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MAGPS 2020 Spring Conference Canceled

Post-Processing: A Means to Being Seen with Presenter Kristi Vera, LICSW



Dear MAGPS Members,

In light of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the DC Mayor declared both a state of emergency and a public health emergency in Washington DC. DC Health recommended that all non-essential mass gatherings, including conferences and conventions, be canceled or postponed. Additionally Saint Elizabeths Hospital, our Spring Conference site, announced that all outside meetings are suspended until further notice.

Unfortunately the decision to cancel our 2020 Spring Conference is out of our hands. Members who registered already will receive a full refund within the next 30 days.

I want to thank my Conference Co-Chair, David Heilman, our Conference Committee, our guest presenter, Kristi Vera, and our Small Group Leaders for their hard work. Although we are not planning to reschedule the Spring 2020 Conference, we would still like to have

Kristi Vera present on Post-Processing. We are planning to work with Kristi and find a new date for this particular theme and keep you informed. Cristina Secarea

MAGPS President

President's Column

by Cristina M. Secarea, MD I joined MAGPS in 2014 shortly after I started my psychiatry residency at Saint Elizabeths Hospital. I knew that I wanted to be part of the organization after attending the 2014 Fall Conference. I remember having a warm feeling and thinking, "what a great group of people." I had the same feeling when I started attending Cinema Series events. I happily agreed to help Lenore cook for the movies and enjoyed preparing foods from different parts of the world. I felt both challenged and rewarded when group members tried my food. Food brings people together and connects us in ways that words cannot explain.

I became a MAGPS Board member in 2017 after I nominated myself as the Young Professional Representative. I felt ready to sit at the table with the "adults" and wanted to meaningfully contribute to the organization that, three years prior, welcomed me with their open arms -- the organization that was now my professional family.

In 2019 when I was nominated to run for the President-Elect position, I asked, "why me?" The response to this question was simple but powerful: "because the organization will be in good hands with you." I felt recognized and appreciated.

As you know, my 2019-2021 President Elect term became short-lived in November 2019 when we all learned that the President role needed to be filled. You probably agree, things have moved quickly for me! Even though I knew the organization well and knew what I needed to do, I feared that I would disappoint the people that trusted me to be a good leader. After multiple emergency board meetings and phone calls with board members, I came to recognize that I was not alone. I had an entire group of people, the MAGPS Board, ready and capable to support and help. This reminded me once again why I joined MAGPS in the first place: to be part of a group, or even better, to be part of a family.

that Karen Eberwein has joined the board as President Elect for 2020-2021. During the upcoming year, I plan to focus on increasing our members' involvement in the organization, encouraging and supporting young members in learning about our organization, keeping our conferences interesting and well-attended, and proudly representing MAGPS at the AGPA Affiliates Meetings.

Now, more than ever, I am ready and motivated to serve as the MAGPS President. I am grateful for every board member and excited

MAGPS had two events scheduled for this spring and I was excited to invite you to attend, be involved, and volunteer for both of them. The first event was the Psychotherapy Networker Conference on March 19 -21, 2020 at Omni Shoreham Hotel, in Washington DC, where MAGPS was planning to have a booth. The purpose of having a MAGPS Booth was to raise awareness about group psychotherapy and inform the community about the value of this treatment modality. The second event was our 2020 Spring

Conference, Post Processing: A Means to Being Seen with presenter Kristi Vera, LICSW scheduled to take place at Saint Elizabeths Hospital on April 18-19, 2020. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, both events have been canceled. Instead of asking you to be involved, I am asking you to stay healthy, safe, and at home (if possible).

