

## Meet the New MPA President: Dr. Elissa Patterson

By Kristen Votruba, Ph.D.



Dr. Elissa (Lissa) Patterson earned a Ph.D. in biopsychology from the University of Chicago and a Certificate of Clinical Re-specialization from William James College (formerly the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology). She currently works as a Clinical Assistant Professor of psychiatry at the University of Michigan, where she specializes in health psychology (<https://medicine.umich.edu/dept/psychiatry/elissa-patterson-phd>; <https://twitter.com/epatters2>). Prior to her life as a psychologist, she studied English literature at Colgate University, teaching at Sierra Nevada College in Lake Tahoe, and biology at the Harvard University Extension School. She is passionate about improving the well-being of individuals and society through education, clinical practice, and systemic growth. She enjoys teaching medical students, psychology graduate students, and psychiatry residents about the applications of psychological principles in medicine--particularly the benefits of re-integrating the mind and the body.

Dr. Patterson works on the Consultation Liaison Service at University Hospital in Ann Arbor, where she sees medical/surgical patients who experience psychological factors impeding their medical progress. In partnership with the department of neurology, she helped develop a multi-disciplinary clinic for patients with conversion disorder (psychogenic non-epileptic seizures) using a published treatment that draws on elements from multiple schools of thought including mindfulness, stress management, CBT, psychodynamic psychotherapy, and principles of influence.

This summer, Dr. Patterson took on a new role as Professional Development Coach with the Michigan Medicine Office of Clinical Affairs. In this position, she helps faculty members evaluate and develop their communication skills, given the positive relationship between communication and patient safety. She is a member of the Michigan Medicine Pain Committee, and she is passionate about the importance of spreading understanding about biopsychosocial approaches to pain perception and management as a tool to fight the opioid epidemic. As president of MPA, she hopes to increase public awareness of the many ways that psychologists contribute to generating healthy communities in all senses of the word "healthy."

Regarding the importance of MPA membership in her life, Dr. Patterson states "MPA membership grounds me in the collective wisdom of a long-standing organization that monitors and influences the practice of psychology in Michigan. I love having access to tailor-made continuing education and networking with other psychologists through MPA-facilitated peer consultation groups. In addition to professional enrichment on a personal level, for me, MPA is an outlet through which I can connect with like-minded colleagues as we all contribute to pro-social initiatives that improve lives by increasing access to psychological tools."

Dr. Patterson lives with her partner Gabriel Corfas, PhD, who is a neuroscientist at Michigan Medicine and the director of the Kresge Hearing Research Institute. She is a dog-lover and also enjoys gardening, jogging, sailing, home renovation, skiing, reading, socializing, and exploring new places and cultures. She speaks French, Spanish, Armenian, some Russian and some Portuguese. What's on Dr. Patterson's nightstand? *Kitchen Table Wisdom* by Rachel Naomi Remen and *In Shock: My Journey from Death to Recovery and the Redemptive Power of Hope* by Rana Awdish.

(To comment on this article, contact Kristen Votruba, Ph.D. at [kvotruba@med.umich.edu](mailto:kvotruba@med.umich.edu))

### Elissa H. Patterson, Ph.D President

It has been an exciting few months for me as the new President of MPA. We now have a full Executive Committee with Joy Wolfe Ensor in the role of President-Elect, as of September 1. Along with our Executive Director, LaVone Swanson, the rest of the Executive Committee (Secretary: Cynthia Rodriguez; Treasurer: Deb Smith; Past-President: Kristin Sheridan), and the MPA Board of Directors, we are laying groundwork to sustain and grow the role of our organization as a community leader on psychology-related issues across the state. In this short column, I want to share a small sampling of the initiatives we've been working on:

#### **Continuing Education Leadership**

With LARA's new CE requirements, MPA is poised to be a leader in disseminating information about the requirements and providing top notch educational events tailored for Michigan psychologists. Many psychologists outside of MPA do not have a direct pipeline to this information, and I have met many who did not know that LARA had instituted CE requirements. As informed MPA members, please help spread the word!

The Spring Convention, Psychology's Response to the Opioid Epidemic and Chronic Pain in Michigan, is now available as an [on-demand 6 CE credit course](#) that meets CE requirements for pain. Members can receive a discount code by emailing [lavone.swanson@gmail.com](mailto:lavone.swanson@gmail.com). Follow the [MPA home page](#) for other upcoming CE activities and opportunities to meet the 3 CE credit requirement for Ethics.

For institutions that are interested in offering APA approved CE events but do not have APA CE approval, LaVone created a CE Conference Planning Guide to facilitate partnerships with MPA - for a fee.

#### **Civility Policy**

In keeping with our [mission](#) and history of promoting societal and individual well-being, the MPA Board formally adopted a [Civility Policy](#) on September 20, 2018. We will rely on this unifying policy as we expand and reach further into public life with new initiatives. Please contact me if you are interested in participating in promoting these values on our listserv as part of a new moderation team that is forming.

#### **Member Spotlights and Communications**

Antu Segal, as Chair of the Communications Committee initiated a new feature for MPA members to get to know each other better. The committee will spotlight the lives and professional niches of individual members on a monthly basis. We hope that you will find it interesting to learn more about fellow colleagues across the state. Antu and her committee are tech savvy, so look for MPA news on Instagram: [@michiganpsychologicalassn](#); Facebook: [@michiganpsychologicalassociation](#); and Twitter: [@pureMPA](#) ogicalassn.

