

MAGPS NEWS

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Fall 2010

Ethical Dimensions of the Co-Therapy Relationship

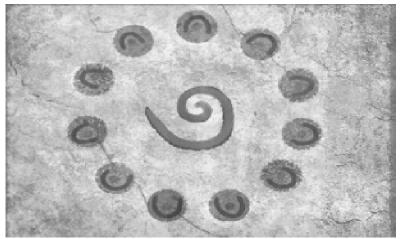
THE MAGPS 2010 FALL CONFERENCE

Interview with Bill Roller, MA, CGP, FAGPS & Vivian Nelson, MA By Venus Masselam

VM: Being Group Co-Therapists is a very dynamic and rewarding experience and we welcome your presentation at this year's fall conference.

VM: Since you are both husband and wife and Co-Therapists I wondered which came first?

B & V: The desire to be together as a couple and the desire to work together as co-therapists developed for us



o work together as co-therapists developed for us simultaneously across time. Just as personal relationships require a substantial commitment in energy and effort, so the co-therapy relationship requires a different, but equal level of commitment and dedication.

VM: Why did you choose ethical issues to be at the heart of your presentation on Co-Therapy?

B & V: Based on our research of the AGPA membership and reported in *The Art of Co-Therapy: How Therapists Work Together*, more than 80% of group therapists practice co-therapy sometime in their career. Too often the

topic of co-therapy is excluded entirely from the conversation about group therapy . Co-therapy involves many ethical issues that, if not explored in advance, can compromise the co-therapy relationship and our effectiveness with patients in group. The Ethical Guidelines and Professional Standards for Group Psychotherapy, ratified by the membership of the International Association of Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes, stipulates the following: "Group psychotherapists who practice co-therapy have an obligation to their patients to meet the standards in the field, including the co-therapists' balance of clinical skills, compatibility of theoretical viewpoints, openness in communication with each other and equality of participation as they co-lead their groups."

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Letter from the President

At this writing, Mid-Atlantic is busy preparing for its fall conference, under the able leadership of Henry Morris, Fall 2010 Conference chair. In keeping with our tradition of having one of our two annual conferences outside the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, we will meet in Richmond, Virignia, October 22-24, 2010. This will be our first meeting in Richmond in just over 10 years. Guest presenters Bill Roller and

Vivian Nelson will lead the conference in examining Ethical Dimensions of the Co-Therapy Relationship. If you haven't already looked at our website (<u>www.magps.org</u>), take a look at the audio-visual live to tape demonstration of a therapy group co-lead by our guest presenters. Details of our spring, 2011 conference, chaired by Margo London, with guest presenter Stewart Aledort, will be announced, as is traditional, at our fall conference. Mid-Atlantic conferences always have experiential, i.e. large and/or small group learning experiences as well as a healthy dose of didactic material

Mid-Atlantic has embraced technology in many facets of our work. This live demonstration group is one example, thanks to the efforts of our webmaster, Rob Williams. Membership chair Deb Sinek, along with Rob, has been ramping up our online registration capability with excellent results. We are now able to invite our members and guests to register for our conferences online. We also have a listserv for our membership which has been an excellent resource for group and related therapy referrals. Similarly, we are moving toward paperless-ness in as many ways as possible. Members now have the option of requesting paperless communications from MAGPS to varying degrees. This newsletter may go digital within the next few months. Our conference brochures are accessible on our web-site and will no longer be sent to members who have indicated that they prefer paperless communications. Finally, our annual membership directory is available on our website, and will only be sent in hard copy to those who request them. Our goal is in part to reduce costs and thereby minimize cost increases to our membership in these trying economic times and beyond.

