



CONTRA COSTA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



2010 Spring Newsletter



The President's Ponder

Birds are singing outside my office window as I stare at the computer screen today. Since the last dinner meeting, my life has been more hectic than usual and I am very thankful that when I raise my head from the debris and toil there is birdsong and blue skies. That brings me to two of my favorite subjects. Happiness and gratitude.

My Wednesday night weight management group is actually a group for attachment issues and mood disorders (don't tell the members). Two Wednesdays ago someone asked the group if anyone was ever really happy. The members murmured non-committal nothings. Believing in therapeutic disclosure, I told the group about a recent experience of uncommon joy and bliss. Long story short, I had gone to San Diego in large part to take a certification exam that I expected to be a three hour grueling event that I would not pass. The test would end after the last flight home. I would then have to fly early the next day and go straight from the airport to work. My preparation for the exam had been thorough, but not exacting.

The test started at 6 p.m. By 7:30 I was in line at the airport for the next to last flight home and feeling amazingly sure I had passed the exam. I turned to woman next to me in line and said, "Have you noticed that everyone is smiling tonight?" She said, "Are you kidding? It's you. We are just returning a little of what you are radiating." A fellow standing near us at that point broke out, in a very good singing voice, "Good Day Sunshine." I honestly can't remember feeling that happy and grateful for many years.

My point to my weight group (and all of you also) was that it had taken a large amount of work on my part to be in a position to feel that happy and grateful. It's much easier to feel miserable and unlucky. But then you get what you get. We think the work will be so unpleasant, we forget, or have never learned the joy of hard earned reward. What I really like is how often that hard earned reward conjoins with unexpected bounty from the 'impersonal' world around us.

Why am I going on about this to you all? I am out to recruit you! By far one of the most rewarding tasks I have taken on over the last 5 years is my involvement in the board of CCPA. Yes, at times it has been inconvenient to carry whatever ball I've committed myself to. By and large though, not only has the world met me more than half way there has been an abundance of direct reward from the relationships I've gained. The work has been pleasure and pleasure shared with a wonderful group of peers. There have been magic tricks, dinners with friends and professional opportunities that would not have been in my life if I had not been willing to attempt to step up.

The board meetings are open to all members. The second Tuesday of every month (except July and August) we meet from 11:30 to 1 p.m. in Dr. Andrew Pojman's office in Walnut Creek. Come and get an idea of how much fun we have taking care of business. We have an opening for Disaster Response Chair (Dr. Moriarty is graciously stepping in as a temporary) and any of our other chairs could use dedicated assistants or committee support.

Last but not least I look forward to seeing many of you at upcoming presentations: Chuck Faltz and Amanda Levy on May 21st present a discussion on Professional Advocacy and Ellin's Sadur's June 10th presentation on Autism Spectrum Disorders. I'll continue to show up at Scott's for every first Friday through the Summer. Then there is our Summer Barbeque on September 12th. No venue has been set for this yet and if you would like to volunteer to host, please let the board know. Enjoy this blustery and amazing

Spring! *Candia* ♦

IN THIS ISSUE

<i>CPA Progress Notes</i>	
<i>Essential Information for Psychologists Who Are Treating Beneficiaries Within Medicare Program</i>	2
<i>From The California Psychologist</i>	
<i>Probability of Licensing Disciplinary Action: Does State Association Membership Matter</i>	3
<i>CCPA Interview with Dr. Hillary Combs</i>	5
<i>Save the Date</i>	6
<i>2010 Board of Directors</i>	6
<i>Member's Corner</i>	7
<i>Speaker's Bureau</i>	10
<i>Office Space</i>	10



CONTRA COSTA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



2010 Spring Newsletter



CPA NEWS

An e-mail newsletter from the California Psychological Association

Progress Notes

**Essential Information for Psychologists Who Are Treating
Beneficiaries Within Medicare Program**

By Tamar Lewin

Editor's Note: Your Editor regularly receives calls from psychologists who are treating Medicare patients within the Medicare program but who are not familiar with Medicare's policies. Every psychologist who is a Medicare provider of services must be familiar with the Medicare policies that are relevant to their practice in this area. This information is being provided below and should be retained by psychologists who are filing claims with Palmetto GBA, the intermediary for California.

Just below is a brief description of the Local Coverage Determination (LCD) for psychotherapy. The link to the complete policy relevant to psychotherapy with Medicare patients is below the brief description. Claims are reviewed by Palmetto GBA using the information in the LCD to guide its review. Psychologists treating Medicare patients who are unfamiliar with this information will be unprepared to respond problems with claims or to most interactions with the Medicare intermediary.

