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American
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Association

PSYCHOTHERAPIST NEWSLETTER

THIS ISSUE

*Note from
Committee Co-Chairs
Committee Update
Spotlight: Olga Fridman
Hope in Connections: A
Personal Journey Through The
Pandemic
PsiAN Update*

PSYCHOTHERAPIST COMMITTEE

Michael Burke LCSW
Padmavathy Desai LMHC LPC
Kathryn Fleming-Ives MD
Olga Fridman LCSW
Margo Goldman MD
Cynthia Lucas LCSW
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Petra Pilgrim MD
Carol Reichenthal PhD
Margaret Cheng Tuttle MD
James Woody PsyD

NEWSLETTER EDITORS

Padmavathy Desai LMHC LPC
Margo Goldman MD

COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS' NOTE

Dear Psychotherapist friends and colleagues,

As the new co-chairs of the Psychotherapist Committee, we are very grateful to our previous co-chairs, Carol Reichenthal and Margo Goldman, for helping us transition into our new roles. We look forward to getting to know you and helping to enrich your experience in APsA.

In that vein, we want to update you about the increased membership dues that began in 2024. The 2023 bylaw change established expanded membership that granted Psychotherapist (and other) Associates full APsA membership. Given this, our annual dues will increase over the next five years, up to the full membership level of \$800. This translates to an approximately 20% per year increase in annual dues during the next five years. The dues for psychoanalytic psychotherapy trainees will mirror that of analytic candidates and remain capped during their training.

As Committee Co-Chairs, we are strongly committed to making your membership beneficial and worthwhile, by maximizing opportunities for your inclusion and professional growth as full Clinical Members. We would love you to participate in as many aspects of the organization as possible, save for training and credentialing work specific to psychoanalysts and psychoanalysis. Ideally, we envision immersion via leadership roles, governance, newsletter article submissions, committee memberships and as attendees, presenters and discussants at biannual scientific meetings.

Please feel free to reach out to either of us if you want to explore a more active role as a psychotherapist in APsA. We would be glad to respond to questions and/or concerns about full membership, and welcome your suggestions about how we as psychotherapists can be more immersed in this evolving organization.

Be sure to “stay tuned” about our Committee’s scientific sessions and networking events at February’s National Meeting in San Francisco!

We hope to meet many of you there!

Kathryn (Katie) Fleming-Ives - kflemingives@gmail.com

Cindy Lucas - cindylucaslcsw@gmail.com

COMMITTEE UPDATE

BY PADMAVATHY DESAI & MARGO GOLDMAN

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

We hope you are doing well and had a chance to “refuel” during the summer. As the foliage changes and the weather gets cooler, we anticipate APsA’s 2025 National Meeting in February in San Francisco; we are delighted to share another Psychotherapist Committee Newsletter issue with you.

Amidst continuing worldwide turmoil and the upcoming Presidential election, our Committee Chairs, Kathryn Fleming-Ives MD (Katie) and Cynthia Lucas LCSW (Cindy) have continued to work with APsA leadership and staff to ensure successful implementation of psychotherapists’ full membership. Three Psychotherapist Committee Members (Kathryn Fleming-Ives, Linda Michaels and Michael Burke) will serve on a new Psychotherapist Advisory Group that will work with APsA’s MRRC/IRRC to develop and utilize individual and institutional membership criteria for psychotherapists and psychotherapy training programs.

In addition to recently elected psychotherapist APsA Board Member Linda Michaels, another APsA Psychotherapist, Michael Groat PhD has been nominated to run for a Director-At-Large position. We continue to advocate for a dedicated BOD position for a Psychotherapist and are aware that a by-law change will be necessary for that to occur. Katie and Cindy are considering additional ways for APsA psychotherapists to be represented in leadership positions, participate in the organization and be more broadly involved in APsA. Please see “Note from Psychotherapist Committee Co-Chairs” for additional information about the impact of Expanded Membership.

Our Committee has welcomed a new member, Olga Fridman LCSW from New York City (see bio and picture), an APsA Psychotherapist Associate since 2014 until becoming a full member last year. We are confident her experience and passion will make her a valuable Committee member and are pleased she has joined the Committee.

COMMITTEE UPDATE | PADMAVATHY DESAI & MARGO GOLDMAN

The Psychotherapy Department, co-chaired by Richard Summers MD and Petra Pilgrim MD has been collaborating with APsA's Science Department to add a clinical component to future scientific paper prize presentations. Dr. Summers will also co-chair a 2-day psychoanalytic psychotherapy clinical workshop with Ann Dart LCSW, who co-chairs the psychotherapy division of the Department of Psychoanalytic Education. Dr. Pilgrim is now serving on the Fellowship Committee, and she recently informed us that the incoming APsA Fellows are a robust, diverse group of clinicians and non-clinicians - all of whom share a passion for psychoanalytic thought and practice. The Department also aims to increase psychotherapy-focused programming and presentations at upcoming APsA scientific meetings; please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like to be a presenter or discussant at one of several future Committee or Department-sponsored sessions. We would also be interested in hearing your ideas for new psychotherapy-related scientific sessions, so please feel free to contact the Psychotherapist Committee Co-Chairs with suggested topics or formats.

