

Filling Gap in OCD Services

Psychologists Open Center for Specialized OCD Treatments

Dr. Melissa Dufrene and Dr. Kristin Fitch, two of the founding members of the Louisiana OCD Association, have opened a new center, The Rise Center for OCD and Anxiety.

Their goal is to help address the shortage of specialized treatment services available for the OCD, a serious, chronic condition affecting an estimated 35,000 individuals in Louisiana.

"The absence of intensive treatment programs for OCD and related disorders is a huge problem in Louisiana," said Dufrene and Fitch. "We are not aware of any specialty focused intensive programs for these conditions in the state. This means that when someone's symptoms are too severe for traditional outpatient treatment they have to leave the state to access the care they need. Obviously, this is a huge strain on resources."

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a common, chronic, and long-lasting disorder in which a person has uncontrollable, reoccurring thoughts and/or behaviors, creating symptoms that can interfere with all aspects of life, such as work, school, and personal relationships.

"We think many providers recognize that they are not making progress with an OCD patient," said Dufrene and Fitch, "but continue working with them because they do not know where to send the patient or it is not feasible for them to travel out of state for an extended period for their treatment. We want Rise to become the solution to this problem."

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Gov. Lifts Mask Mandate Statewide, Except for K-12

On October 26, Gov. Edwards announced he will lift Louisiana's statewide mask mandate in all settings except for K-12 schools, after sustained improvement across the state in terms of new cases, test positivity and hospitalizations.

The Governor's updated order allows school districts to opt out of the mask mandate as long as they continue to follow the existing quarantine guidelines.

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APA Apologizes for Its Part in Promoting Systemic Racism

On October 29, the American Psychological Association (APA) Council of Representatives adopted three resolutions apologizing for its part in systemic racism and pledging to participate in remedies and change.

The first resolution was "Apology to People of Color for APA's Role in Promoting, Perpetuating, and Failing to Challenge Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Human Hierarchy in U.S." The second, over 12,000 words, was "Role of Psychology and APA in Dismantling Systemic Racism Against People of Color in U.S." And the third resolution was "Advancing Health Equity in Psychology."

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LSU's Dr. Calamia Earns Prestigious Early Career Award

The National Academy of Neuropsychology has named Dr. Matthew Calamia as the 2021 recipient of their prestigious Early Career Award. Dr. Calamia is Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of the Psychological Services Center at Louisiana State University (LSU), Baton Rouge campus. He is also an adjunct faculty member at the Institute for Dementia Research and Prevention at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center and has been affiliated with the Jefferson Neurobehavioral Group in New Orleans.

Dr. Calamia has authored over 70 peer-reviewed publications and has completed projects such as the Keller-Lamar Health Foundation *Validation of a Novel Web-Based Assessment of Cognitive and Emotional Functioning*, as well as the Pennington Biomedical Center *Nutrition and Obesity Research Center Apathy, Unintentional*

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Dr. Calamia
(courtesy photo)



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Editorial Page – Opinions

Star-Spangled Men & Women

by J. Nelson

I've written about freedom many times before—freedom of speech, tolerance for divergent ideas, and how a culture of freedom and openness promotes creativity and human productivity. And so, because of Veterans Day and other things, I'm writing about it again.

One of the first things that a consulting psychologist will do with a team is to help the group establish a climate of freedom, primarily through free-speech.

Decades ago when I was a brand new psychologist working at a 5,000 person Honeywell manufacturing plant in Phoenix, I witnessed this dramatic effect. By simply removing blocks to freedom of thought and action for the team members, the group catapulted from last place in the company—the shameful position of the 27th performing team—to the 1st place team, in only a few months.



As an internal consultant, this made me hugely popular. To those who didn't know much about the psychology of group dynamics, it was like a magic trick. But of course it had almost nothing to do with me.

One piece of luck was a leader who was extremely bright, open, and achievement-oriented. He was minimally encumbered by arrogance or false pride so we didn't have to spend time on that. In team-building having this type of leader is like stacking the deck.

I applied the principles of psychology that I'd been taught and the natural forces took over. Participation, motivation, and creativity all increased. The team revved like an airplane that had been finally cleared for takeoff. Then, productivity flew.

In *The Constitution of Liberty*, F. A. Hayek explains that freedom is "that condition of men in which coercion of some by others is reduced as much as possible in society." He reminds us that freedom is not power, wealth, or even happiness. In fact, freedom might mean the absence of these. And it is not entitlement.

Hayek also explains that freedom is not about the collective, but rather concerns only the single individual. "To grant no more freedom than all can exercise would be to misconceive its function completely. The freedom that will be used by only one man in a million may be more important to society and more beneficial to the majority than any freedom that we all use."

As one example, out of many, Steve Jobs was a premier inventor of our time. He could never have created what he did without the freedoms provided in our country. Jobs possessed a naturally creative temperament. But what made it possible for him to reach his potential, to light the entire world with his inventions, was that time and chance placed him in this country, a country where Liberty had made her home.