#### **Public Speakers Bureau**

Todd Favorite, MPA's Public Advocacy Coordinator has initiated a new public speaker's bureau so that MPA member psychologists with specific expertise will be readily identifiable when MPA receives media requests for comment on issues in the news. If you have an area of expertise and you would like to be included in this database, please contact me ([ehpatter@med.umich.edu](mailto:ehpatter@med.umich.edu)) or Dr. Favorite.

#### **Integrated Care Committee**

In May, Jennifer Peltzer-Jones joined the MPA Board as Chair of a new committee on Integrated Care, and she is actively building a network of psychologists working with medical patients across the state. Health psychologists and other psychologists working in medical settings will now have a designated point person on the MPA Board to advocate for the needs in their various settings. Jen comes to this task with a strong background as a nurse and an Emergency Department psychologist, and we welcome her insightful voice.

#### **Committee Reports to Membership**

When Joy Wolfe Ensor was Chair of the Insurance Committee (IC), she realized that much of their

work may be invisible to members, so she created an Annual Committee Report to Membership, which you will receive soon and can access on the [IC page](#).

## Regional Groups

MPA is supporting the development of regional groups to promote networking and stay in close touch with member needs. Washtenaw Psychology Society is the largest of these groups and is thriving with monthly meetings on the second Sunday of each month followed by a free CE presentation for MPA members. There is a long-standing rural group, and GRAPA is the Grand Rapids group that is re-activating itself with an event on November 1 from 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm at Harmony Brewing Company. Email [sylviamalcore@gmail.com](mailto:sylviamalcore@gmail.com) RSVP or obtain more information.

There is too much happening to cover it all, here, so please don't hesitate to reach out if you have an interest in learning more about what's happening and how you can participate.

(To comment on this article, contact Elissa Patterson, Ph.D. at [ehpatter@Med.Umich.edu](mailto:ehpatter@Med.Umich.edu).)

## Book Review

Marsh, A. (2017). *The Fear Factor: How One Emotion Connects Altruists, Psychopaths, & Everyone In-Between*. New York: Basic Books.

By Elizabeth Imbesi, PhD, ABPP

Nineteen-year-old Abigail Marsh's life was saved by a complete stranger after she lost control of her vehicle on a busy highway in Washington. The stranger did so at great peril to himself, never asked for any compensation, and never revealed his identity before leaving the scene. This profound experience was the impetus that inspired Ms. Marsh - now Dr. Marsh - on an academic journey researching the nature of altruism.

Marsh's interesting back story provides a narrative spine to her scientific work, making her book very readable. She first offers fresh insight into some of the more famous studies in the psychological canon, including lesser-known perspectives on Milgram that highlight the empathy shown by subjects rather than the obedience. From this base, she provides the results of her own enlightening work with regard to psychopathy, altruism, and the amygdala's response to fear.

Marsh provides background on the psychopathic children and teenagers whom she studied, noting the difference between reactive, violent emotionality (often the product of abuse or neglect) and true psychopathy (mostly genetically influenced). She gives detail - sometimes chillingly - on the coldly violent behaviors of the psychopathic children and teenagers in her study, and their seemingly ordinary presentation under most circumstances.

In the study, while inside an MRI, the children and teens were asked to view human faces - the standard series of prints showing different expressions - and identify them as male or female. This gender task was designed to keep the subjects blind; the MRI was examining the amygdala response to the images.

I will quote Marsh directly here, because this is fascinating: "(o)n average, our psychopathic children showed no activation - zero - in the right amygdala when they viewed the face of someone experiencing intense fear as compared to a neutral face" (p. 88). On follow-up measures, one psychopathic teenager, when responding on a Likert scale to "(w)hat scares others usually doesn't scare me," checked 5 and wrote "nothing scare's [sic] me #Nothing." Marsh's research, since replicated, demonstrated that psychopathic children and teens could neither recognize nor feel fear.

Dr. Marsh then studied what she terms "extraordinary altruism." This she defines as altruism toward someone unknown to the altruist consisting of acts that put the altruist at great risk. Additionally, the altruistic acts are not within the norm of expected human behavior. Her research population consisted of donors who gave a kidney to a stranger. Results of this study were equally fascinating. In contrast to psychopaths, altruists' right amygdala responded much more intensely to fearful faces than did non-altruists.

Marsh argues that the fearful expression evolved in humans and animals to elicit an empathic response. Extraordinary altruists have an extraordinary amygdala response to fear; psychopathic people have little to no response to that same expression, and therefore feel no empathy.

She then goes on to discuss the concept of allomothering, the role of oxytocin in the response to fear expressions, and the changes in allomothering behavior in female rats after they give birth. Interestingly, pre-motherhood, female rats avoid or kill other rats' babies; after motherhood, they often rescue or protect them - a behavior change engendered by oxytocin. Of course, behavior is not quite that simple, and Marsh is careful to point out nuances in these systems, such as the variant sensitivity to oxytocin in different brains.

The book could have ended at this point. I began the next chapter thinking it sounded influenced by *The Better Angels of Our Nature* by Steven Pinker, and sure enough, that book was cited within the first few pages of the chapter. Marsh closes by offering guidance on ways to enhance altruism, such as practicing the Buddhist concepts of loving-kindness and compassion.

*The Fear Factor* felt long-winded at times where it could have been concise. However, this shortcoming likely was related to the author's conversational style, which kept the book readable and interesting. All-in-all, *The Fear Factor* is an educational, enjoyable and fresh read that offers new insight into important variations in human nature and behavior.

(To comment on this article, contact Elizabeth Imbesi, Ph.D. at [elizabeth.imbesi@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth.imbesi@gmail.com))

## Executive Director's Report:

### CEs, Special Election and New Programs Planned



#### LaVone Swanson - Executive Director

And here we are, fall in Michigan. Cooler nights, vibrant colors and, of course, football.