As we turn our attention to February's meeting, we are very enthusiastic about the two committee-sponsored programs: "Psychotherapists Present" Discussion Group, co-chaired by Margaret Tuttle MD and Petra Pilgrim MD will feature case presentations that highlight the psychological impact of gun violence. We are pleased to have Jeffrey Taxman MD, past Acting President Elect of APsA and past Chair of Psychoanalysis in the Community as our discussant. The Business of Practice Workshop, chaired by Katie Fleming-Ives MD and James Woody PsyD will focus on ethical dilemmas in clinical practice. It will feature illustrative case presentations of common ethical binds; we are fortunate to have Dr. Richard Summers as the discussant.

In conclusion, we want to remind you that we continue to seek articles from the greater APsA community for future Newsletter issues. We favor informal articles with a personal touch i.e. reflections about a recent scientific meeting or professional endeavor, descriptions of one's clinical work or "niche," musings about life cycle or world events that impact patient care, reports about advocacy work, a summary or review about a particular art form (i.e. a film, book, painting or music) as it relates to psychotherapy, etc. In anticipation of new contributors, we recently developed editorial guidelines to clarify the process from submission to editing to publication. If you are interested in writing an article for us, please contact us and we will be glad to send you the guidelines as well as review a potential article.

We wish you safe travels to San Francisco and hope to see as many of you as possible there in February!

Padma Desai LMHC LPC

Margo Goldman MD

Co-Editors

Psychotherapist Committee Newsletter



PSYCHOANALYSIS & YOU



apsa.org/podcast

BIO SPOTLIGHT: OLGA FRIDMAN, LCSW



Spotlight: Olga Fridman, LCSW

Olga Fridman, LCSW graduated from a two-year psychodynamic psychotherapy program at The Psychoanalytic Institute (now called the Psychoanalytic Association of New York (PANY)) in 2011 and completed the one-year Intensive Psychotherapy Course - “Bridge to Psychoanalytic Training” at the Psychoanalytic Association of New York in 2024. She works with adult individuals, couples and groups, is currently employed full time at the Adult Outpatient Psychiatry Department at Northwell Health and has a part-time private practice in the New York City Metropolitan Area. She has been an APsA member since 2014 and is passionate about promoting psychoanalytic psychotherapy in clinical and educational settings.

HOPE IN CONNECTIONS: A PERSONAL JOURNEY THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

SARAH K ABEL, LICSW

“...extreme circumstances sometimes reveal truths about human beings that hide themselves in ordinary times” Anna Freud (1936)

It is difficult to reconcile that positive change emerged amidst the pain and turmoil of the pandemic. I found solace in the quiet. The silence opened up new space by slowing life’s tempo and creating opportunities to rediscover purpose.

In March 2020 I joined an online peer group offered by the American Psychoanalytic Association’s (APsA) COVID Task Force to support the therapeutic community during this upheaval. This group formed relationships that offered the scaffolding for new growth. While facing threats of autocracy, climate crisis, political divides and the pandemic, valuing each others’ presence and taking mutual care was our quiet rebellion.

HOPE IN CONNECTIONS: A PERSONAL JOURNEY THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

The pandemic's threat of disease and death disrupted assumptions about the continuity of everyday life. The mandated isolation and resulting disorientation further intensified pervasive anxiety and fear. This level of provocation was not pacified by typical methods of civil engagement: voting, protesting, community concern for our health and planet. Our ordinary human connections were interrupted.

The move to tele-health led to the disbanding of my two long standing peer consultation groups. Both groups faded away, overwhelmed by zoom fatigue and new stress. In retrospect, these confusing losses were also a product of the respective groups' complacency and unexamined patterns. The intentionality of our meetings had been dulled by convenience. We had our minds on other things and withdrew from one another, attempting to hide from the existential threat, too frightened to reflect. We had settled into the numbing, monotonous safety of insularity, unprepared to manage this new stress together. Without the familiar, I began to question what I needed to enable me to work as an analytic psychotherapist.

I reflected about a previous life experience in which normalcy was suddenly broken. I was working at Bellevue Hospital in New York City when 9/11 occurred. My memories from that morning are of the terror and the poignancy of patients and staff experiencing this event together. That September morning, I canceled the weekly Disabled Men's Group I was about to lead, telling my patients to go home and be careful. "You too," they replied. "Be careful." No longer separated by the roles of patient and therapist, we were all faced with the disorientation of raw emotion.