I am positive that we will recover by the fall and I hope to see you during our 2020 Fall Conference on November 6-8, 2020 with

guest presenter Richard Billow, Ph.D., ABPP, CGP, at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, Maryland.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT PRESENTED BY RAFE POMERANCE Lorraine and Dan Wodiska's house 6014 North 28th St., Arlington, VA Dinner 5:15-6:30 Movie and discussion 6:30-9:30 RSVP TO CINEMA@MAGPS.ORG

April 4th Cinema Series Event Postponed Dear All,

In the service of caution we are postponing our April 4 Cinema Series movie, "The Human Element," which climate activist, Rafe Pomerance, was going to present. However, we are proceeding with the hope that later in the Spring, say sometime in May we'll have a clearer idea of the extent of COVID-19 in our area and country, and will be able to comfortably reschedule movie night. Sonia Kahn will be writing the interview with Rafe, who has just refreshed his memory by seeing the movie for the third time. He likes it more and more!

Thanks for all your enthusiasm and support for the Cinema Series over the years. We're coming back,

with great movies, presenters, and food!!!

So we'll keep you posted.

Everyone take extra care, Lenore M Pomerance, MSW, CGP Chair, MAGPS Cinema Series



Greetings from the Hosting Committee!

The 2021 AGPA conference will be held in Washington DC's Gaylord Hotel. As the local Affiliate, we have been asked to help

coordinate with the central office in New York. We have formed a Hosting Committee, which will assist with three major parts of the conference: Hospitality, Programs, and Marketing. We are in the very early stages of this effort and we are looking for volunteers to help with each of these subcommittees. The committee chairs are already in place, with Nicholas Kirsch as chair of Marketing, Christopher Straley and Rob Williams co-chairing Programs, and Maryetta Andrews-Sachs chairing Hospitality. We have a good start on recruiting volunteers but we need a lot of help! If you are interested in learning more about what is needed, or if you are interested in joining one of the subcommittees, please contact me at AlisonHoward32@gmail.com or 202-368-3501. Thank you!

Alison Howard, M.Ed., Psy.D., CGP AGPA Hosting Committee Chair

Cinema Series Returns for the 2020-2021 Season!

Mark your calendars for upcoming Cinema Series events! Please contact Lenore Pomerance at cinema@magps.org if you are interested in presenting a film, conducting an interview with a presenter, or preparing food for one of the events!







by Nancy Hafkin, PhD, CGP Co-Chair of the Fall 2019 Conference Committee When Jonathan Stillerman, PhD, CGP accepted a long-standing invitation to present at Mid-Atlantic, we knew we could count on a vibrant and challenging weekend. We were not

disappointed. Ninety group psychotherapists attended the 2019 MAGPS Fall Conference in Cambridge, Maryland. The Conference title, "Indecent Exposure?: The Pitfalls and Potential of Group Therapist Self-Disclosure" was vintage MAGPS, focusing on the role of the group psychotherapist and the

ways in which self-disclosure is used and sometimes, misused, in group psychotherapy. The first Plenary, A Tale of Two Statues, focused on valuing the self of the group therapist and understanding different types of self-disclosure and their impact on a group. The second, Moments of Truth, looked at the decision points in group and considered the choices that the group

psychotherapist can make when attempting to be transparent. The third Plenary involved a demonstration group consisting of members from the registrants who had volunteered. The fourth Plenary focused on Death Bed Confessions and discussed the therapist's tendency to over-reveal as a client is

terminating therapy. Endings being so important, Dr. Stillerman encouraged the best practices of being curious about our motivation, considering the impact on all group members, and of seeking supervision. Throughout the weekend, Dr. Stillerman led with his own self-disclosure, sharing with us examples from his own group practice which illustrated usage of his self-disclosure and choice points in his work.

Mohyuddin, Reggie Nettles, Barry Wepman, and Lorraine Wodiska. Nancy Hafkin and David Heilman, Conference Co-Chairs, were supported by a cast of many including the entire Board of MAGPS. It was hard-working members of the Conference Committee who made sure that Save-the-Date postcards were created and mailed, the Conference was announced and marketed, members were registered, Scholarships were awarded,

Dr. Stillerman was assisted by a talented cadre of Small Group Leaders. Laura Kaspar joined us from California. Local leaders were Maryetta Andrews-Sachs, Molly Donovan, Natalia Grekova, Susan Jacobson, Mustafa Kaghazwala, Bradley Lake, Farooq

students and first-timers were welcomed, registrants were well fed, vendors and hotel were paid, and continuing education credits were received. The Committee provided a consistent and reliable base for all matters pertaining to the Conference and ensured a smooth and relaxed weekend. Grateful thanks to Dr. Stillerman, the Small Group Leaders, the Conference Committee, and all who attended.