Medicare's Indications and Limitations of Coverage and/or Medical Necessity The Local Coverage Determination (LCD) was developed to help clarify most medical review issues seen with psychotherapy services. This A/B MAC wishes to promote the availability of medically appropriate psychotherapeutic services for all of its beneficiaries, while helping resolve the high proportion of problem payments found by the OIG (2001), including abusive billing patterns, unnecessary care, or very poor documentation.

This A/B MAC's patient population for psychotherapy services is diverse. About 2/3 are under age 65 (this group is only 10% of Medicare beneficiaries). Half who receive psychotherapy services receive short-term treatment (5-6 annual services or less.) Only 5-10% received more than ~2 services per month. Thus, this LCD applies to a large group of younger patients, a small group of older patients; a large group of short-term patients, and a small group of chronic patients. Of interest, the distribution of service intensity among patients with the same diagnosis (5 per year for some, 12 per year for others, 30 per year for others) changed little across 23 diverse diagnoses under which 80% of psychotherapy care was rendered (whether the diagnosis was brief reactive depression or chronic paranoid schizophrenia.)

This policy aims to present "safe harbors" of appropriate care (particularly for the small proportion of chronically mentally ill patients), indicate limitations of Medicare coverage and their rationale, and provide clear documentation guidelines, including those regarding HIPAA rules for psychotherapy notes.

http://www.cms.hhs.gov/mcd/viewlcd.asp?lcd_id=28294&lcd_version=17&show=all ◊



CONTRA COSTA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



2010 Spring Newsletter



From *The California Psychologist* • March/April 2010

Probability of Licensing Disciplinary Action:

Does State Association Membership Matter?

Charles A. Faltz, PhD

Many psychologists regard getting an unexpected letter from their licensing board with an emotion similar to getting an unexpected letter from the IRS. In both cases, most psychologists would prefer to take preventative steps that would avoid their coming to the attention of either agency.

Avoiding Licensing Board Discipline

Even though a very small percentage of complaints received by the California Board of Psychology ever results in discipline, a recent study (Knapp, Samuel EdD and Leon VandeCreek, PhD, 2009) suggests that if you are reading this article in the *The California Psychologist* you are a psychologist who is less likely to be disciplined for a license violation. Why? *Because you are a member of your state psychological association.*

Likelihood of Board Discipline and State Association Membership

The referenced study by the Pennsylvania Psychological Association (PPA) found that Pennsylvania psychologists who were not members of PPA were much more likely to be disciplined by the state licensing authority. The study measured the relationship between association membership and the likelihood of being disciplined by the State Board of Psychology. Nonmembers of the state association were involved in 106 infractions and members in 34. Statistically, this difference was highly significant, $p < .001$.

Gender and Likelihood of Board Discipline

In a finding possibly surprising only to men, the study also found a strong positive relationship between being a male psychologist and the likelihood of discipline by the licensing board. The study suggests that female psychologists are much less likely to face state board discipline. For male psychologists, however, the magnitude of the effect of state association membership on reduced likelihood of licensure discipline is absolutely striking.

Analysis and Conclusions

The results of the study demonstrate that psychologists' affiliation with one's colleagues, through the structure of the state psychological association, and the information and consultation that results from association membership, has the direct payoff of reducing the likelihood of licensure discipline. In accounting for the gender difference, it might be speculated that being affiliated with colleagues through the structure of the state psychological association is even more important for male psychologists.

Structured affiliation with colleagues that results from being a member of the state association takes the form of regular feedback from colleagues and experts, available peer consultation, and information gathering from and among the psychologists who belong to their state association. Most psychologists who do not belong to CPA do not realize that they are outside the loop of information regularly being circulated in the profession through (a) Association email lists,



CONTRA COSTA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



2010 Spring Newsletter



(b) Association online and hard-copy publications, and (c) the annual convention of the Association. CPA regularly is contacted by non-members who have made errors of commission or omission because they were not aware of changes in law, regulation or professional guidelines affecting practice or training.

The reason California psychologists are organized into an association is so they can collectively help each other and combine resources to advance practice. CPA is the visible recognition by psychologists of the need to have a recognized voice to respond to bills introduced in the state legislature. The members of CPA have also developed a variety of other programs to benefit themselves and their patients such as:

- Free CE Credit for reading articles in *The California Psychologist* as a benefit of membership
- Free consultations with experts on practice and ethical issues
- Special discounts on auto, home, vision, and dental insurance
- *Progress Notes*, a bi-weekly electronic newsletter that contains timely information about current issues in psychology
- *Capitol Notes*, a semi monthly electronic newsletter that helps you stay on top of what's happening in the California Legislature.
- Special Interest Divisions that allow you to join with colleagues who share your professional focus.
- Special discounts at the annual Convention.
- The New all-member listserv for participating in a statewide virtual community of psychologists.
- Post a job – Search for a job – FREE to members!
- Special discounts on CPA sponsored APA Insurance Trust risk management workshops and malpractice insurance.

