

Psychotherapy E-Newsletter



Spring | 2021

Dear Colleagues,

We hope this Newsletter finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe as we begin to see light at the end of the tunnel of an enormously difficult time in our lives. In this issue we have exciting articles in a variety of topics, please see below for a list.

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 APsaA's Virtual 2021 National Meeting
- Book Summary by the Editor, "Rage and Creativity: How Feminism Sparked Psychoanalysis"
- Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN) Spring 2021 Update
- Save the Date: APsaA's Virtual 110th Annual Meeting, September 17-19, 2021
- Call for newsletter contributions

A Note from the Chair

As Chair of the Psychotherapist Associates, I hope you enjoy this newsletter. Our editor, Padma Desai, works very hard to find interesting and relevant content that represents Psychotherapist Associates. As a non-analyst practicing psychoanalytic psychotherapy, I have found the Psychotherapist Associates to be my home within APsaA. We hope that those reading this newsletter feel similarly. We invite all comments, suggestions, and thoughts, as we strive to develop and grow this organization within the Organization. We know that most practitioners of dynamic treatment are non-analysts. So, please tell your friends and colleagues about this group. Give them my email. I'm happy to speak with anyone, anytime. Would be happy to welcome more into our group. Again, enjoy the newsletter!!

Jonathan Kersun, MD
kersun@mac.com

Report from the Virtual 2021 National Meeting

I enjoyed attending the symposium, "Community Effects of Coronavirus in Four Countries." Chaired by Dr. Jeffrey Taxman, with panelists representing the U.S., Brazil, China and Russia. The panelists highlighted the divergent impact of national policies on the Covid-19 pandemic's toll and proposed a psychoanalytic understanding of these effects.

Dr. Taxman framed the pandemic as a "massive community disaster, perpetrated by an invisible enemy that resonates with an early childhood developmental fear, i.e., being attacked by an unknown assailant without having an idealized self-object for protection. The abandonment terror leads to ineffective defenses of denial and splitting.

Dr. Taxman also contrasted this crisis with other disasters due to its prolonged duration, geographical breadth, differing time courses, divergent national responses, emerging variants and uneven vaccination programs. He described the emotional stages of disasters, including pre-disaster, heroism, honeymoon, disillusion, working through and reconstruction; he correctly predicted the "honeymoon" associated with available vaccines would diminish with inefficient implementation, leading to a letdown due to the slow return to normalcy. This spring we are experiencing public impatience, with premature lifting of restrictions, non-compliance with mask-wearing and social distancing and resultant increased case numbers.

Because we are familiar with the United States' response to Coronavirus and its enormous human toll, I will describe other countries' experiences.

Susana Muszkat, a Brazilian psychologist and psychoanalyst discussed the social, economic, sanitary, humanitarian and psychological crisis resulting from pre-morbid economic inequality and poor national leadership. Coronavirus was initially "a Chinese problem, "spread by upper class" travel. In late February 2020 the first Brazilian case occurred and by March, lockdown ensued. Brazil's president fired the health minister for paying "too much attention" to Coronavirus; he touted unproven treatments, ignored science and belittled rising death rates. Ms. Muszkat described this as feeling "psychotic," analogous to parents abandoning endangered children. Brazil's tremendous economic inequality exacerbated the pandemic. When schools closed, education ceased for students without computers; there were no school meals, with consequent malnutrition. Unemployment was rampant and hygiene non-existent in "favelas," where 11% of Brazil's population reside. In contrast, people of privilege had access to virtual psychotherapy and analysis that provided significant support.

A Russian psychotherapist, Tatiana Onikova, described her government's denial and manipulation, engendering rampant mistrust of leadership, physical and economic loss along with fear and anxiety. Trans-generational worry about control and persecution also occurred. Therapy became 25% virtual and was supportive instead of analytic; seeking mental health treatment was more socially acceptable despite the state's lack of support for psychosocial help.

In contrast, Dr. Jun Gao, a Chinese psychologist, highlighted her country's prompt and effective pandemic control via complete lockdown in Wuhan by January. There were 101,488 nationwide Covid-19 cases in February 2020 and just 1320 cases in February 2021! However, despite strictly enforced public health measures, about 1/3 of the population experienced "significant psychological distress." Key stress-relievers included available local medical resources and government visibility and prevention/control measures, i.e. state-mandated mask-wearing.

To conclude, Dr. Taxman noted the similarity between proactive leadership during Covid-19 in China and President Bush's presence at Ground Zero after 9/11, in contrast with pandemic responses in the U.S., Brazil and Russia. Effective national leadership can "mitigate the primitive childhood fear of being parentless in a crisis." Misinformation by government leaders fosters group regression, trauma, anxiety and fear, reminiscent of how dishonest or inconsistent borderline parents damage their children's emotional health. People experience "high anxiety, develop regressive defenses and carry traumatic memories when they don't know what to expect."