Zixuan Wang, Psy.D.

and gender.





attending this fall's group conference. This is my first "real job" after completing all of the pre- and post-doctoral clinical training. There is that imposter syndrome, the adjustment into taking on a much bigger caseload, the fact that I do not need a supervisor's signature on my notes anymore to make sure that I'm doing my job right, they continue to run in the back of my mind, and they seep

out in a variety forms of self-disclosure, through adding a little piece of item here and there in my new office, or disclosing the year of my graduation on my Psychology Today profile. I was so glad that I attended this conference at the end of my first week of work, to learn the theories and practical scenarios of self-disclosure in therapy, to process my personal experience of self-disclosure in my small group, and to observe and discuss it in a larger group setting. I remembered leaving the conference feeling more comfortable and confident with where I am, both as a therapist and as an individual in a group.



There's something about the raw nature of recent loss that compels people to let go of inhibitions that can interfere with openness and vulnerability in a group setting. For the past 18 months, I've been facilitating an Early Loss Group for individuals in their 20s and 30s who lost a parent or

sibling in childhood or adolescence (see Spring and Fall 2019 newsletter for more on the formation of this group). This continues to be a strong, dynamic group of five women whose connections with one another are deepening and expanding as we process their early traumas and identify how they manifest in their current lives.

Throughout this past year, I've received Psychology Today inquiries about the Early Loss Group, eventually collecting a waiting list of a handful of names. As additional inquiries rolled in over the past few months and weeks I realized that most of these individuals were presenting with more recent losses - anywhere from a few years ago to as recent as December 2019. What was I going to do? The ongoing Early Loss Group was stable and thriving after some fits and starts during the first year.

And the circumstances of these incoming clients didn't fit, although most of their demographics were parallel in terms of age

I decided the universe was telling me I needed to start a second Loss Group, specifically for those who had experienced loss in recent months or years. Meanwhile, I was scheduled for total knee replacement surgery on December 16th, 2019. I wanted to launch the new group early in the new year; how would I manage this feat given my compromised physical, emotional, and mental state? For anyone who has had this procedure or knows someone who has, you can well appreciate the extreme challenge of the recovery process that impacts all facets of one's life. I was caught between a sense of urgency and purpose and my own hampered capacities. Nonetheless, I forged ahead, but this meant that the intake and group formation process would be truncated.

Most of what I've done to get this new group started would not conform to recommended protocols. Only one group member

is seeing me for weekly individual therapy. Two others are seeing colleagues. The rest have outside therapists who are

unknown to me, and some I have yet to contact. One has never been in therapy before joining this group. Aside from my individual client, I've met with each prospective group member only once. The group now has a total enrollment of nine, two of whom will join during the second meeting (with no advance notice to the others). I wanted to close enrollment at seven, but I simply felt I could not turn down the last two, whose intakes occurred after the start date. Prior to the first meeting of the Recent Loss Group, which occurred on Saturday, February 1st, 2020, I received guidance from Rob Williams' consultation group that having a co-leader would be a good idea, given the intensity and size of this group. In our group practice, we don't normally work in pairs, largely because of the logistical difficulties associated with insurance and our schedules. And while there have always been a few groups in the practice, we are only recently beginning