Psychology's Response to the Opioid Epidemic and Chronic Pain in Michigan, which was the topic for this Spring's Annual Conference was a rousing success. MPA recorded this program and will be offering it to members and non-members to view as an On-Demand Webinar. This program will allow you to watch the entire conference at home or in your office. You will have the ability to pause the program and return to it at any time. After viewing the video and taking the post-test, you will receive a CE Certificate awarding you 6 CE's for successfully passing the post test. Members will receive a discount of \$35.00 off the posted price of \$200. Email me to receive your discount code.

Recently MPA held a Special Election per the bylaws, to elect a President-elect and Secretary. Please join me in congratulating Joy Wolfe Ensor, Ph.D., elected MPA President-elect, and Cynthia Rodriguez, Ph.D., elected Secretary.

The MPA Program Committee has been busy planning a number of CE programs for 2019.

On February 8, 2019 an ethics program will be held at the VistaTech Center in Livonia. The presenter will be Amanda D. Zelechowski, J.D., Ph.D., ABPP, from The Trust. She will present a workshop on Sequence VII: Legal and Ethical Risks and Risk Management in Professional Psychological Practice, Risk Management with the Suicidal Patient, and Legal and Ethical Issues presented by Retirement. Six CE's will be awarded.

On April 26, 2019 the MPA Annual Spring Conference will be held at The Henry Center in East Lansing. One of the presenters will be Dr. Naar-King, who will be returning from Florida to Michigan to present on the topic of Motivational Interviewing.

On a personal note, Holly Mauk, who has been our Association Management person from MHSA for a number of years, announced that she will be moving to North Carolina later this year. Many of you have probably talked to Holly in the office or met her at an MPA CE Program. Plans for a smooth transition are already underway at MHSA. She will be missed.

I look forward to seeing many of you at one of our upcoming MPA programs. In the meantime, enjoy the Fall here in Pure Michigan.

*As always, I welcome your input, questions and concerns about MPA. Feel free to contact me at any time via email at [lavone.swanson@gmail.com](mailto:lavone.swanson@gmail.com).*

LaBuda, J., Axelrod, B. N., & Windell, J. (2018). *Cognitive Behavioral Protocols for Medical Settings: A Clinician's Guide*. Routledge, New York.

Reviewed Brigid Waldron-Perrine, Ph.D., ABPP and Summar Reslan, Ph.D.

To date, health, rehabilitation and neuropsychologists working in medical settings have relied on myriad far-flung resources, often handed down over time and only loosely anchored to their original source, to optimally engage in psychotherapy practices aimed at addressing physical, emotional and cognitive complaints of patients in busy medical settings. In the era of increasing emphasis on evidence-based care, this book fills an extremely important resource gap for this population of treaters and patients, and, in the opinion of these writers, should be required reading at the graduate practicum, internship, and post-graduate residency training levels for those moving into careers in health psychology, rehabilitation psychology, and neuropsychology.

The book is extremely well organized with a logical flow to the content. In part one, the initial chapter reviews common conditions and highlights important considerations for assessment and treatment. The section is well-researched but concise and leads the reader to numerous scientific references with regard to specific conditions. The second chapter reviews essential features of successful psychological interventions with explanations grounded in the scientific literature regarding why each element is imperative. Without setting the stage for successful psychotherapy by engaging in these principles, psychologists are not likely to have the success they desire with their patients. Thus, this section, if followed, sets the clinician up for success with the specific intervention that they choose. Chapter three lays out the general principles of evidence-based practice and treatment in particular, and thoroughly reviews the evidence base of specific intervention approaches with specific patient populations.

Part two of the book includes specific evidence-based and brief intervention approaches to commonly reported difficulties in a medical population. Organized into four sections (physical symptoms, mood symptoms, anxiety symptoms and interpersonally disruptive symptoms), specific protocols include pre-treatment considerations, session by session topics to be addressed and useful tools such as tables/charts, graphs, figures and worksheets to be utilized by the therapist and patient. Homework, or out-of-session practice, is emphasized, and behavioral monitoring charts to be utilized by the therapist-patient dyad are included in the protocols. Normalization of emotions in the context of making efforts to change behaviors and recognize the unhelpfulness of certain thinking patterns is a common theme throughout the protocols, which reflects a transdiagnostic Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach. Throughout the book, there appears to be the perfect balance between description of empirically-supported ideas, easy to understand and implement treatment considerations, and concrete examples of the discussed concepts to promote implementation.

Integration of assessment and treatment is also a theme through the book. This is particularly relevant to the cognitively impaired patient population, as an accurate and thorough assessment is essential to ensure appropriate interventions will be implemented, and to minimize any iatrogenic effect stemming from inadvertent reinforcement of inappropriate or maladaptive behaviors. For practitioners who may have less experience working with cognitively impaired patient populations, this section is essential reading. The book authors incorporate possible cognitive weaknesses and presentations that patients in a busy medical setting may exhibit (e.g., delirium), and account for these presentations in the proposed treatment protocol. This is a consideration that is not a focus in other abbreviated CBT-influenced treatment protocols. In the chapter dedicated to behavioral management of disruptive behaviors in confused patients (Chapter 11), empirically-supported principles of functional analysis and behavioral therapy are incorporated into an otherwise largely CBT influenced book. This is a reflection of the care and consideration taken on the part of the book authors to recognize the special needs of confused patients (e.g., recognizing the limits of cognitively-based therapy techniques with confused patients) and introduce appropriate management strategies. In this chapter, the book authors deviate from delineating how CBT principles can be adapted for use in a medical setting, and instead draw on behaviorally-based principles to best suit a patient's needs.