We are very pleased to have the MAGPS/Washington School of Psychiatry Group Psychotherapy Alumni Association Cinema Series back on board after a brief hiatus. This collaboration is coordinated by John Thomas and Rob Williams. The 2010-2011 schedule appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

By now, all members have received the Call for Nominations, sent out at the end of July by Past-president and nominations committee chair, Lenore Pomerance. This is your opportunity to nominate members to run for positions on the MAGPS board. Self-nominations are welcome. In a few short months, I will move into the past-president role and president-elect Farooq Mohyuddin will move into the presidency for two years. It has been, and continues to be, a joy to be involved with this community of folks dedicated to advancing the use of group methods to achieve personal growth and therapeutic goals.

> Reginald Nettles, President Mid-Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society

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Interview (Continued from Page 1)

VM: What theories provide the basis for your work together as group Co-Therapists?

B & V: The findings of our research indicate specific co-therapy behaviors which lead to good therapeutic outcomes. A few of those behaviors are mentioned in the ethical guidelines quoted above. James Dugo and Ariadne P. Beck have elaborated a theory of co-therapy development that is based in part on Beck's phases of group development. We shall cover each of the nine phases of co-therapy team development in our presentation.

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VM: Would you share some examples from your experience of the benefits and pitfalls of being Co-Therapists?

B & V: Co-therapy provides a widened perspective for the co-therapists and widened transference possibilities for their patients. Co-therapy provides greater opportunity for therapists to check and balance their behavior giving as it were, on the spot peer supervision. These benefits favor both therapists and their patients. Co-therapists can reach an impasse if they allow unrecognized competition to flourish in their relationship. It does not bode well for the group or the co-therapy relationship if the co-therapists conflict over who is right or who is in charge. Another problem arises if insufficient equality exists in the relationship and one therapist becomes dependent or develops a co-dependent bond with the other.

VM: How should participants in the fall conference prepare themselves for your presentation?

B & V: Participants will benefit from reading our text which was cited above. From it they will gain insights into some of the more subtle aspects of the co-therapy relationship. The practice of co-therapy is complicated and requires experience and reflection to grasp its deeper significance in creating a therapeutic context for a group. Participants ought to discuss with their co-therapists some of the questions that reading our text stimulate. Therapists in search of a partner to work with will find help by referring to the co-therapy questionnaire in the back of the book. Just as important, participants ought to view our six hour video series of a spontaneous group, *The Promise of Group Therapy: a Live to Tape Video of a Time Limited Group*, to discover the various ethical dilemmas that emerged and how we responded to these challenges.

VM: What should participants expect to take away from your presentation?

B & V: Although co-therapy requires both time and personal commitment, the benefits which clinicians derive from its practice are deep and long lasting. The bonds which co-therapists form are often profound and have impact in their lives beyond the work environment. They learn from each other, they console each other in times of loss, and by their empathy and respect for each other, they can overcome the sense of loneliness that can envelope the practitioner who works alone.

VM: Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us today.

YOUNG ADULT THERAPY GROUP

Group therapy for young adults with Social anxiety and other behavioral and emotional issues related to this phase of life

> When: every Wednesday at 4:45 pm Where: Downtown Bethesda Contact: Dr. Nicholas Kirsch 301-907-8934

MAGPS 2010 FALL CONFERENCE **The Return to Richmond**

After a lapse of several years the Mid-Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society will return to Richmond, Virginia, for its Fall 2010 Conference on Friday, October 22 through Sunday, October 24, 2010. The venue is the Sheraton West Richmond Hotel at 6624 West Broad Street in Richmond's near west end. The topic will be "The Ethical Dimensions of the Co-Therapy Relationship," and presenters are Bill Roller and Vivian Nelson. They are Marriage and Family Therapist from Berkeley, California, who are both spouses and co-therapists.

During a period when boundaries seem to have become fluid in all aspects of our lives including politics, entertainment, finances and sports, a reexamination of professional boundaries is especially timely. We have all been inundated with escapades of boundary disregard by celebrity financiers such as Bernie Madoff, by sports stars such as Tiger Woods and politicians such as John Edwards and John Sanford. It seems that every day another account of betrayal and boundary violations appears in the media. At times the media accounts are so intrusive and redundant that these violations almost come to seem the average and norm for our lives. Most of us would like to think that as professionals we are immune to such scandalous behaviors. However, experienced and knowledgeable though we might be, there are hidden and subtle vulnerabilities which exist no matter how long we have been practicing or how much we may know. Often times professional violations occur with the colleagues and the patients we know most intimately.