to develop a more robust and varied group therapy program. Still, I took the consultation group's suggestion and immediately texted our clinical manager, who happened to be walking into a meeting with our externs and interns. Within minutes, she replied that one of our psychology externs was very interested. This development seems to illustrate the spirit of how this group is coalescing - from idea to fruition in a matter of minutes, days, or weeks. Perhaps it mirrors a kind of emergency response system one needs to have in the face of recent loss. And it may be that my own less-than-optimal functioning - the losses of mobility and mental acuity -- have allowed (or forced) me to be less rigid in my expectations of myself and others, and take a leap of faith to get this group underway. During our debriefing after the first meeting of the new group, my co-leader asked me how I define the difference between a support group and a psychotherapy group. I couldn't come up with a succinct answer. I stumbled a bit and felt like an inadequate mentor. Thinking about it further, it occurs to me that my Early Loss Group has evolved into a psychotherapy

group. Now that members have provided one another with the support, compassion, and safety that everyone needed (and continues to need), they are beginning to take more risks to confront, probe, and comment on what's happening between them in the room. I've become more assertive in drawing out group members who seem hesitant or avoidant, taking the risk of therapeutic rupture in order to get to something that needs to be exposed and explored. I expect it will take a while for the Recent Loss Group to transition from support and safety to a more probing, psychodynamic level of interaction. As of now, there's no apparent hesitation to speak or guardedness about sharing the raw

details of the traumatic event that brought them (though, of course, there's more to uncover). There is great relief in finding

member put it, "being the girl with the dead Mom." Note: The Recent Loss Group is currently closed; it is expected that there will be space for new members by June 2020.

your tribe, as each person names their most traumatic loss, unafraid of making someone else uncomfortable for, as one

https://www.networktherapy.com/library/articles/Dealing-Directly-in-Our-Relationships-21-Tips/ to read the article.

January 2020 in the Mental Health Library of NetworkTherapy.com. Please go to

Jonathan Lebolt, PhD, CGP published an article, *Dealing Directly in our Relationships*, in



Washington School Presents Pioneering Gay Analyst Jack Drescher, MD on LGBT Issues by Jonathan Lebolt, PhD, CGP

On November 16, 2019, from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm, the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity and Culture (CSREC) of the Washington School of Psychiatry presented Jack Drescher, MD in Psychotherapy and LGBT Identities: Historical, Clinical and Ethical Issues. Dr. Drescher is a New York psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, who was one of the first openly gay men to train in psychoanalysis at a major New York analytic institute. He was a member of the DSM-5 Workgroup on Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders, which was responsible for changing the diagnosis, "Gender Identity Disorder" to "Gender Dysphoria."

The program offered 6.5 CEs and included small group meetings and large group discussion. This small group leader was impressed by the depth of sharing in which members engaged. The conference was well-attended and -received. In the words of one participant, it was "(b)eautifully organized and well executed. All phases of the day were important and rich."

The morning plenary addressed the evolution of psychoanalytic thought about homosexuality-- from Freud's view of it as

"inversion," to Rado's pathologization of it as "perversion," to Kinsey's and Hooker's studies that normalized homosexuality, to

the American Psychiatric Association's 1973 decision to remove ego-syntonic homosexuality from the DSM, and, finally, to the

postmodern "queering" of psychoanalysis, in which homosexuality is viewed affirmatively. The afternoon program focused on



Ongoing Process Oriented Therapy Groups for Therapists Several openings in weekly groups that are exclusively for therapists. These groups offer a rare opportunity to be with other relationally oriented therapists who value authentic interpersonal connections and here-and-now processing. Groups

ethical and clinical issues in the treatment of persons who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

consistently offer the deep emotional support and direct engagement similar to what many of you have experienced through process groups at MAGPS, AAP, WSP, AGPA institutes, etc. **DETAILS**:

1. Groups are ONLY FOR THERAPISTS, coed, novice through seasoned. Limit 8. 2. Groups meet weekly for 75 minutes.

3. 3 groups in Dupont Circle, 1 group in Bethesda. 4. sliding scale available for new practitioners, grad students, and agency employees. Diversity is promoted. Please call/email with questions or to discuss further. Nicholas Kirsch, Ph.D.

301.442.7618 nicholaskirsch56@gmail.com bethesdapsychotherapist.com

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