Although the results of this study identify the positive effect of state association membership only, psychological associations at both the local and national levels are also important. Nevertheless, belonging to an association at one level does not provide the benefits of membership that exist by being a member of one's professional association at a different level. Local, state and national psychological associations all have different roles and benefits for psychologists. There is an undeniable isolation that does occur for practicing psychologists in both solo and organized settings. Just as malpractice insurance is vital when a licensing complaint has been filed, the cost of CPA membership is relatively inexpensive insurance for avoiding and preventing the stress and significant expense of dealing with licensing disciplinary actions.

Reference

Knapp, Samuel EdD and Leon VandeCreek, PhD (2009). Disciplinary actions by a state board of psychology: Do gender and association membership matter? *Focus on 31*, Fall, 2009, V. 41, #3, p. 7 Charles Faltz, PhD, is the Director of Professional Affairs for the California Psychological Association and provides free consulting on practice issues as a member benefit.

On May 21st, from 1-3 PM, CCPA is excited to host Chuck Faltz, Ph.D. in a discussion about issues relevant to psychologists who work with insurance and/or managed care companies. Accompanying him will be Amanda Levy, also a director of Professional Affairs for CPA.

This forum will allow participants to have their own questions addressed. Those who have such questions should email them to Dr. Alyssa Scanlin by 5/11 and she will forward them. (Please watch the CCPA listserv for more details) ♦



CONTRA COSTA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



2010 Spring Newsletter



Interview with Dr. Hilary Combs

Where did you do your training?

Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology, Yeshiva University, NYC.

What brought you to this area?

My husband's job moved our family to the area recently. We have been here since January 1st.

Have your interests expanded or diverged from your graduate studies?

In graduate school I was trained within the context of a psychoanalytic model and my dissertation focused on the mental health of teenage girls. The journey of my career has been unplanned, similar to this recent move. I have followed a thread which has led to expanding my interest in women's mental health and learning about other models of treatment, IPT and DBT.

What kind of work do you currently do?

I currently have a private practice in Rockridge where I see individuals and couples. I am intending to start a DBT group in the Walnut Creek area and I work as a consultant with a psychiatric residential treatment center Bridges to Recovery which is in Los Angeles.

Are there particular populations that you enjoy working with and if so, why?

I seem to enjoy populations that are challenging - teenagers, patients with a history of trauma, dissociative spectrum disorders and personality disorders. I enjoy these groups as I have to be active and I find them always interesting and intriguing. I have also developed a specialty with perinatal mood disorders and very much enjoy working with pregnant and new mothers as I have three young kids of my own and feel that this is a population that is often overlooked.

What factors have influenced the direction of your clinical work over the years?

The largest factor that has influenced my work is having a family. Having children changed my relationship to my work and influenced my perspective theoretically. In addition, relocating for my husband's job and my desire to work part time has influenced the course of my career and the choices I have made. I have been lucky and have had the opportunity to work part-time and have interesting positions, Clinical Director for a grant funded program focusing on perinatal mood disorders in NYC and Clinical Director of a psychiatric residential treatment program, Bridges to Recovery in Los Angeles.

What has your level of involvement been with CCPA thus far? Has the association been a useful source of information, collaboration?

I am very new to the area however thus far CCPA seems to be quite useful and I plan to be further involved and attend events sponsored by CCPA.



CONTRA COSTA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



2010 Spring Newsletter



CCPA 2010 Board of Directors

PRESIDENT: Candia Smith, DMH
(925) 254-7823

PAST PRESIDENT: Karyn Goldberg-Boltz, Ph.D.
(925) 939-3909

PRESIDENT ELECT: Susan O'Grady, Ph.D.
(925) 938-6786

SECRETARY: Barbara Peterson, Ph.D.
(925) 939-4147

TREASURER: Marney Middlebrook, Ph.D.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR: Shendl Tuchman, Psy.D.
(925) 201-3435

INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICE CHAIR:
Michael Cheney, Psy.D. (925) 210-0700

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Sarah E. Wood, Ph.D.
(925) 680-1844

PROGRAM COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS:
Alissa Scanlin, Psy.D.
Susan Snyder, Ph.D. (925) 388-2001

CLASP REPRESENTATIVES:
Barbara Peterson, Ph.D. (925) 939-4147
Ellin Sadur, Psy.D. (925) 831-0341 x6

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS-CPA REP:
Howard Friedman, Ph.D.