A dimension of group psychotherapy leadership which is special and has unique aspects is the co-therapy relationship. At some time in most of our professional lives we have been in a co-therapy relationship. Many of these have continued for years in an almost marriage like bond while, others have ended abruptly and never been attempted again. Sometimes these co-therapy relationships have been entered into because of an emotional pull for a fellow professional without any knowledge or theory base to our decisions. A frequent example is the so called co-therapist relationship involving a student and their supervision in what is supposed to be an equal structure. Seldom are the pitfalls and vulnerabilities explored by co-therapy participants prior to the onset of their leadership together. This conference will examine the dimensions involved with co-therapy including the advantages and disadvantages and the phases of the co-therapy team development. In addition, demonstrations of how co-therapists can balance their clinical skills, their theoretical perspectives and their communication styles will be offered.

Bill Roller and Vivian Nelson, are in private practice in Berkeley, California, and have been cotherapists for 35 years. They are co authors of the forth-coming book, *A Second Chance at Love*, which addresses the issues of making a new relationship. Their first book, *The Art of Co-Therapy* was published in 1991 through the Guilford Press. The *Promise of Group Therapy*, their, video series, is available at www.thepromiseofgrouppsychotherapy.com . The companion book for *The Promise of Group Therapy* was published in 1997 by Jossey-Bass/Simons-Schuster. Bill is a Certified Group Psychotherapist through the American Group Psychotherapy Association and is Ethics Chair for the International Association of Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes. He has spent the last six years developing ethical guidelines for that organization. Bill and Vivian presented at the AGPA conference in February in San Diego, California.

As usual for MAGPS conferences, there will be small process groups throughout the time. In keeping Continued on Page 5

Return to Richmond (Continued)

with the theme of the Conference, most of the small groups will be led by cotherapy pairs. At the time of this printing, all pairs were not firmly established, but the following were set: Venus Masselam and George Saiger, Lew Weber and Phyllis McIntyre, Molly Donovan and Barry Wepman, Rob Williams and Sally Brandel, and Nina Brown with Nial Quinlan. Additionally, as has become traditional at our conferences, a group therapist from another affiliate society will be leading a group. Elaine Cooper from the Northern California Group Psychotherapy Society will be joining us for this conference.

The setting for this year's conference is located at a conveniently accessible hotel just off of Interstate 64 West. It is easily reached by taking I95 south toward Richmond and then taking I64 west toward Charlottesville. The hotel is located at the Broad Stree east exit off of I64. It is strongly suggested that departure from the Washington, D.C. area be late morning or early afternoon as I95 can be quite congested. The hotel has all the amenities including a comfortable bar area plus an on site restaurant. A block of room has been reserved for the conference but they are first come /first serve. They will be at \$89/night with a cut-off reservation of September 22. The web site is www.sheraton.com/richmondwest.

In addition to the comfortable hotel setting, information will be available for tours and exploration of the local area, which includes many historic sites and unique Georgetown-like neighborhoods and shopping areas. Richmond has grown over the last many years to be more than the former capital of the Confederacy. It is described as artsy, charming and edgy. There are clubs with excellent music, classic mansions for touring, a fine arts museum and many wonderful restaurants.

Please take time to join us for an exciting conference and an opportunity to enjoy southern hospitality.



MAGPS NEWS

Spring Conference 2010

Margo London

Our Spring 2010 conference, *The Favorite Patient: The Group Therapist's Dilemma*, was a lively, intense, often highly personal, and successful two-day event, held at the Johns Hopkins University campus in Shady Grove, MD.

Guest presenter Ellen Weber Libby, Ph.D., CGP, led the three plenary sessions, presenting two dimensions of the concept of favoritism. The first explored the dynamics of favoritism in families and Libby's notion that at each person's core are feelings related to being chosen, not chosen, or overlooked. The second explored how these influence our work as group therapists.