In their final chapter, the authors encourage the reader to utilize the previously described protocols flexibly, taking into account the specific presentations and complaints of their individual

patients, and to generalize the principles described therein to other patient populations they might see. The reader is encouraged to turn to the literature for the latest science with regard to assessment and intervention approaches, and to integrate their findings into their daily practice.

This book strikes an important balance between proving structured, easy to follow protocols including helpful therapeutic tools while also encouraging critical thinking, flexibility and lifelong learning in the providers that are its target audience. As neuropsychologists and rehabilitation psychologists working with the patient populations who present with symptoms that these protocols are intended to address, we cannot recommend this book highly enough.

(To comment on this book review, contact Brigid Waldron-Perrine, Ph.D and Summar Reslan, Ph.D. at [BWaldron@dmc.org](mailto:BWaldron@dmc.org), and [SReslan@dmc.org](mailto:SReslan@dmc.org))

## Book Review

Review of ***A Carnival of Losses*** by Donald Hall. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018.

By Jack P. Haynes, Ph.D.

*Notes Nearing Ninety* was written by Donald Hall and published about two weeks after his death in New Hampshire in late June at age 89. That book is a disparate collection of brief essays-about 70 of them-which include reflections on aging and on his recent life, as well as his earlier life.

Donald Hall was a very American poet of the first rank, in fact the Poet Laureate of the United States in 2006-07. Additionally, he was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 2010 by President Obama. He was also well-known for his prose. His first book was published when he was an undergraduate at Harvard. Hall also served as the first poetry editor of the *Paris Review*.

This book, as well as a companion book, *Essays after Eighty*, are both humorous, clever, witty, and wise. As a set, they present Hall's wryly honest perspective on getting older. Hall authored 50 books, including 22 poetry compilations, some plays, short stories, textbooks, short essays like those contained in *Carnival of Losses*, as well as children's books. In addition, he edited several anthologies and believed that anthologizing has become a lost art. Years ago I purchased and read his *Fathers Playing Catch with Sons: Essays on Sport (Mostly Baseball)*. While reading *Carnival*, I also enjoyed his definitive anthology of poetry *Apples and the Taste of Stone* -all while listening to the included CD where Hall reads selected works.

Hall wrote that he is about to be a nonagenarian, and hence would hold nothing back. His prose is concise, readable, at times blunt, at other times sensitive-but at all points apparently authentic. I believe most readers will feel they know and appreciate Donald Hall after reading this volume-at least I did. The reviewer is a person with few regrets, but one regret might be that I did not take a class from Donald Hall when I was a student at the University of Michigan.

Prior to teaching at Stanford, Harvard, and the University of Michigan, Hall was educated at Oxford. Before that he was an undergraduate at Harvard (Phi Beta Kappa) after graduating from Phillips Exeter Academy, not far from his childhood home. He was apparently precocious and aware of his gifts, because at age 16 Hall attended a writer's conference, seeking out and beginning a lasting friendship with Robert Frost.

In this volume, Hall's focus is on his experience of life rather than on positive self-reflections. In fact, he includes several not-so-flattering memories of his decisions. In this reader's opinion, *Notes Nearing Ninety* should be on the curriculum for university gerontology courses. Hall, the former University of Michigan professor, decided to leave the university three years after meeting his second wife-to-be; he moved to New Hampshire where he was born and raised, and where he devoted himself to freelance writing.

Hall initially was married and had two children, but the marriage ended in divorce. Some of his writing in this volume focuses on his second marriage to accomplished poet Jane Kenyon. She was 19 years younger than Hall, and they met when she was a student in his class. Their 23 year marriage began in 1972 but she died at age 47 in 1995. Hall's words about her, about their relationship, and about her death from leukemia are powerful. His reminiscences about her are laden with devotion, sentiment and reflection, but not with sentimentality.

*Carnival of Losses* is well-written, interesting and engaging, though at times scattered. I found it lends itself to being read aloud, as Hall and his wife read books aloud to each other. I also found myself returning to reread some of the essays before I had finished reading all of them. The book gave this reader considerable pleasure. Much of the gravitas of this volume comes from descriptions

of his life together with his wife, his deeply felt loss, and its complexities.

Parts of this book are very personal, such as when he writes about some of the indignities of aging. More positively, the reader resonates with his interests and viewpoints, including his appreciation of baseball, especially the Boston Red Sox. He also describes idiosyncracies and eccentricities of famous writers he has known and appreciated. He seemed particularly devoted to his friend Seamus Heaney, the late Northern Ireland poet and translator who was a Nobel Prize winner and a major world poet of the twentieth century.

Some of the humor is notable, such as his one-liners. He observed that one is old when the waiter does not mention you are holding the menu upside down. He talks about knowing that he was old when he realized one day it had to be Sunday for the reason that the mail did not come, adding flippantly "It might be Christmas." He also observed that he must be old since-although he always was a big manuscript reviser-one manuscript apparently required 84 revisions by him.

The book also contains a photo taken 40 years ago in Ann Arbor at a pig roast. Hall got the idea to take the apple from the mouth of the pig to be roasted, and insert it into his own mouth! He is sporting a somewhat unruly beard in that 1975 picture. At one point in this book, Hall references that "...eventually each locomotive reaches its roundhouse." The reader of this book is fortunate to be able to enjoy that part of his journey.

(You can comment on this article by contacting Jack Haynes at [jhaynes254831mi@comcast.net](mailto:jhaynes254831mi@comcast.net))

## NOTES OF A PSYCHOLOGY WATCHER

### Random Thoughts and Observations

By Steven J. Cersenie, Ph.D.

