



Analyze This!



The Official Newsletter of the San Gabriel Valley Psychological Association

SGVPA.org

AN OFFICIAL CHAPTER OF THE CALIFORNIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

January/February 2022

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SGVPA Inaugural Diversity Conference

March, 2022

All members and non-member professionals
are invited to attend an all day, in-person event for **6 CE's**.
Extending our Embracing Diversity Series discussions on BLM,
White Allyship, LGBTQ+ issues,
Covid's Impact on the Asian American Community,
Latinx Mental Health, and Native American
and Indigenous Mental Health.

This will be an all day event, offering continental breakfast and lunch,
as well as networking opportunities!

March 2022 (Official Date TBA)

9am-4pm

University of the West

Ken Locke Hall

Rosemead, CA

Meet the President!

On-going

President Wayne Kao, PsyD
will continue to organize informal
coffee meet-and greets to meet or reconnect
with our wonderful membership.
All are welcome!

Watch the SGVPA Listserv posts for announcements of times and places.

SGVPA supports Black Lives Matter and systemic social justice reform. We are making efforts
to increase diversity representation in our organization, in our profession, and nationwide.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



“The only source of knowledge is experience.”
— Albert Einstein

As we head into 2022, we look back on a year of continued obstacles and struggle, but also another year of perseverance and triumph.

One of the many things I've most cherished as President of SGVPA has been my honor to engage in both information and experience. One of the most beautiful aspects of being a psychologist has been our ability to engage in both the science and art of what we do. While we're trying to engage in research to better understand how our minds work, we are also harmonizing the hard information we gather with the individual and collective experiences of our friends, colleagues, and family.

We all know that in research, we must omit certain factors in order to not only achieve significant results, but to also to complete our research. This makes research eternally incomplete, constantly seeking more data, as well as time to collect the data. However, in individual experiences, there can be so much variation that we can never be sure what is an individual experience versus a collective experience. Hopefully, the obvious answer is that we need both experience and research to move closer to completion.

For example, I can read books on the wonders of a place I haven't been to, cites that I must see, and foods to eat. However, I will never know for sure until I go and see for myself, as the factual descriptions alone cannot substitute for the experience of being there myself.

As we continue to endure the struggles of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as political and multicultural unrest, I've cherished the ability to work towards harmonizing both information and experience, to attempt to not only hear, but to amplify the voices of those typically unheard. I've enjoyed gathering all this information and assembling it in the context of our continuing education trainings.

To celebrate our hard work as well as successes, we will be starting 2022 with our **January Jubilee**, on January 28 (please note this is a new date!), at the USC Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena. This will be an in-person event, where we will be able to come together again to eat, drink, and share!

We will also be having our first **Diversity Conference** in March, another 6 hour CE training, which will reflect on all the hard work that we've put in—not only to expand our association, but to become a truly inclusive community. We will amplify all voices, as we reflect on the amazing work we've done, but also the work we have yet to accomplish. Breakfast and lunch will also be provided.

Here's to a happy and healthy 2022!

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne Kao, PsyD
President

Diversity Committee Meetings

If you are interested in being involved
in our Diversity Committee where you
can stay informed on the activities and events that are being planned in SGVPA
as well as stay up to date on resources available to our larger community, please contact
Diversity Chair Amee Velasco at ameevelasco@gmail.com for more information.

In Person January Jubilee!!

Friday, January 28, 2022

6:30- 9:30pm

USC Pacific Asia Museum
46 N Los Robles Ave, Pasadena, CA 91101

New Year Kickoff Address by our new President!

SGVPA Plans and Projects for 2022!



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Dr. Wayne Kao**

Dr.WayneKao@gmail.com

“See You at the JJ!!”



Poetry to Ponder

Auden wrote this poem on the day Hitler invaded Poland. He was trying to find some hope and consolation during a chaotic, uncertain time in the history of the Western world, a time with some similarities to our present, also fraught with fears of autocracy and extremism. To understand the poem, it helps to know that Hitler was born in Linz and that Thucydides was an ancient historian who chronicled the fall of the Athenian democracy in the 5th century BC.

