

Newsletter

**Houston Association For
Marriage & Family
Therapy**

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

September's Multicultural Panel, on September 16th, featuring Dania Dandashli, Santi Periasamy, PhD, Leticia Fallick, LPC, Yoko Seubert, MA, LPC, LMFT, and Ify Ezeobeloe, PhD, RN, CNS. All five represented the different cultural regions of Mexico, Japan, Lebanon, Nigeria, and India. It was a rich experience hearing all their points on moments with clients in the therapy room, to insights on how to approach different cultural aspects in therapy, to how mental health and diagnoses are viewed from their cultural lens. While I attended culturally diverse universities and consider myself well rounded in knowing about cultures, I'm from America, which poses as a disadvantage because of our tendency to reduce a culture to its' bare pieces - language, religion, and food - being the most notable. A large majority of us aren't blessed with the awareness to know about specific traditions, beliefs, and rituals. Often we hear about different cultures through a slanted media lens which rarely gives us two independent sides to a story. I felt this panel was very diverse, yet poignant on the aspects of mental health in their native cultures. They broke down the stereotypes we often have about groups that are different from us. I thought the occupational environments were well diverse too - we had a PhD level nurse working with a psychiatric center, another PhD level clinician working in the private practice sector, a student getting her associate/intern hours, and two master's level clinicians - both in groups with other therapists. So, each had different types of clients, presenting concerns, and interactions through the view-finder of their culture. Since the workshop, I've been more aware of how I, through my culture, impact others who are not from America and am now more empathetic towards their process of acculturating into the States. All of us have been new to a situation, where we needed to assimilate to that environment - whether it was to a country, a new home, as a new family member, to a job, or in a new role in life, we all have to adjust and gage our way of thinking, believing, and acting to that of the environment we encounter. The mix is not always cohesive and due to that, I think it is imperative, as therapists, to be consciously aware of that. As therapists we learn and are trained to be agents of change - I now challenge myself, and I hope the rest, to be agents of cultural empathy.

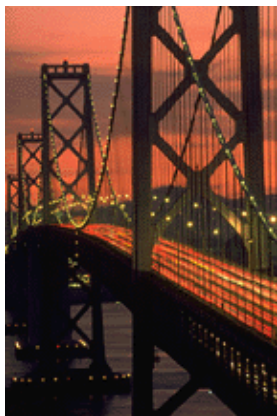
All My Best,

Dagny Lodowski, MA, LMFT

President, HAMFT



OCTOBER WORKSHOP



“The impact of economics on the family:
Macro and micro factors”

Dr. Jared Dupree

October 14, 2009 @ 6-7:30pm

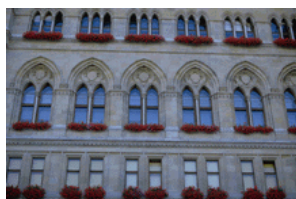
The Council on Alcohol and Drugs Houston

NOVEMBER WORKSHOP

“People who do not understand themselves have a craving for understanding.”
-Wilhelm Stekel

Karen Magee, MA, LPC, LMFT, a Jungian analyst will be coming to guide us through the “Self of the Therapist in Ethics” on November 20th from 1 – 4 pm at the Council on Alcohol and Drugs auditorium

CONSULTATION OFFICE FOR MENTAL HEALTH



Single consultation office (15 x 13 with windows) available for lease in attractive house converted for professional use. Prime location in West U. / Rice Village area. Furnished waiting rooms. Common kitchen with refrigerator, microwave. Access to fax and copier. Private closet for filing cabinet/storage. On-site parking. Available for full-time lease beginning on September 15, 2009.

Contact Victor Loos, Ph.D. at (713) 526-4751 or vloos@cffc-online.com

BEING ETHICS CHAIR

When I was asked to consider the position of Ethics Chair for HAMFT I was amazed. Here I was, a trainee therapist, part way through my Masters degree. I was a little apprehensive to say the least. However, I have been pleasantly surprised at how even someone with my level of experience in the MFT field can be of service. One of the great things about being responsible for this kind of position is that it has forced me to think more deeply about what being an ethical therapist means.

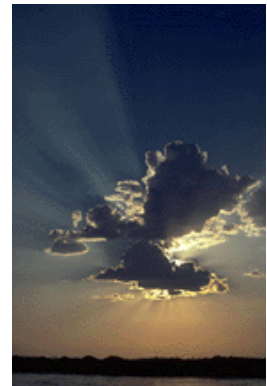
My responsibilities are to put on the annual Ethics program in November where we spend 3 hours working on Ethics issues. This is an important program as it provides CEUs for MFTs in the Houston area. I am also responsible for seeking advice on any ethical issues or cases brought to the Board. Fortunately there are many resources via AAMFT and TAMFT to help in this endeavor and a stable of very wise therapists who have gone before me in this position. My commitment is to attend the Board meetings and do what it takes to make these things happen.

