



CCPA NEWS

The Contra Costa Psychological Association Newsletter

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President's Message

By Marc Komori-Stager, Psy.D.

The board is working on our big January presentation. We are planning on holding it remotely. This meeting is when I become your immediate-past president. The board is discussing who to nominate for my replacement, and then you will get to vote. I will leave behind average-sized shoes to fill, so not to worry, the next president will do just fine.



First Fridays are still happening, even if they are happening remotely. Look for Dr. Alissa Scanlin's emails for details on how to join.

The Practice Building Group also continues to meet. Please look for Dr. Alexis Smith-Bauman's emails for details.

Thank you to Dr. Andy Pojman, who has been guiding our renewal to provide CEUs to you. The APA makes this such an arduous and expensive process that the board, in an attempt to protect Andy, has discussed either switching who approves us to CPA or leaving the business of providing CEUs all together. As offering CEUs is a major part of our mission, we have decided to continue with the application.

We are working through how to go about having our annual CCPA BBQ. We are wondering if there are safe physically-distant ways for us to meet, and if we would want to. Do chime in on the forum to let us know if you would attend, and what precautions you would want us to abide by.

Have a safe and sane summer.

Sincerely,

Marc



CCPA Events

First Friday
August 7, 2020

CCPA Board
Meeting
September 8, 2020

Spotlight on Diversity

Laura Naman, PhD, Diversity Chair

There seems to be so much going on right now in this nation and in this world that it seems hard to know where to focus our energy to contribute to positive change. COVID19 continues to impact day to day life for ourselves both personally and professionally, our community, our country, and the world. In the last few weeks it has also become painfully evident that even in the midst of a pandemic and perhaps especially in the midst of a pandemic there is a continued call to action in the fight for liberty, justice and freedom and a need to stand up for and stand with individuals that have been excluded from basic rights and freedoms by systemic racism.

The most recent killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Rayshard Brooks, among others and the wave of protests and calls to action that have followed have been powerful. It is my hope that these most recent events and the protests that have followed are indicative of a tipping point that brings to the forefront the social disparities that exist for black lives in this country and the world. I learned early in my graduate school program the importance of examining my own bias and privileges, even in the context of my own experiences as an immigrant and an ethnic minority in the United States. Recent events have been a personal reminder that sensitivity, understanding, and awareness to the impacts of racism and prejudice are not enough to contribute to change and that there is always more to be learned about individuals' circumstances and much we need to do.

I have had the opportunity recently to hear about the experience of a family a few years ago in the Contra Costa Community whose family member Miles Hall was killed by the police (son, brother) in the context of the family calling 911 for help with a mental health crisis. This was a family that had diligently learned via NAMI and other mental health organizations on steps they could take to protect Miles Hall, a 23-year-old black man from being a victim of police violence due to lack of understanding and bias (see justiceformileshall.org). I have also learned about the personal and professional experiences of Oakland civil rights litigation attorney Adante Pointer Esq., and Dr. Brandon Nicholson, Executive Director of The Hidden Genius Project, which is dedicated to improving access to opportunities in tech for disadvantaged communities. I plan to continue to find opportunities to learn from individuals that are taking steps to bridge the gaps and dissolve disparities for black lives and other disadvantaged communities and find ways that I can take action. #blacklivesmatter

June was also pride month and was a reminder to keep in mind the disparities that exist for members of the LGBTQ community and a call to contribute to creating an atmosphere that encourages the promotion of self-affirmation, dignity, equality, and increased visibility for members of the LGBTQ community as well as individuals that are questioning and intersex. I have found The Safe Zone Project and the (thesafezoneproject.com) and LGBTQIA Resource Center from UC Davis (lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu) to be easily accessible sources of current information that I have found helpful for educating myself and good resources to recommend to individuals I work with and other individuals I interact with in my community. #pride2020

I encourage Contra Costa Psych Association members to find ways to contribute to furthering social justice causes that are aligned with your own individual abilities and strengths because striving for an equal and socially just world is not a sprint it is a lifelong marathon!

Laura Naman, PhD
Diversity Chair



Ethical Considerations in Returning to In-Person Therapy

Dr. Susan O'Grady

In talking with colleagues in our county and around the country, it's clear that we are all in a difficult and ambiguous situation with regard to returning to in-person practice now or waiting until some indeterminate time in the future, or a combination of both.

As we've adapted our practices to teletherapy many psychologists have decided to continue only providing therapy via video calls and have let their office leases go. Still, others returned in June to seeing both therapy and assessment clients in person using masks, plexiglass shields, and providing plenty of hand-sanitizer.

The New Yorker Magazine had an article by Adam Gopnik, [The Empty Couch](#), which is an entertaining read about all the changes we've had to make doing teletherapy.

APA addresses how to balance practical and ethical considerations in resuming in-person services and I encourage you to read the article from APA's website: [COVID-19: What the Ethics Code says about reopening your practice now](#)

Many factors go into balancing ethical responsibility with risk management including our clients and our own risk, our comfort with doing therapy masked, the physical environment of our office, and its ventilation system, to name just a few. Some services may require in-person treatment such as neuropsychological and medical-legal evaluations. Individual therapy is probably best suited to teletherapy although I have been finding that my work with couples is benefiting by more time doing telehealth.

If you have decided to see clients in-person I recommend you follow the APA guidelines for creating an informed consent for in-person therapy during the pandemic and a screening questionnaire for your clients to take so you can assess their risk.

A [sample informed consent](#) for resuming in-person services can be found on APA's website. If you have not created a health screening form for your clients please feel free to contact me and I'll be happy to provide what we use.

Finally, balancing the goals of doing good and avoiding harm--if we have followed basic ethical guidelines, are practicing good self-care, and continuing social distancing ourselves, then returning to practice again in this difficult time is our decision to make.

We will each make different choices depending the type of practice we have, our risk tolerance, our health and our age, and the current Covid conditions in our community. The website [Covid Act Now](#) is a useful resource for checking conditions in each county in the US. For instance, at the time of this writing on June 10, Contra Costa County has an infection rate of 1.06 which is considered to be a medium threat. Our county has a significant percentage of positive COVID tests (4.1%) also considered to be a medium threat. Assuming current trends and interventions continue in Contra Costa County, our hospitals are unlikely to become overloaded in the next 3 months. However, if all restrictions are lifted then the cumulative infection rate goes up significantly to above 70%, with an estimated 7,000 deaths, and our hospitals will be overloaded by July 12, 2020.

These are sobering numbers and illustrate how much depends on personal responsibility and thoughtfully weighing the many factors that go into our decision to return to our offices.

I encourage those of you who have not yet made a professional will to do so now. I wish you all well in your decision about how to continue your work either by teletherapy or in-person, or both.





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Upcoming Events

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CCPA Board Meeting - September 8, 2020



Office Ad

Retiring psychologist seeks tenant for nicely furnished mid-sized office in a suite with waiting room and kitchen, shared by two other psychologists, in a professional building located in downtown Lafayette. Handsome and well-equipped sandtray set-up also available. Current rent, including utilities, is \$1,181/month.

Location: 895 Moraga Rd, Suite 10.

Please contact Dr. Charmaine Hitchcox, Ph.D. at 925-284-8048 or clio1947@gmail.com if you are interested or have questions.

2020 CCPA

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