September 1, 1939

W. H. Auden - 1907-1973

I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty-second Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of a low dishonest decade:
Waves of anger and fear
Circulate over the bright
And darkened lands of the earth,
Obsessing our private lives;
The unmentionable odour of death
Offends the September night.
Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad,
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made
A psychopathic god:
I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.
Exiled Thucydides knew
All that a speech can say
About Democracy,
And what dictators do,
The elderly rubbish they talk
To an apathetic grave;
Analysed all in his book,
The enlightenment driven away,
The habit-forming pain,
Mismanagement and grief:
We must suffer them all again.
Into this neutral air
Where blind skyscrapers use
Their full height to proclaim
The strength of Collective Man,
Each language pours its vain
Competitive excuse:
But who can live for long
In an euphoric dream;
Out of the mirror they stare,
Imperialism's face
And the international wrong.
Faces along the bar
Cling to their average day:
The lights must never go out,
The music must always play,
All the conventions conspire
To make this fort assume

The furniture of home;
Lest we should see where we are,
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of the night
Who have never been happy or good.
The windiest militant trash
Important Persons shout
Is not so crude as our wish:
What mad Nijinsky wrote
About Diaghilev
Is true of the normal heart;
For the error bred in the bone
Of each woman and each man
Craves what it cannot have,
Not universal love
But to be loved alone.
From the conservative dark
Into the ethical life
The dense commuters come,
Repeating their morning vow;
«I will be true to the wife,
I'll concentrate more on my work,»
And helpless governors wake
To resume their compulsory game:
Who can release them now,
Who can reach the deaf,
Who can speak for the dumb?
All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.
Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages:
May I, composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.

—Submitted by Daniel Goldin, PsyD

The Inspiring, Humbling, and Fraught Nature of a Career in College Counseling



By Elisa Hernandez, PhD
Membership Chair

A counseling psychologist by training, I am captivated by the profound challenge of moving through a life transition such as starting college. It's the very process of recognizing and shedding what no longer serves you, and carving out an authentic self, instead of living in the "shoulds" and expectations of the world around you. While preparing for my internship at a university counseling center (UCC), I was excited to delve headfirst into the therapeutic process with a population that seemed primed for identity exploration. My aim was to use the theories that I'd spent years learning, to execute detailed treatment plans that beautifully reflected the arc of a "complete" course of treatment. But I had not prepared for just how I would fit that work into just three sessions—i.e., the average course of treatment in most college counseling centers.

My perspective and approach to therapy had to shift. I began to more fully consider the clients seeking our services... Clients who had never experienced therapy before, but often had extensive histories of trauma. Clients who often were first generation college students, and children of immigrants, who were trying to make sense of their bicultural value systems, as well as confronting the tension between their present and their imagined futures. These were clients who were trying to balance school, work, family obligations, friendships, relationships, drugs and alcohol, and institutional bureaucracy, while trying to figure out what they are going to do for "the rest of their lives." Some of these students were eighteen, and living away from home for the first time. Some were full-time working parents in their forties, returning to school to complete a degree they hoped would provide more opportunities. I never knew who would walk into the room or what their stories would reveal.

Luckily, I had many mentors who were kind, patient, and seasoned. They helped me reframe the role of a counselor in the brief therapy framework used at UCC. Of course, there were also more practical components—like crisis management, diagnosis, and referrals—as well as less clinically-focused tasks like outreach, serving on university committees, and program development. But there were also more formidable duties: introducing students to therapy, normalizing and demystifying the confusion and tension that accompany this developmental stage and life transition, and instilling hope that change is

possible, and they are not alone.

Sometimes the work is straightforward: a client with a specific short-term goal that is a good fit for brief therapy, or a client with adequate health insurance who is motivated to get connected to long-term therapy in the community. More often, I operate within a stressful middle ground: helping clients who are in distress and in need of support, but are not convinced they need long-term therapy; or who have limited insurance which makes it difficult to connect them to a long-term provider. On these occasions, I have to engage in the difficult and delicate balancing act of providing support and containing, without going too deep. However, during these moments, I am also reminded of my great privilege and responsibility—when a client shares their distress, and comments that no one has ever before validated their feelings; or when a client bursts into tears because no one before has normalized their experience, or been accepting of whatever parts of themselves they've hidden due to shame. These moments remind me of the magic and healing that can happen in just three sessions! In my practice, I often reflect on a metaphor about planting seeds: therapists in UCCs rarely get to witness the fruits of the client's healing, but we do have a crucial role in providing the experience of safety, trust, and information so that clients can begin their healing work.

The perspective that college counseling is just about relationship distress, managing independence, roommate conflict, and academic problems is outdated. Students now present with more extensive histories of mental illness and more acute crises, coupled with more awareness and willingness to engage in therapy. A UCC therapist is more likely to encounter long histories of trauma, mood and anxiety disorders, acute suicidal crises, and even budding psychosis. Today, a career in university counseling requires creativity, flexibility, and adaptability, as well as a willingness to work in an environment with high demand for services and dwindling resources. We label ourselves generalists because we must be well-versed in many theories, approaches, and interventions, but there is also a specificity to our work. We specialize in connecting, educating, and containing. We are bridges and lifelines.