#### **Virtue**

A most important virtue is tolerance based on humility. Tolerance is welcoming discussions with people who fundamentally disagree with us based on humility - a recognition we cannot be sure we are right about our beliefs.

#### **Chance**

We underestimate the importance of chance, accident, and luck in the events of our lives. Sure, hard work and character are important in achieving success, but reflecting on our lives highlights whatever success we achieve in relationships and work has much to do from more than just a little bit of luck.

#### **Make Waves**

Heard from a client who owns a sailboat about his friend's behavior:

*My friend is always making waves in a no wake zone.*

#### **Heard from a talented handyman**

I'm having such a bad day, I can't even do wrong right.

#### **Martin Elias Peter Seligman, Ph.D.**

Martin E. P. Seligman. *The Hope Circuit. A Psychologist's Journey from Helplessness to Optimism.* New York: The Hachette Book Group, 2018.

Seligman begins his story about his journey from helplessness to optimism by describing the world as he found it when he arrived "one gestation period after Pearl Harbor." Both his parents had troubled lives - far from the optimism Seligman would later research and apply to the lives of many. His mother was born in Hungary, now Romania - his grandmother died giving birth to his mother Irene. Irene became the center of his father's love and attention until his father remarried and turned all his attention from his daughter Irene to his new wife. Seligman's mother, Irene, always felt the horrible sting of rejection. His father's parents had emigrated from the Dutch border of Germany and from Alsace, and married in New York in 1899. Seligman's father was an anxious child who skipped four grades in school.

Seligman describes his father as "a brilliant young lawyer, armed with a doctorate from Columbia Law School." It was the second year of the Great Depression; lawyers were making a living, but many were poor. His father chose a secure path taking a job in civil service, reporting judges'

decisions at the Court of Appeals in Albany, New York. Seligman describes his mother as, "gorgeous - there is no other word: five-foot-one, full-figured, blonde, and blue-eyed. She was well-spoken but reserved and very sympathetic of manner..." Her parents' poverty took a toll on her, and she dropped out of high school to help support the family as a legal secretary.

In Albany, Seligman's parents joined a conservative synagogue. To Seligman's dismay, he later learned his father was an atheist - although his mother was very strongly attached to Judaism.

Seligman was named for his saintly maternal grandfather who died of a sudden heart attack in 1940. Elias was chosen as his middle name to honor his grandfather and his six-year-old sister was given naming rights to call him Peter. So he was named Martin Elias Peter Seligman.

There is much more detail in his elegantly written book about his family background and his early years. A detail that caught my eye was about Seligman, who like one of my younger entrepreneurial brothers, took a job in his early teens selling magazines for five summers. He made more money selling magazines than he made until he was an associate professor.

Jumping ahead to his college years, Seligman was strongly influenced by Robert Nozick (1938 - 2002), a professor of philosophy at Princeton, where Seligman did his undergraduate study. Nozick was famous for his 1974 magnum opus, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. In this classic text, Nozick wrote that he believed in capitalist acts between consenting adults - an unusual belief for a college professor during those years. Seligman wasn't sure whether to pursue psychology or philosophy. Looking back, Seligman asked the question, "How much rigor? How much reality?" These questions formed Seligman's role in the transformation of psychology over the next fifty years.

Seligman spent his 50-year psychology career rejecting psychology's basic premises. When he came to psychology, he found help for psychological maladies focused on people's misery and suffering, with Freud and his followers developing treatments hoping to remove the crippling conflicts and memories stemming from childhood experiences. The best humans could accomplish according to this approach was to turn hysterical misery into common unhappiness.

Early in his career, Seligman discovered learned helplessness, where animals and people were exposed to uncontrollable events such as shock or noise and then developing passivity and learning to give up. Over many years, learned helplessness has become a model for studying and treating depression. Seligman noted that when studying learned helplessness, about three of either people couldn't be made helpless, that is, these three people were invulnerable to being helpless. Thus, began his study of the components of optimism and he took techniques from cognitive therapy to teach pessimistic people to be optimistic. I particularly liked the chapter where Seligman discovers he was wrong about the causes of learned helplessness based on new research on the neurological underpinnings of The Hope Circuit. This chapter is worth the price of the book.

In 1998, Seligman was elected President of the American Psychological Association with the largest number of votes of any APA President. During his Presidency of APA and beyond, Seligman created Positive Psychology, a view that there is a lot more to life than suffering, and built his research efforts on what makes life worth living. The alleviation of suffering is only the start to what psychologists can do for their clients - human happiness matters. Positive psychology is now a worldwide movement to enhance well-being and attracting some of the best psychologists in the field who have turned their research interests to what makes people live better lives. Seligman and his colleagues have taken his studies of positive psychology, resilience, post-traumatic growth, optimism and more and applied these mind-enriching concepts to people around the world in schools, corporations, and our service people in the United States Army.

During his career, Seligman challenged the belief that we are creatures whose minds are blank slates, where experience is all important and writes what we take in from our senses to stamp-in experiences on these blank slates- a core tenet of early behaviorism - a theory that didn't take conscious experience seriously; nor did this approach incorporate the findings of evolution seriously.

The blank slate view of humans is personal for me. I remember the first time I evaluated an autistic child while working at a child psychiatric state hospital in the 1970's. I met two warm, loving, guilt-ridden parents telling me through their tears about their unresponsive, odd five-year-old child who didn't talk and was obsessed with playing with door knobs and hinges. When this child entered my office, he walked past me as if I wasn't there, and went straight to the curtains and began sucking on the cloth. Back then, the prevailing theory was autism was caused by the child being raised by a cold "refrigerator mother," a theory I never believed, but an accepted view in the field that caused the suffering of thousands of children and their families. Scientists have now discovered the importance of genetics in autism - and in all psychiatric disorders and personality traits.

