1960s. AAPCSW is finding its way into its own reckoning, keenly aware that we are an organization whose membership is majority White. While our demographics are consistent with those of the mental health professions (where less than 10 percent of practitioners and less than 1 percent of psychoanalysts are Black), we recognize we have work to do before we can authentically

References


From page 3

committee’s beginning recommendations include feasible goals such as the formation of virtual study groups on racism and psychoanalytic social work; enhancement of intercommittee work within the organization on matters of racism and antiracism practices; content analysis of our educational offerings up to present time for use in planning future programs; working with Area chairs toward the possibility of local/regional antiracism educational programs focused on diversity and social justice; joining forces with outside organizations with mutual goals and projects (as opportunities develop); and compiling a list of member publications related to questions of race.

We are at a crucial point in the history of our nation and our profession, and we need to seize the moment! Our social work psychoanalytic understandings contain wisdom and strong, potentially flexible roots. We are here reminded of W. B. Yeats’s words from his 1919 poem “The Second Coming”—“Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold” (1171)—written in the context of an apocalyptic postwar Europe and the Irish struggle for emancipation. Some forty years later, the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe published *Things Fall Apart*, a novel that depicts the profound humanity and courage of oppressed peoples. In each of these works, hope is to be found in the rubble of conflict. But not messianic hope, rather a hope that takes work. A poignant example of this hope-in-the-work can be heard in the voices of the Black Lives Matter movement. In our own, much smaller organizational realm, we cannot retreat, we cannot look away, and we cannot claim to have all the answers. Where do we begin? We can begin by coming together and listening to each other. And, equipped with the courage of our professional commitment, knowledge of conscious and unconscious dynamics of human functioning, and the strength of our clinical skills, we can move forward. In this process every step counts. The Diversity and Social Action Committee invites you to join us and help make this project into a membership-wide effort, and we welcome your thoughts and suggestions as well as any future proposals for this column. The center, our association’s center, will hold!
claim that we are committed to being a truly antiracist organization.

Our Diversity and Social Action Committee will be seeking to engage with the American Psychoanalytic Association’s new Holmes Commission on Racial Equality, established to understand and address systemic racism within APsaA and its member institutes. Further, as a core member of the Psychoanalytic Consortium, AAPCSW hopes to propose ways that all five consortium organizations can work together to influence the larger psychoanalytic antiracist movement, in addition to each member organization’s own ad hoc antiracism work. Just as American psychoanalysis was forced from being an elite guild of physicians into welcoming social workers as equals at all levels of the profession, we must now insist psychoanalytic theory, training, and professional organizations fully open its thinking, membership, and leadership to Black and Indigenous peoples and people of color.

Teresa and I have begun participating in a small four-part study group organized through (das) Unbehagen, the psychoanalytic peer collective, on Frank Wilderson’s canonical and provocative new book Afropessimism. At its core, afropessimism claims, “Blackness is coterminous with Slaveness” (102). As Wilderson elaborates, “Anyone who thinks nineteenth century slave narratives are reports on the past isn’t paying attention” (101). In other words: Slavery is never dead. It’s not even past. Wilderson recognizes how difficult this notion is to assimilate. The temptation is to turn away entirely, to foreclose even considering the premise, in part because anti-Black racism and anti-Black violence are so essential to the construction of every other category of person that the problem of anti-Black racism and Black suffering become a problem with “no coherent solution” (171). To even be able to consider and attempt to engage with the proposition of afropessimism, Wilderson suggests, may be the only possible act of solidarity by those of us who are not Black. We hope our study of afropessimism will help us as we think about and move AAPCSW forward in its own work.

We have been doing this work quietly and incrementally, mindful to not overpromise; we have watched other organizations forced to walk back their public antiracism claims when the actions behind their commitments were thin. We welcome AAPCSW members to reach out to us personally (see below for our email addresses) and to step forward with us in this important antiracism work.

Finally, given that our annual in-person Board meeting in March 2020 was cancelled because of the pandemic and our biannual conference has been postponed from March to November 2021, we plan to reconvene the full Board over a series of shorter online meetings early next year and into the spring. We will invite Advisory Board Committee chairs and Advisory Board Area Representative chairs to join the Executive Board via Zoom. At these meetings we will consider our organizational structure and set our course for the coming year. Members who have agenda topics, please let us know.

And so, while 2020 (and likely into 2021) may be remembered as a “lost year,” AAPCSW continues to move forward and respond deliberately to our rapidly evolving circumstances. We always welcome your feedback. But mostly we hope to make you proud to continue to call AAPCSW your professional home. While the rest of psychoanalysis is discovering race, class, and intersectionality—we know that these issues have been at the forefront of social work’s progressive values for a century. As we keep saying, if it weren’t for social work, there would be no psychoanalysis, and psychoanalysis is becoming increasingly suffused with social work values and ethics. Keep up the great work!

In solidarity,
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Want to Join AAPCSW?

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aims & purposes

- To represent and protect the standing and advancement of psychoanalytic social work practitioners and educators.
- To provide an organizational identity for social work professionals engaged in psychoanalytically informed practice.
- To promote and disseminate the understanding of psychoanalytic theory and knowledge within the social work profession and the public.
- To affect liaisons with other organizations and professions who share common objectives for social work and the advancement of psychoanalytic theory and practice.
- To advocate for the highest standards of practice and for quality mental health care for the public.
- To bridge social work and psychoanalytic discourses by integrating concerns for social justice with clinical practice, and to conceptualize psychoanalytic theory and practice within its broader social-political context.

core values

- Recognize the dignity and worth of each human being.
- Acknowledge the intersection of each individual’s inner and outer worlds.
- Convey a psychoanalytic sensibility in our work with all populations and in all settings.
- Integrate concerns for social justice with clinical practice.
- Promote inclusivity and affirm the diverse identities of our colleagues and of those with whom we work.
- Cultivate a community of professionals that advocates for open inquiry and respect for difference.