The 85 participants also met in ten small groups for three sessions of process experiences over the two days, with each group having a mix of seasoned clinicians, newer group therapists, and graduate students. MAGPS hosted a reception for first-time attendees after the Saturday session and also matched them with Mentors to facilitate their joining into the conference.

Our visiting small group leader was David Hawkins, MD, from the Carolinas Group Psychotherapy Society, and leaders from MAGPS were Gloria Myers Beller, Sarah Brandel, Jay Casey, Joshua Cordonnier, Larney Gump, Nancy Hafkin, Sarah Hedlund, Hallie Lovett, Ray Lovett, Grace Riddell, and Jonathan Stillerman. The conference faculty and Elly Libby met as a consultation group periodically throughout the conference.

Our conference gathering exuded energy and excitement, in sessions and during breaks, as people met, talked, laughed, explored, and discussed the dynamics of favoritism -- both professionally and personally.



Photos courtesy of **Paul Timin.** Many more are available on the website at: **www.magps.org**







Lessons Learned: Community Outreach Focuses on Military Needs

Elizabeth Hammer, PhD, San Diego Psychotherapy Group Society Community Outreach Task Force

This article is a summary of the combined work of Diane Feirman, Public Affairs Director, AGPA; Dr. Suzanne Philips, Co-Chair Community Outreach; and Richard Beck and Tom Stone, former Co-Chairs of Community Outreach AGPA.

As group therapists we know the beauty of a small group of people of different backgrounds, experiences and talents working together in at times inexplicable ways to reach a common goal. It was that kind of small group experience in Chicago at the 2009 Annual Meeting that led to the creation of a series of courses to be offered at the Annual Meeting in San Diego the next year. I was at that time also Chair of the Local Hosting Committee and knew the concentration of military personnel in San Diego made it an ideal time to reach out. At the table that lunch time were Ms. Diane Feirman, Dr. Paul Cox, Mr. Richard Beck, Dr. Suzanne Phillips and myself. The group brought together expertise in group psychotherapy, expertise in trauma intervention and research, personal and professional understanding of the military community, and a heavy dose of creativity and passion about group work and all it can offer. I believe it was Dr. Paul Cox who first suggested military an institute for mental health providers...and using the model of "Care for the Caregivers" an institute was conceived that met the specific needs of military mental health professionals and chaplains who much like therapists in any disaster not only offer intervention for trauma, but simultaneously live it. We then came up with other areas that needed to be addressed: trauma intervention in general, veterans, couples, and active duty military issues including combat stress, suicide and the unique needs of women in the military.

At the Annual Meeting in San Diego, the following tract of courses was offered to military members:

"Care To Military Caregivers: From

Fatigue to Hope and Resiliency" facilitated by Mr. Richard Beck and Dr. Tom Stone The institute was a two-day institute which includes self-care techniques and supportive process.

"Til Trauma do Us Part: Helping Couples Heal in the Aftermath of Trauma and Combat Stress" led by Dr. Suzanne Phillips and Dianne Kane. This workshop addressed the role of couple's relationship as a major source of resiliency in recovery from trauma.

"Military Mental Health – Treatment Challenges in a Unique Environment" led by CAPT Edward Simmer. This session provided an overview of the unique stressors and challenges in the military. It provided clinicians with needed information to address the special needs of this population.

"Group Therapy Applications for Returning Veterans" offered by Drs. David Foy, Shirley Glynn, Barbara Niles, William Unger and Melissa Wattenberg. This workshop detailed manualized evidence-based treatments all developed specifically for the unique military population and delivered in group.

"Using Group for Trauma Intervention", Directors, Drs. Robert Klein and Suzanne Phillips, organized a two-day course with faculty providing in-depth training on the multiple emotional impacts of trauma, including a series of group interventions strategies and protocols designed to address the needs of a particular population including adults, school children, organizations and military. A Care of the Caregiver segment was offered as part of this training which focused on recognition of countertransference responses as well as self-care strategies for caregivers.