Ten years later, I am still impressed by the insight that can be gained in three sessions. But, my heart still breaks for those who I sense will struggle to get connected, and may not continue on their path to healing. For me, working in UCCs has been simultaneously inspiring and frustrating, humbling and empowering, rewarding and exhausting—and I would have it no other way.

Dr. Elisa Hernandez can be reached at elihernz@gmail.com.

Voices of Inclusion

Alliance and Socio-Cultural Attunement in Psychotherapy

By Silvina Irwin, PhD



Most psychotherapists agree that a strong therapeutic alliance is a necessary ingredient for successful treatment. Our clients come to us because they are stuck in their suffering, and as we make sense of their struggles, their stories unfold.

The stronger our alliance with our clients and the more safety we build, the more clients reveal of their experience and the more they feel seen and known.

A solid alliance rests on the foundation of the well-known construct of attunement. Attunement has been defined as “a kinesthetic and emotional sensing of others knowing their rhythm, affect and experience by metaphorically being in their skin.” Daniel Siegel once shared a story about a very depressed client who told him upon termination that what helped her heal in therapy with him was essentially his ability to exquisitely attune to her. She said, “When I am with you, I feel felt. I know that I am known.”

Attunement can encompass many different elements of seeing and being with our clients. Given current understandings of the ways in which people are shaped by intersecting and overlapping social and cultural identities, we may ask what does it mean to be socio-culturally attuned? That is, the ability to attune to the various identities our clients hold and how those identities have shaped them. We might ask, how often have I brought a sense of genuine curiosity to my clients’ experience of living in their many identities within the various social systems that they are a part of – including (but not limited to) race, gender, culture, religious practice, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, education level, age, physical ability, neurotype, family status, and immigration status?

Most of you reading this column have invested, or are in the process of investing, a substantial amount of time and resources to developing your knowledge and craft as a psychotherapist. You likely have studied several models of psychotherapy in depth, and care deeply about being a good therapist and healer. That said, most have not invested much energy in to developing knowledge about the ways in which culture, race, power dynamics, and societal structures strongly influence a person’s experience of themselves. Such internal working models reside within one’s implicit sense of value, sense of safety and belonging in the world, and expectations of others. If we are to meet our clients in their full humanity, it makes sense that we make space to see our clients within the multiple sociocultural contexts they are a part of and in

all of the important identities that they carry.

Where to begin? It starts with you: the Self-of-the-Therapist. Self-inquiry and exploration of the various identities that *you* hold are necessary for you to bring your full self and your identities into the process. How can we explore them fully with our clients if not?

Many of us began this work in graduate school. The task is to recognize the various identities and relational contexts that have been formative to us. It’s crucial in this process to reflect in earnest on how these identities are intimately connected with our experiences, —such as being in positions of power or oppression, part of the majority or the minority, in relational comfort and discomfort, with feelings of self-worth, safety, or woundedness or distress. Explore for yourself: what are your most important identities? Reflect on moments when that identity made you feel like part of the majority group and comfortable. Were there moments when an important identity you carry made you feel ashamed or less than, or judged? What did this experience say to you, about you? How did it impact your sense of belonging? What did you do with your discomfort?

Bringing an awareness of the various identities that you carry into the room with your clients provides you with a more expansive lens through which to attend to, understand, and resonate with your clients. Dr. Kenneth V. Hardy aptly notes that it also offers rich exploration and conversation about the mix of identities present between therapist and client, and where that helps and where it may hinder the therapeutic process.

Being socio-culturally attuned may be seen as part and parcel with being a culturally-sensitive psychotherapist. When taken on in earnest, these are often uncharted waters for therapists and clients alike, and can be anxiety-provoking and riddled with fear of making mistakes, offending, or getting it wrong. When unaddressed, however, these very understandable fears and discomforts place us at risk of limiting the self-explorative process.

Being a culturally sensitive expert in counseling is a constant process of evolution and growth—one does not “arrive.” Recently, psychologist Heide A. Zetzer noted that it is a process that is punctuated by the reality that “as soon as you feel culturally competent, conditions will change. New clients, trainees, contexts, and identities will emerge as the culture shifts. Hence, it is essential that we treat ourselves and our trainees with the loving-kindness we afford our clients.” Connecting with others to discuss these ideas, seeking consultation, attending workshops, reading literature on socio-cultural attunement and culturally sensitive psychotherapy are wonderful resources to support your development in this arena.

Silvina Irwin, PhD can be reached at silvina.irwin@gmail.com.

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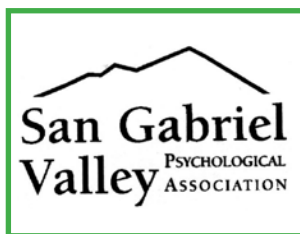
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