DISASTER RESPONSE CHAIR:
Marge Joehnk, Ph.D. (925) 451-2054

MEDIA RELATIONS: Susan O'Grady, Ph.D.
(925) 938-6786

HISTORIAN: Dierdre Moriarty, Ph.D.

SAVE THE DATE

Professional Advocacy:

Surviving Hard Times and the Role of the Professional May 21st, from 1-3 PM (location TBA)

CCPA is excited to host Chuck Faltz, Ph.D. in a discussion about issues relevant to psychologists who work with insurance and/or managed care companies. Accompanying him will be Amanda Levy, also a director of Professional Affairs for CPA.

This forum will allow participants to have their own questions addressed. Those who have such questions should email them to Dr. Alissa Scanlin by 5/11 and she will forward them.
(Please watch the CCPA listserv for more details)



Autism Spectrum Disorders: Practicalities for Practitioners Ellin Sadur, Psy.D June 10 at Lafayette Park Hotel

6:30 No Host Social Hour

6:30-8:30 Dinner/Presentation

\$50 member

Early registration (on or before June 3rd)

\$75 member late registration

\$60 non-members early registration

\$75 non-member late registration

2 CEU's, dinner included

RSVP by phone or mail - No walk-ins please.

We want to ensure we have enough food and seating.

Please contact Dr. **Alissa Scanlin**

3468 Mount Diablo Blvd. Ste B203

Lafayette, CA 94549

925-283-3902

Check CCPA Listserv for more details.



CCPA Summer Barbeque - September 12, 2010

Time & Place TBA, Check CCPA Listserv for more details.



An Introduction to the Professional Use of Quickbooks

When: September 22, 2010

Iris Hecker Time: TBA



CONTRA COSTA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



2010 Spring Newsletter



Members Corner

Groups Offered in Contra Costa County

Group Title: Men's Group
Group Leader: Bruce H. Feingold, Ph.D.
 Location: Walnut Creek
 Group Size: 6-8
 Age Range: 35-80
 Meeting Day & Time: Mondays, 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
 Length of Meeting: 90 Minutes
 Contact Info: (925) 945-1315

Group Description: This is a long-term support/process groups for high functioning men. The goals of the group are for the men to discuss their lives in a meaningful and authentic way and to gain insight, feedback and support. The range of issues includes marital problems and divorce, depression and anxiety, work difficulties, fathering, and forming intimate male friendships. The men work on fundamental emotional and cognitive patterns and challenge the limitations of conventional definitions of masculinity. As the men integrate into the group they experience it as highly rewarding and make profound changes in their lives.

Group Title: Chronic Medical Illness Support Group
Group Leader: Ann Steiner, Ph.D., MFT
 Location: Lafayette, near BART - Wheelchair Accessible
 Group Size: Maximum 6-7
 Age Range: 30-60
 Meeting Day & Time: Thursdays, 3:30-5:00
 Length of Meeting: 1.5 hours, long term, ongoing
 Target Population: Adults dealing with chronic medical conditions and or chronic pain, does not include terminal illnesses.
 Gender: Male, Female, Both
 Contact Info: (925) 962-0060 Email: DrSteiner@DrSteiner.com Website: www.DrSteiner.com

Group Description: Isolation and loss of connection with others is a major issue for most people dealing with chronic pain and illness. This wonderful, warm, long-term support group which addresses hidden disabilities, chronic pain, and life-altering medical challenges is designed to enrich your current individual therapy and help expand your client's support network. Members of this unique group inspire each other to make the most of life with limitations, reduce their isolation and add more compassion for themselves.



CONTRA COSTA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



2010 Spring Newsletter



Members Corner

Groups Offered in Contra Costa County

Group Title: Relationship – Focused Psychotherapy Group

Group Leader: Ann Steiner, Ph.D., MFT

Location: Lafayette

Group Size: Maximum 6-7

Age Range: 30-65

Gender: Male, Female, Both

Meeting Day: Wednesdays

Meeting Time: 5:00 – 6:30

Length of Meeting: 1.5 hours, long term, ongoing

Contact Info: (925) 962-0060, Email: DrSteiner@DrSteiner.com, Website: www. DrSteiner.com

Target Population: Adults interested in learning about and improving their process and relationships

Group Description: This ongoing, long-term, supportive group addresses relationship issues, trust, intimacy and improving self-care. This group provides a safe environment where they can benefit from getting honest feedback from others who have dealt with or are dealing with similar life challenges. Designed for psychologically aware members who want to look closely at what is getting in the way of more meaningful, satisfying work and personal relationships.