These courses were very well received and will be offered again and expanded upon at the 2011 Annual Meeting in New York.

All of these courses and most specifically the

institute led by Mr. Beck and Dr. Stone focused on the goal of providing "Care of the Caregivers". Military mental health professionals, chaplains and other health professionals in combat situations experience direct, indirect and vicarious traumatization. This process continues as veterans return home and seek mental health services from civilian, Department of Defense and Department of Veteran Affairs Caregivers. In the two-day institute offered for military caregivers, participants were encouraged to share and learn about the overall effects of their work. The format included lecture and open group process. The focus was a balance of the psychological costs and benefits to the mental health caregiver. The learning objectives included:

- Defining compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, vicarious trauma, and relevant counter transference responses.
- Identifying the sign and symptoms of these concepts and the defenses utilized to manage them.
- Specifying the physical and psychological costs and benefits of working with traumatized military personnel and veterans.
- Identifying specific steps to combat compassion fatigue and build hope and resiliency in their work.

The "Care of the Caregivers" programs including the Institute offered at the 2010 Annual Meeting offered a mix of didactic training with an opportunity for process feelings and reactions in a group of peers. This mix is essential because the reactions of caregivers are normal responses to abnormal events and it is crucial with uniformed personnel in particular that these responses be normalized and validated. Training is key.

The Care of the Caregiver Program that has been offered nationally by AGPA to different civilian and uniformed service caregiver groups is an all day Group Program (that can be repeated) that builds on the awareness that those involved with trauma work- whether as mental health professionals, medical staff, spiritual care givers, peer counselors, veterans manning suicide hot lines or ancillary service providers- **need opportunities to deal with the impact and cumulative effects of the trauma which they listen to, respond to and contain.** Given the numbers of cases they must face and the nature of the traumatic symptoms and suffering they must address, their self-care and services to enhance this become crucial. The Care of the Caregiver program was given to hundreds of caregivers in varying setting after 9/11 and since then has been adapted for clergy, uniformed service peers, medical staff, and military and Department of Veteran Affairs' personnel. An adaptation of the program was given internationally to caregivers in India through Skype after the terrorist attack of 2009 and an abbreviated program was offered at the IAGP Conference in Italy for Caregivers who had dealt with the Earthquake in L'Aquila in April 2010.

The program affords mastery by providing psycho-education on the nature of trauma and PTSD in general as well as the impact specific to the natural disaster, critical incident, traumatic event, combat stress injury or cumulative stress experienced by those with whom the caregivers are working. For example following the catastrophic wildfires in an Diego, a Care of the Caregivers program was offered in San Diego for police, fire and military mental health professionals It addressed issues of "Responding to Responders" and included the need to take into account mission focus, band of brother's mentality, natural resiliencies, attitude to injury, barriers to seeking help, attitude toward mental health, acute and cumulative stress, delayed and masked symptoms. These issues were addressed through presentation, media, and group discussion etc. This type of program reflects the recognition that information and training is an important antidote to secondary stress and burn out.

Building on this, the crucial aspect of the Care of the Caregivers program is the presentation, Continued on Page 10

Military Outreach (Continued)

discussion and recognition of issues of counter-transference, secondary trauma, vicarious traumatization, risks of disclosure, coping strategies and resiliency traits. Feedback, discussion and group experiences underscore the Program's goals of normalization, connection, affect regulation, sense of continuity, development of resourcefulness and restoration of hope in Caregivers.

A decade ago war came to Manhattan, Washington, DC and rural Pennsylvania. Many, many AGPA members stepped up in heroic ways to apply group psychotherapy techniques and theory to the trauma, grief, and cumulative stress of a terrorist attack that in every way resembled a war zone. It is those experiences, those lessons learned and the accumulated experience of our skilled colleagues that puts AGPA in a unique position to reach out to military members, their families, and caregivers now. The "Care of the Caregivers" program and others like it are one way we as members of AGPA and group therapists are contributing and can contribute to the well-being of many.