One of my first acts was to meet with Rob Hochschild who held the position before me. Rob was very kind and shared with me his ideas about how to do a good job. I talked to Rob about how Ethics is not just about following the AAMFT Ethics code but it's about the self of the therapist, who we are as ethical people, and about doing the right thing, not just doing things right. I am in the fortunate position of being the partner of a philosopher whose field of study is Ethics in the philosophical sense and he has challenged me along the way to think about what it means to be ethical in life in general but also as a person who has the welfare of others in her hands. For this reason, I chose to propose to the Board that this year for the annual Ethics program we should concentrate on the issues of the "Self of the therapist" with regard to Ethics - spending our time looking inwards to challenge ourselves. Thankfully the Board agreed and we are very fortunate to have Karen Magee, MA, LPC, LMFT, a Jungian analyst coming to guide us through this task on 20th November from 1 – 4

pm at the Council on Alcohol and Drugs auditorium (Shameless plug!).

I know there are a lot of people out there who think that they don't have the experience to consider a Board position, but my experience tells me that isn't so. All you need is a willing heart, a passion for your profession and a willingness to listen and learn from some wise and experienced peers. I have been honored to work with my fellow Board members and thank them immensely for the opportunity. I am richer for this experience!

-Sarah McConnell



“If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.”

-Mark Twain

ETHICS CORNER

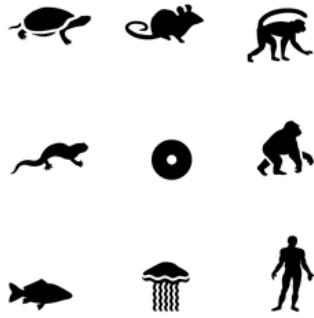
While reading through Monica McGoldrick's textbook on Genograms this weekend, I came across some questions posed by Paul Peluso who has proposed the use of ethical genograms. I thought the questions were very useful and certainly made me think! I've included some of them here. In keeping with some of the exploration we will be going through at the annual Ethics workshop in November, here are some questions we need to be asking ourselves as we work with our clients. Take a trip through them and let them sink in.....what are you finding out about yourself?? See you in November...

- What are the toughest moral or ethical decisions you or members of your family have ever had to make, or should have made? How were those decisions or decision points handled?
- What kind of behavior was considered unethical in your family? What happened when there were infractions of your family's moral code? Were there conflicts in your family over moral or ethical rules?
- Have you changed your values regarding any of the ethical rules you were taught growing up?
- What were the strongest family values in your family regarding ethical behavior? Honesty? Loyalty? Chastity? Fairness? Respect? Justice?

References:

Genograms – Assessment and Intervention 3rd Edition (2008), Monica McGoldrick, Randy Gerson & Sueli Petry. W. W. Norton and Company.

Peluso, Paul (2003), The ethical genogram: A tool for helping therapists understand their ethical decision-making roles. *The Family Journal*, 11 (3) 286-291.



Center for the Study of Natural Systems and the Family

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND TRAINING IN BOWEN FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY 2009 – 2010

“Theory defines the thinking about problems and directs the process of change.” **Victoria Harrison**

Center for the Study of Natural Systems and the Family (CSNSF)

will hold educational programs and training in Bowen Family Systems Theory for introductory study and ongoing applications in Houston & El Paso.

Details are available at:
WWW.CSNSF.ORG

The programs at CSNSF include:

- individual coaching for learning and using Bowen theory in one’s own family & field of work
- use of biofeedback and neurofeedback for understanding and managing reactivity
- consultation seminars
- videotapes from The Bowen Archives & Bowen Center Library
- live webcasts from The Bowen Center
- conferences & workshops on BFST & its applications with guest speakers
- collaborative programs & projects with community organizations
- programs that bring science and the study of family systems together in practical applications for families and in organizations.

For more information, please contact Victoria Harrison at
vaharrison@sbcglobal.net or 713-790-0226

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Dear Colleagues,

Through the past few years, the Houston Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (HAMFT) has seen a soar in dynamic workshops, presentations, and opportunities for family therapy across the spectrum of the field. To have achieved that feat, is due in part to the interests of our members. Our Board reflects a cross-section of our membership. Through their interactions with our other members, local and state wide connections, and looking to our own national and global society, they help generate ideas of presentations and specific topics that are important on multiple levels to family therapy. To date, this year, we have brought presenters that highlight specific topics, whereas, in past years, programs have been designed around theoretical approaches or themes.

A membership to HAMFT is a great opportunity for any level of marriage and family therapist. Members receive free continuing education credits at monthly workshops, free continuing education credits to our annual Ethics workshop, and a chance to network with other professionals in the field. HAMFT also supports connection. The therapy world at times can be isolating and very private. The monthly workshops we offer, allow therapists and other professionals to come together to share and build on the common element that brings us to HAMFT – a desire to want to know more about the couple and family system.