By using a psychoanalytic framework to understand the pandemic's far-reaching effects, our profession can guide future community policy and elucidate societal psychological impacts. The session clearly demonstrated how psychodynamic theory can potentially reduce the enormous emotional toll of catastrophes, *beyond the treatment room*.

Margo P. Goldman, MD
margogoldmanmd@gmail.com

Book Summary by the Editor, "Rage and Creativity: How Feminism Sparked Psychoanalysis" (2020, IPBooks)

This anthology, with contributions by psychoanalytic thinkers, both women and men, celebrates how a feminist thought collective changed psychoanalysis to better understand women's needs and desires. It focuses on Arlene Kramer Richards' essay "Rage and Creativity: How Second-Generation Feminist Thought Collective Influenced Psychoanalysis". The ideas she sets forth are the jumping off point for the discussions that follow. By inviting the contributors to discuss her essay, she affords her discussants an opportunity to be part of a feminist collective. Each of the discussants focuses on some aspect of her thesis that resonates for them. They expand on concepts she introduces, raise questions about particular points she makes and offer their perspective on the topic. Controversy is part of the exchange between Dr. Richards and the contributors to this volume.

A number of the essays explore a facet of the authors' professional and/or personal developments, particularly in relation to feminism and the psychology of women. As one follows the discussions, one sees both a continuum and departure between the ideas of pioneer women psychoanalysts, formerly ignored by mainstream psychoanalysis, i.e. Karen Horney and Melanie Klein. As theoretical ideas by these pioneers are incorporated into contemporary psychoanalysis, the dynamic aspect of psychoanalysis is highlighted.

The adaptive aspects of rage and aggression to transform and empower, is also a theme. Some of the essays discuss how expressions of righteous anger can grow out of being ignored, unfairly

restrained or abused. Others address the ways in which prejudice threatens or quashes ambition. Still others discuss how one mitigates the barriers to self-fulfillment and intellectual honesty, overcoming being invisible or capriciously excluded by the gatekeepers.

Sexism, racism and “othering” are in the conversation. A brief vignette of Dr. Margaret Morgan Lawrence, the first African American psychoanalyst, illustrates how racism and sexism converge. A discussion by an African American male psychoanalyst, elegantly illustrates, with passages from his novel, how the “liberation of white women and Black men intersect”.

Sandra Buechler says in her back-cover comment about this book, “... The lively back and forth between Dr. Richards and her discussants itself demonstrates how an open exchange can foster mutual growth.” The essay, discussions and narratives tell a story about how voices are shaped and what happens when those voices are expressed and heard. This collection consolidates the past, establishes our present and prepares a base for the future.

Included among the contributors are: Rosemary Balsam; Sandra Cohen; Paula Ellman, Alison Feit; William Fried; Nancy Goodman; Cordelia Schmidt-Hellerau; Dorothy Evans Holmes; Lee Jenkins; Kimberly Kleinman; Nancy Kulish; Merle Molofsky; Kerry Kelly Novick; Jack Novick; Arlene Kramer Richards; Lucille Spira; Jeffrey Stern; Judith Alpert; Selma Duckler; Les Von Losberg; Margery Quackenbush; Paul Schwaber; Herbert Stein; with a personal statement and artwork by Bracha L. Ettinger, psychoanalyst, philosopher and artist.

Lucille Spira, Ph.D., LCSW
Editor, “Rage and Creativity: How Feminism Sparked Psychoanalysis”
lbspira@earthlink.net

Update on The Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN)

You’ve probably already guessed it – yes, PsiAN has been busy! We’ve presented our original research to the **Psychoanalytic Consortium** and its member organizations, including APsaA, continued our ongoing legislative advocacy efforts, formed 2 new committees, added new Strategic Partners and hosted our first webinar for the legal field. Read on to hear more about what we’ve been up to!

We’ve gotten a huge vote of confidence!

The Group for the Advancement of Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis in Psychology (GAPPP) has given PsiAN a tremendously generous grant -- **\$100,000 total**, if we can raise \$25,000 in matching funds! They see the potential in leveraging the original market research that PsiAN has conducted over the past year under the leadership of Santiago Delboy and Linda Michaels. This research gives us a unique look into the attitudes, beliefs, biases, and associations that the general public has about therapy and mental health issues. Taking an innovative approach, we used the tools and strategies of market research and completed an extensive qualitative and quantitative research effort. Importantly, we went straight to the public and listened deeply to them. After all, if we are going to elevate our therapies in their minds, we need to understand the public -- not just talk to ourselves.

In addition, PsiAN co-chair Linda Michaels was invited by APsaA to present this research at the annual meeting in February. She joined Austin Ratner as panelists in the APsaA Committee for Public Information (CPI) panel **"Re-branding psychoanalysis: Correcting the public’s misunderstandings."**

Given the strong interest in the research, we are offering a presentation for PsiAN members **June 5, 11am-1pm Central**. We will be offering CEs, in partnership with the Institute for Clinical Social Work. Advance sign-up is required and space is limited. Please email us (hello@psian.org) for more info.