For more information regarding AGPA programs designed for military members contact Diane Feirman, Public Affairs Director, AGPA at (212) 477-2677 or dfeirman@agpa.org

Note: The editor of the Newsletter, on behalf of the Board and membership of MAGPS, wants to thank Elizabeth and all of the people who contributed to this worthy article. There is so much of value going on in our field and it is important to find ways of communicating the detail of such things across the various society boundaries.

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MAGPS and the WPS Cinema Series

The Washington School of Psychiatry and MAGPS announce the resumption of the Cinema Series. Evenings will begin at 5:45 pm with a light dinner and continue until approximately 9:30 pm with the viewing of the film and a moderated discussion. Each evening will earn 2.5 CEUs. A contribution of **\$10** apiece for the dinner and **\$25** for anyone wishing the CEUs will be collected.

The evenings will be held in the WSP's conference room at 5028 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20016. **Reservations are suggested:** 202-237-2700

Please arrive before 6:15 pm as space is limited. Also, be respectful of the fact that therapy sessions will be in progress so quiet in the halls will be appreciated.

Friday, October 8, 2010 <u>The Talented Mr. Ripley (1999)</u> *Directed by Anthony Minghella* Moderated by Susan Mann, LCSW

Friday, January 28, 2011 <u>Si Puó Fare (It Can Be Done)</u> (2008) *Directed by Giulio Manfedonia* Moderated by John Thomas, LCSW, CGP

Friday, April 1, 2011

<u>The Reader</u> (2008) Directed by Stephen Daldry Moderated by Marc Feldman, PhD & Stephanie Koenig, LICSW

If you have any questions or would be interested in presenting a movie in the future, please contact Rob Williams, LICSW, CGP at rob.williams.msw@gmail.com or at 202-330-5390.

Meet Your Board Presenting the Incoming Board President: Faroq Mohyuddin, MD

It is a pleasure to be writing about my favorite subject, "Me". When our esteemed editor Ron Kimball asked me to give a biographical sketch, I thought of listing all of my education and training but then we are much more informal in MAGPS. So here is a brief description of my professional life. I am a psy-chiatrist, currently practicing in Alexandria, Virginia. I am an educator and my current full-time job is the Director of Psychiatry Residency Training at St. Elizabeths Hospital Washington, DC. My involvement with group psychotherapy started even before my training in psychiatry when I took a course of Bibilio-therapy and got hooked on groups. Shortly after that my supervisor and then president of MAGPS, Barry Bukatman invited me to come to this conference in Richmond where I could learn more about groups. MAGPS has been a part of my life since then. It is an honor to be elected President of a vibrant group such as MAGPS. I look forward to getting more group therapists practicing in the mid-Atlantic region involved with MAGPS and to increase the diversity of membership to include therapists conducting groups in different settings including private practice, day treatment programs, state hospitals, counseling centers etc.. I hope that all of you will help us in achieving this diversity.



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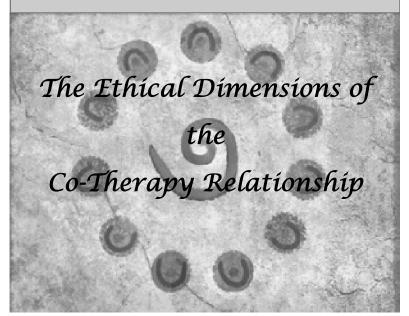
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MAGPS 2010 FALL CONFERENCE

with

Bíll Roller & Vívían Nelson October 22-24, 2010 Richmond Sheraton West Richmond , VA www.magps.org



Save the Date

MAGPS SPRING 2011 CONFERENCE

"Shame and Excitement: Crucial Markers for Group Psychotherapy"

Presented by

Stewart Aledort, MD, CGP

April 30—May 1, 2011 location to be announced