The association benefits by having more focus of what types of programs to offer their members. HAMFT is unique in its design; we are collaborative being. We want to hear from our members what they are interested in and who they know to get help get the information to the most people. We communicate electronically with our members, mostly with email reminders of programs and our electronic monthly newsletter. In these newsletters, HAMFT strives to bring you a recap of the last workshop, advertisements for upcoming ones, contact information of our Board, advertisement information, and any other announcements that affect our overall community. We honor those members who prefer a paper version of our newsletters. We have a generic email address, info@hamft.org that any person, regardless of member status, can access to inquire about more information. The yearly directory that we print and send out to our members is another great communication tool. This is an excellent resource for any mental health professional to use in researching a referral. Lastly, we support our students by offering our Warm Hearth Fund, a scholarship fund, to help students attend conferences, workshops, and trainings that will enhance their skills as a marriage and family therapist. Our connection with the student community is a strong one, as they represent the future that is coming into our field.

Along with being in the student community, we help our other members by having established a Crisis Response Network, which are trained MFT's who are willing to volunteer in a time of crisis. We saw this in great action after Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005 and many displaced New Orleanians called the Astrodome their home. Scores of mental health professionals came to talk and process with them about their experience.

HAMFT is also a member of Mental Health Association's of Houston's Project Resiliency Consortium. The consortium is for mental health professionals to provide pro-bono counseling to survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We also support our state's Marriage and Family Therapy Political Action Committee (PAC). These additional funds from members go to help increase support for the MFT license by giving us more of a political voice.

We have a variety of Membership options to choose from. Students have a discounted rate of \$10 per year. Clinical, Associate, and Affiliated members are the same rate of \$45 a year. This year to be in accordance to AAMFT guidelines, we created a new category, the Subscriber category, which is open to any professional. This was done to meet AAMFT's policy about members having dual membership with both their local chapter and their national chapter, which also includes you as a member of your state's chapter. Because membership dues can be costly, HAMFT understood that choosing one membership over another could happen. The Subscriber category is designed for those members who choose to be affiliated with HAMFT over AAMFT. Please go to our website, www.hamft.org and print off a membership form. At this point, we can only accept payments in cash or by check.

Another way to be active in HAMFT is to be on the Board. There are four executive positions and a variety of chair positions that are the heart of the Board. Our Bylaws allow flexibility in creating new chair position as we see a need arise. Advantages to being on the board are vast. It allows one to network with presenters and to learn about upcoming events, programs, and services for families. Being a member of the Board gives a person the ability for their voice to be heard and to help bring presenters, workshops, and ideas to HAMFT. It helps one advocate for their career and to make sure that the field of marriage and family therapy is and stays strong and important. Lastly, being on the Board helps people stay in touch and impassioned about what our field of study is set out to accomplish.

I joined the Board the year after I graduated from UHC L. Only knowing one person, I accepted the role because I thought this was a good way to know from more experienced therapists in the field, how to direct my practice and where to look for jobs! I knew only one person my first year, and from there it has been a great volunteering experience. I encourage everyone to come to a Board meeting and see what it's like as well as to see where you may fit in! The Board has grown in the last three years that I've been on it and I don't see it "downsizing" soon!

I hope this letter answers some questions, provides some information, and peaks your interest in renewing your membership, becoming a new member, or joining the Board of HAMFT. As always, I am here with any questions, concerns, and information. Please do not hesitate to contact me, dagnylodowski@gmail.com.

Dagny Lodowski, MA, LMFT
President
HAMFT



BECOME AN HAMFT BOARD MEMBER TODAY!

Marriage & family therapists relate to their professional associations in a variety of ways. For me, the relationship formed with HAMFT is one in which I find opportunities for comradery, consultation, and connection to the larger mental health profession.

HAMFT's great warmth and passion are characteristics that distinguish it from other professional associations. Each and every HAMFT board meeting and workshop are electrified with excitement.

Also, HAMFT offers the chance to engage a diverse group of practitioners with questions regarding ethics, clinical practice, and vocational opportunities.

And lastly, I am an active board member for HAMFT because I believe that political advocacy is a cardinal element within mental health practice. Therapists are advocates – most often for healthy life practices –

when they are in session, and I believe that our clients and colleagues deserve formal advocates in government affairs. I appreciate HAMFT's annual Political Action Committee (PAC) contribution and involvement with lobbying endeavors each legislative session.

HAMFT is a wonderful professional association, and involvement on the board has afforded me the opportunity to feel like an active participant within my vocation. I believe in the mission of supporting systemic theory and the effective practice of marriage & family therapy. Furthermore, I strongly encourage therapists, both student and licensed, to join the HAMFT Executive Board. It is an experience that can greatly enhance your relationships with your practice, your colleagues, and the larger mental health profession.

Submitted by, Brandon M. Wheeler,
HAMFT Past-President



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- 1/2 of page or 10 to 15 lines - \$40
- 1/4 of page or 5 to 10 lines - \$25
- 1/8 of page or up to 5 lines - \$15



HAMFT members may place announcements of up to 60 words or 5 lines free. Members receive 25% discount on 1/4, 1/2 or full page ads. Complete written information with camera ready graphics and fee payment (checks payable to HAMFT) must be received by publication deadline - the 20th of every month. Items received after that time will be published in a subsequent newsletter. E-mail ad text to info@hamft.org or mail to PO Box

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