Seligman not only challenged the belief that the best outcome humans could achieve from psychological therapy was normal misery, but he argued against the blank slate view of humans, and stressed the importance of evolution in human development. With his colleagues, he showed that not any stimulus paired with any other stimulus would be learned - a challenge to Pavlovian conditioning. Humans, it turns out, are prepared to learn some things and not others.

During his work on Positive Psychology, incorporating his challenges to psychology's basic premises, Seligman compiled research evidence and became convinced there are five elements of well-being, summarized by the acronym: **PERMA**.

Positive emotion  
Engagement  
Relationship  
Meaning  
Accomplishment

On a side note, it was the program committee of the Michigan Psychological Association who invited Seligman to speak at an MPA conference in 1996, two years before he was elected APA President. Seligman, to the surprise of the committee, agreed to speak at the MPA conference to announce his decision to run for APA President. I had the privilege of picking Seligman up at the airport, and the next evening have a gathering of MPA members at my house to meet Dr. Seligman, who I now called Marty.

Before taking Marty to his hotel, I took Marty to my local delicatessen for dinner. Back then, Marty was a serious fellow, and we were soon embroiled in a discussion on the topic of sexuality. I had worked in a child psychiatric hospital for many years and treated many adolescent males brought in for inpatient treatment because of a history of sexual perversions - a label not used now. As we waited for our dinner in the crowded deli, Marty shared some of his experiences treating this sample of youngsters and stressed the importance of classical and operating conditioning models of etiology and the benefits of cognitive therapy. I had found the work of psychoanalyst Robert Stoller, M.D. most helpful in treating these trouble youngsters. Stoller had written the book, "Perversion: The Erotic Form of Hatred," emphasizing the role of unconscious learning. The part of our dinner I will never forget is this: Marty said in so many words that my views were not up with the current research and then he gently raised his voice and said, "Let's take masturbation for an example." I noticed several restaurant patrons turn their heads our way, and then I said to Marty, "Maybe we should discuss masturbation another time. You're leaving town tomorrow, and I'm a regular customer at this deli."

We both smiled.

(To comment on this column, contact Steve Ceresnie at [sceresnie@aol.com](mailto:sceresnie@aol.com))

## **MICHIGAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION MPAF 2019 AWARDS**

**The Michigan Psychological Association Foundation is accepting  
nominations for the following awards:**

### **DISSERTATION GRANT**

The MPA Foundation (MPAF) will be making at least one grant up to \$1000 to support dissertation research in any area of diversity and multicultural psychology. The student's dissertation proposal must have been approved by his/her committee before applying for the grant; the student must be a Student Affiliate of the Michigan Psychological Association (MPA) or may apply for Student Affiliate at the time of the Dissertation Grant application; and the proposal must be sponsored by a member of MPA.

For more information and an application package contact President, Dr. Debra Smith at [dls40@aol.com](mailto:dls40@aol.com). Due January 30, 2019.

### **BETH CLARK SERVICE AWARD**

The Beth Clark Service Award is given to an MPA member who has demonstrated volunteerism, initiative, perseverance, integrity, selflessness and good will in the service of MPA or other worthy causes related to the mission of MPA. A psychologist eligible for the Beth Clark Service Award must reside in Michigan, be a member in good standing of the Michigan Psychological Association, be nominated by a member in good standing of MPA, and be considered by his or her peers as a person exhibiting the qualities outlined in the criteria. Nominations are accepted with a supporting statement of 250-500 words identifying the basis for the nomination and specifying how the candidate meets the criteria for the award. Please submit nominations or seek more information by email to Dr. Debra Smith, MPAF President at [dls40@aol.com](mailto:dls40@aol.com). Due February 28, 2019.

### **DISTINGUISHED PSYCHOLOGIST AWARD**

The Distinguished Psychologist Award honors a psychologist who has made outstanding contributions over a number of years to psychology in Michigan. Such contributions may be academic, applied, or otherwise reflect the qualities of dedication, competence, high ethical standards, and advocacy for the field of psychology. A psychologist eligible for the Distinguished Psychologist Award must reside in Michigan, be a member of good standing in MPA, be nominated by a member in good standing in MPA, be considered by his/her peers as having made outstanding contributions to psychology in Michigan. Outstanding contribution may include distinct and extraordinary accomplishments with recognizable impacts providing advance in enabling, understanding, or communicating key psychological issues during the past five-year period. For more information or to submit a nomination contact Dr. Debra Smith, MPAF President at [dls40@aol.com](mailto:dls40@aol.com). Due February 28, 2019.

## **MPA Program Committee Announces Upcoming Workshops**

**By Chris Sterling, Psy.D.  
Program Chair**

The 2018 and 2019 years are shaping up to be very exciting. The Program Committee is working to ensure this.

MPA's Program Committee is enthusiastic about their plans to coordinate with MAPP on a seminar at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo on October 19, 2018 with two half-day presentations. The first presentation is Brains and Behaviors featuring Patricia Moylan, Ph.D., a Neuropsychologist. The afternoon program will spotlight Becky McDonald, President of Woman at Risk, International. This presentation will help clinicians better understand and intervene with Anti-Sex Trafficking.