This 287 year-old hospital had thick walls that held us as they had done for others before. We watched the news on the waiting room TV, called our loved ones and hugged each other in the hallways. We faced this horror together, comforted by knowing there was little this hospital had not seen. To our relief, the hospital administration's strict orders provided structure. Our clinic psychiatrist and I waited in the Bellevue atrium for the traumatized survivors who never arrived.

Almost twenty years later, as a clinician in private practice, I was alone, managing the tumult brought by the catastrophic pandemic. I missed the ancient hospital's predictability. Daily news contained constant contradictions. The isolating experience of solo practice coupled with the idleness and loss of my peer groups left me vulnerable to struggles erupting everywhere, from fraught political divides to climate change.

There was no hospital administration to force routine like I had at Bellevue. Ordinary comforts were indefinitely paused. Overnight, therapists had to manage the radical change from in-person treatment to tele-health. In one of my earliest Zoom sessions, I opened the room feeling unsure about all the new steps involved in bringing my adolescent patient into this novel setting. "BOO!" was his playful greeting. The generational differences in comfort with technology were obvious.

HOPE IN CONNECTIONS: A PERSONAL JOURNEY THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

The APsA peer group offered grounding. I clicked onto Zoom and met 12 vulnerable anxious therapists ranging widely in age from across the country, who shared psychoanalytic orientation and a need for support and consultation. Each of us was grappling with attachment needs anew. The groups' parameters were simple: one hour a week for as long as we wanted. We did not have a leader, although at times we craved one as we moved forward together.

Meeting strangers during this time of fear and loneliness was both daunting and exhilarating. Each of us craved connection to combat our surrounding losses. Life felt dire. We washed our groceries, walked 6 feet away from strangers and made nervous eye contact over the masks that we were utterly unaccustomed to wearing. As therapists we faced contagious anxiety within ourselves and our patients.

The group united in the face of change and shared stories. When police violence racked our country, we witnessed political and racial turmoil with different degrees of vulnerability and privilege. We met while helicopters swarmed outside of a member's DC office on Jan. 6. We watched a member's WIFI in New Orleans come in and out as hurricanes approached. Wildfires polluted the air of three group members from California. I shared news of public Nazi activity in my town.

Our group continues to challenge each other to think deeply from different walks of life. Our empathy, the very quality we encourage in our patients, continues to grow. "This group allows us to have faith in what we do," one group member recently affirmed. Psychotherapy can be an essential contribution during times of great suffering. Life is fertilized through the sheltering containment we provide for one another as we take risks and grow. The conditions of our world are precarious and frightening, but in these connections we swim against the tide of despair.

The extreme circumstances of COVID revealed personal and relational truths as Anna Freud suggests - discoveries that forced us to freshly engage with the preciousness of relationships. The experience of being "part of", founded in a moment of chaotic change, has anchored and enriched our group. I am hopeful we will continue to inspire sustained growth and strengthen our own voices to combat suffering. There will always be work to accomplish in our quiet rebellion.

The logo for the APsA 2025 National Meeting. It features a red square on the left containing the text 'APsA' in white. To the right of the square, the year '2025' is written in blue, followed by the words 'NATIONAL MEETING' in large, bold, purple capital letters.

APsA 2025 NATIONAL MEETING

February 4–9 | In-Person
Palace Hotel, San Francisco



PSYCHOTHERAPY ACTION NETWORK (PSIAN) UPDATE

LINDA MICHAELS, PSYD, MBA

Between the Psychotherapy Action Network's ongoing advocacy work, our groundbreaking original research and our new mentorship program, we are proud of all we have accomplished and hope to achieve. I will summarize the work we have done, as well as our plans for the future.

Advocacy

PsiAN continues to monitor for and strongly oppose policies that marginalize therapies of depth, insight, and relationship. For example, PsiAN learned about Medicare's recent efforts to audit insurance claims for psychotherapy services, particularly therapy sessions over 45 minutes (billing code 90837). These intrusive demands to justify treatment disrupt needed care, violate therapist-patient confidentiality, consume clinicians' time and delay payment. They also lack clinical rationale and don't provide purported "education" or "treatment consultations." With the Illinois Psychological Association as a co-signer, PsiAN sent a letter to Illinois's Senators. We also contacted the Center for Medical Services' (CMS) Secretary Becerra and initiated our first Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for government data about the number of audits being done, as well as details about auditors' training, supervision, and compensation. We will update you when CMS responds.