Group Title: Therapy Group for Therapists

Group Leader: Ann Steiner, Ph.D., MFT

Location: Lafayette, near BART - Wheelchair Accessible

Group Size: Maximum 6-7

Age Range: 30-50

Gender: Male, Female, Both

Meeting Day: Thursdays

Meeting Time: 9:00 – 10:30am

Length of Meeting: 1.5 hours, long term, ongoing

Contact Info: (925) 962-0060, Email: DrSteiner@DrSteiner.com, Website: www. DrSteiner.com

Target Population: Psychotherapists interested in learning about and improving their interpersonal skills and enhancing their self-awareness as individuals and therapists.

Group Description: This process-oriented co-ed psychotherapy group offers a safe environment for personal and professional growth. This group has been meeting for over eight years, and is a powerful antidote for the isolation of private practice. Members learn more about the healing power of group interaction, increase their interpersonal skills and enhance their self-awareness as individuals and therapists. We currently have openings for one or two male therapists who are interested in doing this deep work in a supportive group setting.

* **Note:** This group is designed for therapists who are interested in working on their own issues and have been in, or are currently in, individual therapy.



CONTRA COSTA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



2010 Spring Newsletter



Members Corner

Groups Offered in Contra Costa County

Group Title: Consultation Group for Licensed Psychotherapists
Group Leader: Ann Steiner, Ph.D., MFT
 Location: Lafayette
 Group Size: Maximum 6-7
 Age Range: 30-55
 Gender: Currently Female, open to men as well
 Meeting Day: Thursday's, twice monthly
 Meeting Time: 10:30am – 12:15 pm
 Length of Meeting: 1.5 hours, long term, ongoing
 Contact Info: (925) 962-0060, Email: DrSteiner@DrSteiner.com, Website: www. DrSteiner.com

CE Credit available for MFTs and LCSWs, CE for psychologist is pending

Group Description: This twice monthly, facilitated consultation group is designed for therapists who want to look closely at their clinical work, deepen their understanding of their client's processes and sharpen their skills. This case consultation group combine's member's case presentations, informal didactic presentations and discussion. Presentations include therapeutic framework, working diagnoses, client's history and cultural context, different diagnostic and treatment planning issues as they relate to treatment challenges, family of origin issues, and impact of medical issues if any. The quality and meaning of the transference is explored, while acknowledging the informative value of counter-transference.

Group Title: A Healthy Divorce/Separation Group
Group Leader: Shendl Tuchman, Psy.D.
 Location: San Ramon
 Group Size: Maximum 8
 Age Range: Adult
 Gender: Divorced or separated men and women
 Meeting Day: Monday, 8 week initial commitment
 Meeting Time: 6:30-8pm
 Length of Meeting: 1.5 hours
 Contact Info: 510-201-3435, Email: dr.tuchman@earthlink.net

CE Credit available for MFTs and LCSWs, CE for psychologist is pending

Group Description: Are you divorced or separated, struggling with the ending of your relationship and feeling it continues to be difficult to manage? Do you sometimes wonder how you are going to get through the next conversation with your former partner or soon-to-be former partner? I work primarily with people engaged in some aspect of divorce: custody decisions, communication difficulties, children, step-parents, etc. Groups are a unique environment to work through your fears and frustrations with people who may have similar experiences and with a professional who can help to support and focus group members as they work on moving forward in their lives.



CONTRA COSTA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



2010 Spring Newsletter



Speaker's Bureau

Anyone interested in being put on the CCPA website under a link for Speaker's Bureau, please send an email with the topics you have experience in, and would like to speak about to Susan O'Grady at susan@ogradywellbeing.com. Our updated website will be in operation by early summer, so please let me know if you want to be added to the website list.

Susan O'Grady 938-6786

We invite you to utilize the CCPA Newsletter as a format for sharing your knowledge and information with your colleagues, thereby with the community at large.

The following dates are submission deadlines for future publications:

July 15, 2010 (Summer Newsletter)
September 15, 2010 (Fall Newsletter)

These dates are subject to change

The following prices are in effect for advertisements:

¼ Page Ad \$30 ½ Page Ad \$60 ¾ Page Ad \$100

(Advertisement for office space is free to CCPA members)

Email submissions by the deadline to sarahewoodphd@yahoo.com

Office Available

Lovely Lafayette
psychotherapy office
available Tuesday,
Thursday, Friday &
weekend.

\$175/day/mo with less
for more than one day.

Pam Rudd
650-348-8829