The Trust will return to Michigan on February 8, 2019 at Schoolcraft College in Livonia. This winter program will allow MPA members the opportunity to take the Series VII Sequence and also obtain an additional discount on their Trust Insurance. The topic of this seminar will be Risk Management while working with couples and families as well as legal and ethical issues working with the suicidal patient.

Responding to many requests from MPA members, the topic for the MPA Spring Convention will be Motivational Interviewing. The Program Committee is very pleased to announce that the presenter for the Spring Convention workshop will be Sylvie Naar-King, Ph.D. The Spring Convention will be held on April 26, 2019 at the Henry Center in East Lansing.

The Program Committee is exploring ways to provide psychologists additional education and training in a topic area. Although most psychologists would find spending two or more days at a seminar extremely challenging, the Program Committee is investigating the possibility of a series sequence on a particular topic. A series sequence would allow clinicians to commit to a series of half-day seminars occurring every three or four months over a period of 12 to 18 months. This has proven successful in other state psychology organizations and may prove beneficial to Michigan psychologists.

The first Beacon360 MPA recording is now available, along with other topics in the MPA library to allow members, who could not attend workshops and seminars in person to gain knowledge in new topic areas while acquiring needed CEs. The MPA digital library will allow members to attend a

digital presentation at their convenience, without additional travel.

The Program Committee is chaired by Chris Sterling and committee members include Drs. Janice Tomakowsky, Lisa Yufit, Anthony DeOrio, Christine Liff, and MPA Executive Director LaVone Swanson.

(To comment on this article, contact Christopher Sterling, Psy.D. at [miles702@mac.com](mailto:miles702@mac.com))

## An Early Career Psychologist: Myth or Malady?

Steven J. Ceresnie, Ph.D.

Approaching three score and ten years, I have had the privilege of being invited into the private lives of many people in deep distress - that's what clinical psychologists do. But lately, I feel my mind and body are changing - my muscles are becoming more supple, my waistline is shrinking, my pectoral muscles are taking the shape of a younger man, and I stop at clothing stores to sample clothing worn by college students and young men. I have started listening to music that matches the tastes of younger, more macho males - I find pleasure in rap, heavy metal and alternative music genres.

On some nights, late in the evenings, I go up in our finished attic and try on these fashionable attire of young men and adjust my Spotify to play the latest rap tunes. There are other symptoms I experience but I'm embarrassed to make these public. I dare not tell my wife, I fear she would suggest I seek psychiatric help.

Yet psychiatric help, of which I'm most familiar, is not what I believe I need. Of course, I'm aware that at my chronological age any number of biological or psychological maladies may explain my unusual behaviors, not to mention denial of mental and physical deterioration, dementia or death.

Over the years, I have not been prone to denial, the most logical explanation for my behavior, and my physical health is good - although I do take blood pressure and cholesterol medications, not uncommon for gentleman my age.

Oh, I forgot to mention that I started reading many psychology articles and textbooks - I keep up with the literature and don't miss an opportunity to cruise the shelves of psychology texts in college book stores I visit across the country seeking out the current requirements for a Ph.D. in psychology. Not only do I read as much as I can, but I tell my wife that my cravings to collect these journals and textbooks - to my wife it appears I'm studying for exams. All of this reading can be traced to the many seminars I'm asked to present around the country; okay, that's not exactly the truth.

After much consideration, I fear I have a yet undiscovered serious psychiatric disorder that in some way mimics those few men I see in my practice who tell me they feel they have a female genotype - a concept I use metaphorically - trapped inside their male phenotype. These men are convinced they are females and that the world has played a cruel trick on them. In fact, their fear of not living as females is stronger than their fear of death; some grand existential dilemma.

Bear with me as I briefly outline what I have come to think is my existential crises: I am an early career psychologist trapped inside an almost 70-year-old body. After all my years of immersing myself in the lives of others, I'm aware how easily our minds adopt beliefs, opinions, and facts used to justify our actions. As that astute philosopher David Hume reminds us, the intellect is a slave to our passions.

So as a scientist, skeptic and a life-long worshipper of reason, I set out to test my passion-driven beliefs examined under the light of intensive psychotherapy, peering into my unconscious, preconscious, conscious, defenses and neurotransmitters. To do this, I took a sabbatical from my work and committed myself to challenging my beliefs, or at least attempting to understanding them, by subjecting myself to the psychotherapy by the best clinicians I could find who practiced psychoanalysis, cognitive behavioral therapy, pharmacotherapy, and various other approaches. I took carefully monitored trials of antidepressant and antipsychotic medications.

I am embarrassed but not surprised to report the early career psychologist continues to live and grow inside of me despite excellent psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy. Of course, I have not revealed my preoccupation to my wife or any of my friends or colleagues. In the old days - during

my training as a psychologist- my behaviors were called a perversion.

So, I confine my early career psychologist behaviors to my attic in my home - three late evenings a week for two hours after my wife goes to sleep. I've given on being cured. Over my own years of practice, I have learned that the word "cure" is not often applied to psychiatric maladies. Consequently, I have come to accept the advice of Sigmund Freud:

*A man should not strive to eliminate his complexes, but to get into accord with them; they are legitimately what directs his conduct in the world.*

(To comment on this article," contact Steve Ceresnie at [sceresnie@aol.com](mailto:sceresnie@aol.com).)

## Psychlegal Notebook

# Professionalism as a Foundation for Psychological Practice



Robert H. Woody, PhD, ScD, JD

Whether due to the general economy, managed care, increased competition from non-doctoral mental health practitioners, or otherwise, psychologists face new challenges in maintaining and promoting professionalism. Although they may see some benefits from government regulations and satisfying third-party payment sources, independent practitioners must accept increased accountability via fulfilling mandates for evidence- or data-based services. Psychologists must also make sure that recipients of services see progress, and sense satisfaction from the provider-relationship. They must also convey the distinction of psychology (versus other types of services) to the community.