We are also gravely concerned about the new World Health Organization (WHO) treatment guidelines that favor behavior therapy and cognitive-behavioral therapy. By giving insurers, clinicians and policy makers justification for approving just short-term, structured and symptom-focused treatments, these guidelines will likely result in restricted access to psychodynamic therapy and other in-depth treatments with documented longer-lasting efficacy. PsiAN prepared a petition that implores WHO to preserve access to all evidence-based therapy, including long-term insight-oriented treatments. Thus far, nearly 13,000 individuals and 200 organizations, including APsA and the IPA, have signed this petition!

Furthermore, PsiAN is proud to partner with a range of organizations that share our goals. For example, we participated in a compelling panel hosted by the highly regarded Data & Society, a professional organization that conducts research about how technology impacts the community. This rich, robustly attended panel featured Linda Michaels and two other mental health experts. They presented overlapping concerns that highlighted ways in which technology can intrude on sessions and how "therapy" apps and digital platforms (i.e. Talkspace, Betterhelpcan, Alma, Headway etc) can mislead the public.

We are also collaborating with the William Alanson White Institute. (See below).

PSYCHOTHERAPY ACTION NETWORK (PSIAN) UPDATE

LINDA MICHAELS, PSYD, MBA

Original Research

As some of you may know, PsiAN's Santiago Delboy and Linda Michaels conducted a quantitative nationwide research study to better understand what people want, feel, expect, and worry about when seeking therapy. The results showed that most people want to get to the root of their struggles, understand that emotional problems are complex and that treatment to address and resolve such issues may take time. People also realize the therapeutic relationship is key. Significantly, about 90% of the respondents would choose therapy that takes longer, offers symptom relief and gets to the root, instead of a shorter therapy that offers symptom relief without addressing root causes. These study results demonstrate that people want what depth therapies offer, are concerned about cost and are unaware of what kind of therapy they are getting. PsiAN plans to leverage and publish these findings, to educate the public and correct misconceptions about psychotherapy.

Given the potential impact of our market research work, we plan to conduct additional studies about the mental health landscape. To this end, we added the Research Strategy Committee to PsiAN's Board. The committee, comprised of Steve Axelrod, Usha Tummala-Narra, Chris Muran, Katie Lewis, Santiago Delboy, Linda Michaels, and the Research Director Nicolle Zapien, will define our research strategy and identify future projects.

PsiAN in the Media

PsiAN continues to attract media attention, and in doing so, disseminates our message to professionals and the public.

The Wall Street Journal published Linda Michaels' letter to the editor. Her letter responded to Abigail Schrier's article, "Stop Constantly Asking Kids How They Feel," based on her book, *Bad Therapy: Why Kids Aren't Growing Up*. Linda expressed PsiAN's concern about Schrier's glaring misrepresentations of real therapy, especially therapies of depth, insight and relationship. We are gratified that mainstream media such as the Wall Street Journal conveyed support for psychotherapy by publishing Linda's letter.

Dr. David Puder interviewed Linda Michaels on his podcast, "Psychiatry and Psychotherapy," about PsiAN's original research findings.

Dr. Nicolle Zapien also interviewed Linda on the podcast "Technology and the Mind;" they discussed grassroots efforts to advocate for therapies of depth, insight and relationship as well as marketing's impact on educating the public about mental health treatment.

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New Initiatives and Future Plans

We have launched our PsiAN Mentorship Program, based on our belief in the power of relationships. This is a free program offering guidance and support for PsiAN members at every career stage.

In collaboration with The William Alanson White Institute, PsiAN is starting a webinar program, “The PsiAN Series: Advocating for Our Patients, Our Practice and Ourselves.” This online resource for psychotherapy trainees and practicing clinicians will correct prevailing misconceptions about mental health and psychotherapy; in doing so, it will improve clinicians’ understanding of the mental health landscape and educate them about range of available psychotherapy so they are better equipped to advance treatment.

PsiAN is also creating “Therapy That Sticks,” a campaign to engage, educate and empower the public; a marketing expert will help leverage our research findings. The campaign will direct people to a new “Resources” section of PsiAN’s website - to our knowledge, the first of its kind! The section will include articles, information and a searchable database of low-cost clinics throughout the United States. Our goal is to correct the myth that relational/depth therapy is outdated and moribund by demonstrating its vibrancy and relevance.

Finally, our newly formed Programming Committee co-led by Kris Yi and Elliot Jurist, is planning PsiAN’s 2025 in-person conference. We’d love you to attend, so please stay tuned for details!

If you support PsiAN’s work and want to consider getting involved, please visit our website at www.psian.org, or feel free to contact me by e-mail at lindamichaels.psyd@gmail.com.

Linda Michaels PsyD, MBA
Chair and Co-Founder, PsiAN
Member-at-Large, APsA Board of Directors
Committee Member, Psychotherapist Committee

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Interested in writing for the next
Psychotherapist Newsletter?
We’d love to hear from you!

Please contact Margo Goldman
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or Padmavathy Desai
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for more information.

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