APsaA is supporting the matching grant with a \$5,000 donation from its restricted fund dedicated to advocacy efforts. If you would like to contribute personally, [click here](#).

PsiAN continues to grow!

Since we last wrote, PsiAN has been delighted to welcome a number of new Strategic Partners—organizations that endorse our mission to advocate for therapies of depth, insight and relationship, and have joined our coalition (for free!). Our newest allies are the Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies, the Psychoanalytic Center of the Carolinas, New York Graduate School of Psychoanalysis, the Illinois Association for Infant Mental Health, The City College of New York Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program, the Minneapolis Psychoanalytic Society and Institute, Antioch Psychoanalytic, and RADAR.psy in Canada. Strategic Partners have the option to nominate a member to PsiAN's Steering Committee, which meets once a month and guides the activities of our organization. Let us know if your institute or organization is interested in learning more and joining us.

We're also proud to have hosted our first-ever **webinar for the legal field**, co-sponsored with Case Western Law School, in mid-March. This two-hour event, designed for law students and lawyers, addressed questions legal professionals often have around mental health but might be afraid to ask, such as: "How do I identify quality treatment for myself and my clients? And how do I find it?" and "How can therapies of depth, insight and relationship go beyond band-aid interventions and lead to better outcomes for my clients and myself?" Many thanks to [Candela Bonaccorso](#) and [John Thor Cornelius](#) for their presentations, and for sharing their expertise with the audience.

We're also proud to announce the formation of two new PsiAN committees, both of which are open to new members and have projects already underway! Our **Insurance Committee** is taking on issues including protecting telehealth, supporting mental health parity efforts, and fighting intrusive insurance practices like claw backs. Our **Developing Professionals Committee** welcomes members who are early in their careers, from undergrads and graduate students to those just entering the field. This committee is building resources to enhance identity as a practitioner of therapies of depth, insight and relationship.

The PsiAN Forum

Last year, we relaunched PsiAN's website with tons of new functionality and features, including a [Forum](#) featuring original essays and articles. We've been delighted to publish several pieces since our last update. In "[What I Learned About Therapy in Five Sessions](#)," [Dayna Sharp](#), LCSW, gives snapshots of five consultations she experienced as a patient, each with a different therapist. Her search for a good match culminates with Dr. G, who "offered me a weekly refuge from life and from my mind that I eventually was able to create within myself," Sharp writes.

In our next post, "[Why Ask Why?](#)," mental health counselor [Keith R. Wilson](#) writes that insurance companies, psychotherapy researchers, and employers of therapists would rather that patients ask how to ameliorate their struggles than why they are the way they are—but it's the latter that his patients have overwhelmingly sought his help with. "Why is a question that goes all the way down and never ends," he writes

In "[Collective Calamity and Therapy...With a Dash of Sitcom](#)," [Irene Yancher, PsyD](#) uses the television show *Monk* to analyze how a phobic, suspicious relationship to the world can develop, and how patient and therapist might collaborate to change it. "As Monk has more and more experiences in a secure relationship, he will find it possible to have a different relationship to the world as well," Yancher writes. "Yes, life's dangers will always be there, and it is not adaptive to deny them when action is needed. However, it is also not adaptive to endlessly marinate in fear."

Most recently, we've posted a [video interview](#) with [Enrico Gnaulati, PhD](#), author of *Saving Talk Therapy: How Health Insurers, Big Pharma, and Slanted Science are Ruining Good Mental Health Care*. The video interview is the first installment of a new Forum initiative, PsiAN Speaks, which will present a series of video interviews with PsiAN Advisors and Steering Committee members.

Legislative Advocacy Efforts

The PsiAN Insurance Committee is going strong! We recently testified in the Illinois legislature in support of telehealth, which has been a lifeline to many during this pandemic. We also joined the

Kennedy Forum Illinois, Inseparable, and other organizations to support the [Health is Health Illinois](#) campaign, which is focused on ensuring mental health parity. The campaign aims to update Illinois law with clear and commonsense definitions and standards of mental health care in order to decrease costs, reduce homelessness, and save lives.

As you can see, PsiAN is working hard to advocate for the treatments we offer. Please [join us](#) (at no cost!) or drop us a line to learn more.

Linda Michaels, PsyD, MBA
Co-Chair, PsiAN
lindamichaels@psian.org



Upcoming Events:

110th Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting usually takes place in June but, in 2021, will take place in September, virtually.

September 17-19, 2021.

More information will be made available later this year on our meetings website

<https://www.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 next Annual Meeting in 2021? 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 (padma@padmadesai.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](#) or [Psychotherapist Associate Trainees](#) - Benefits include a discounted meeting fee. Contact APsAA's Membership Services Assistant, Bronwyn Zevallos (membadmin@apsa.org) with any questions.

To view back issues of the Psychotherapy E-newsletter, visit:

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

American Psychoanalytic Association | 309 East 49th St | New York, NY 10017 | 212-752-0450
| apsa.org