For a myriad of reasons, service users, clients and patients now must be "satisfied customers." Yes, modern mental health service recipients are commonly considered to be consumers. Dissatisfied consumers are known to seek retribution, notably disciplinary and influential interventions by courts of law, licensing boards, third-party payment sources, nongovernmental ethics committees in professional organizations, community advocates (e.g., "better business" organizations), and the list goes on. Consequently, the psychologist must diligently assess and consistently assess dimensions of client satisfaction.

Without delineating the many reasons, suffice it to say that there has been and continues to be a steady increase in consumer criticism of mental health practitioners, including psychologists. The profession has undeniably become a "regulated industry," with the psychological practitioner clearly relegated to the status of "service provider" in the "health care industry." The concept of esteemed "professional" is under siege and increasingly being replaced by "commercial service business."

Nonetheless, professionalism must prevail, even in the face of economic and political factors. It seems ill advised to allow non-psychological sources to exclusively or predominantly decide or greatly influence the service components, duration, and qualifications of providers. Again for public benefits, professionalism should be the foundation for all health care, which will require astute and consistent adaptation (even if there is opposition from psychologists). The frontline defense against a seemingly ill-advised movement away from professionalism would be adoption and applying preventive strategies.

Although the voice of the individual psychologist is critical to buttressing the professionalism, collective efforts of a professional organization (e.g., the Michigan Psychological Association and American Psychological Association) can provide distinct and authoritative substance to the decision-making within all sources. Therefore, asserting one's professional identity depends upon members' advocacy. (Regrettably, various sources reveal that contemporary professional associations are now facing challenges to retain established members and attempting to attract new qualified members.)

On the individual level, the psychologist must cultivate competencies to inform, effectively treat, and satisfy service users. This "educative" objective extends into working with supportive community persons, agencies, and organizations. First, all psychological services should nowadays have a scientific core, as underlying the *Daubert* principle (1993; Woody, 2016) and the standards and guidelines promulgated by key professional associations (Woody, 2013).

Given the involvement with health care practices by non-professional sources, it is undeniable that psychological practitioners, individually and collectively, should assert and act on their professionalism. Indeed, reducing or eliminating professionalism contradicts the fundamental axiom that applies to all health service practitioners, including psychologists: Do no harm!

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(To comment on this article, email Robert Woody at [psychlegal@aol.com](mailto:psychlegal@aol.com)).

## Book Review

### *Cognitive Behavioral Protocols for Medical Settings - A Clinician's Guide.*

Authors: Jennifer LaBuda, Bradley N. Alexrod, and James Windell. Routledge, New York.

By Todd K. Favorite, Ph.D., APBB

The application and scope of mental health practice has changed significantly over the past few decades with a compendium of methods and techniques across a range of disorders. Nowhere is this more evident than in medical institutions where the utility of evidenced-based methods have become an integral feature in treatment planning and consultation. Mental health providers play an increasingly essential role on health care teams in hospital settings and integrated outpatient clinics. The authors have crafted an important and practical guide for mental health providers through a thoughtful process of identifying common conditions of psychological disorders encountered by clinicians in these settings.

This book begins with a useful primer on the development and utility of psychological interventions in medical environments. The authors then provide a comprehensive, yet concise, description of the most effective treatment protocols for the range of common presentations (i.e., pain, sleep, depression, anger dysregulation, anxiety-related problems). This book demonstrates their interest in developing a clinician friendly guide that is easy to access and practical in its application. I found their articulation of methods for addressing "illness anxiety" and anxiety about medical setting particularly useful for any clinician working within a healthcare system.

The result of their efforts is a valuable clinical resource that offers clinicians key elements for their diagnosis, conceptualization and treatment planning. They have added relevant research, methodological rationale, and specific protocols outlines with appended treatment materials. **Cognitive Behavioral Protocols for Medical Settings - A Clinician's Guide** is a "must have" for any mental health clinician working in a medical setting.

(To comment on this article, contact Todd Favorite, Ph.D. at [tfavor@med.umich.edu](mailto:tfavor@med.umich.edu))

## Classified Ads

[Walter P. Reuther Psychiatric Hospital in Westland is seeking a fully licensed Ph.D. Psychologist for full-time employment. Applicant skills: Assessment, psychotherapy \(individual and group\), adult inpatient experience.](#)

[Apply through NEOGOV State jobs.](#)

[Questions to Dr. Medoff: 734-367-8517.](#)

Seeking Pain Psychologist to replace retiring psychologist at Compass Health, which is a multidisciplinary rehabilitation center in East Lansing, Michigan. Doctoral level psychologist (Ph.D. or PsyD) is preferred, but will consider a master's level psychologist. Psychologists in this medical setting provide evidence-based interventions (e.g., CBT, ACT) for chronic pain and conduct

psychological testing for surgical clearance. Knowledge of biopsychosocial factors in health and familiarity with musculoskeletal/neuropathic pain mechanisms is important, and ability to work well with physicians is required. We will train or supervise if applicant has strong clinical skills and an interest in pain psychology.

Contact: Amy Jo Simon, Manager

Email: [asimon@lansingneurosurgery.com](mailto:asimon@lansingneurosurgery.com)

## Have You Just Published a Book or Article?

When you publish a book or article, let us know so we can inform the MPA membership of your scholarship and success. Send an email to the editor at [jwind27961@aol.com](mailto:jwind27961@aol.com) to let us know what you have had published.

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