On November 11 we honor our veterans. We think about their service and their sacrifices.

In a letter addressing the First Brigade of the Third Division of the Militia, October 11, 1798, John Adams wrote, "If it be the pleasure of Heaven that my country shall require the poor offering of my life, the victim shall be ready, at the appointed hour of sacrifice, come when that hour may. But while I do live, let me have a country, and that a free country."

[Julie Nelson is a licensed psychologist, journalist, consultant, and publisher of the Times. She also holds other positions in the community. However, her opinions here are those of her own, and do not represent any group or association. She and the Times receive no compensation other than paid advertising. Email her at drj@drjulienelson.com, —she welcomes feedback.]

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Corrections & Clarifications

No corrections were received for last month's issue. Please send your corrections to:
psychologytimes@drjulienelson.com

State & National News

Gov. Lifts Mask Mandate Statewide, continued

According to the announcement, CDC guidance still says everyone 2 years of age or older who is not fully vaccinated should wear a mask in indoor public places. And if you are fully vaccinated, to maximize protection from the Delta variant, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area with high transmission.

At this time, in light of the Delta variant, CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status, said the announcement.

Private businesses may choose to continue to require and enforce mask requirements under the Governor's order.

"Today, I am cautiously optimistic and very relieved that the worst of this fourth surge of COVID is clearly behind us, which is a direct result of the people of Louisiana who stepped up to the plate when we needed them to and put their masks back on, got vaccinated, and took extra precautions to stay safe. That's why we are able to lift the statewide mask mandate," said Gov. Edwards.

"While the K-12 mask mandate will be in place, school districts can opt out if they follow the existing, evidence-based CDC quarantine guidance. This new order does offer a way for local leaders to end the school mask mandate, if they so choose. Let me be clear ... Louisiana has been a leader in bringing students safely back into the classroom. And they have done that by following public health guidance including on masking and quarantine. Public health experts and I encourage schools to stay that course. But because case numbers are going down and have reached a new baseline I do believe it's an appropriate time to give schools more autonomy. It's not lost on me that while Louisiana has seen 18 children die of COVID, half of those deaths came in the last three months, as the much more contagious Delta variant surged throughout our state."

Masks will still be mandated by federal regulation, including on mass transit and in health care facilities. They will not be mandated in most places, including government buildings, college and university campuses and businesses. School districts may opt out of the mask mandate if they choose to, but only if they continue to adhere to CDC quarantine guidance.

"We are encouraged about our current COVID trends, but remain mindful of our profound loss as a result of the last surge and cognizant that we will remain vulnerable to an equally damaging surge unless more of our friends, family and neighbors choose to get vaccinated," said State Health Officer Dr. Joseph Kanter.

Appoints Elizabeth Adkins to LDH

Governor Makes October Appointments

In October, Gov. Edwards announced his appointment of Elizabeth C. Adkins of Prairieville to the Louisiana Department of Health. Adkins is the deputy assistant secretary for the Office of Aging and Adult Services for the Louisiana Department of Health. She will serve as the interim assistant secretary representing the Office of Aging and Adult Services for the Louisiana Department of Health. The mission of the Louisiana Department of Health is to protect and promote health and to ensure access to medical, preventive and rehabilitative services for all citizens of the State of Louisiana.

The Gov. also appointed Travis Johnson of Harvey to the Governor's Advisory Board of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Johnson is the director of behavioral health for Inclusive Care Medical Clinic. He will serve as a person with expertise and competence in preventing and addressing mental health and substance abuse needs in delinquent youth and youth at risk of delinquency.

The Governor's Advisory Board of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention encourages and assists the state, units of local government, and private non-profit agencies in the comprehensive improvement of the juvenile justice system in the State of Louisiana by providing advice and counsel to the Louisiana

Commission on Law Enforcement, the Louisiana Legislature, and the Governor on the ways and means to facilitate greater juvenile justice system effectiveness.

Other appointments during October included:

Dana M. Peterson of New Orleans was appointed to the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System. Peterson is the manager of College Hill Strategy Group LLC. He will represent the 2nd Congressional District.

Roy O. Martin III of Alexandria was appointed to the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council. Martin is chairman, CEO, and CFO of Martin Sustainable Resources LLC and the director and co-founder of Indigo Materials LLC. He will represent Louisiana's general business community.

Dr. Ashley M. Volion of New Orleans was appointed to the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council. Dr. Volion is a policy analyst for Disability Rights Louisiana. She will serve at-large.

Cynthia M. Butler-McIntyre of New Orleans was appointed to the Board of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges. Butler-McIntyre is an independent field supervisor for iTeach. She will represent the 2nd Congressional District.



APA Apologizes for Its Racism

continued

The first resolution noted that APA “failed in its role leading the discipline of psychology, was complicit in contributing to systemic inequities, and hurt many through racism, racial discrimination, and denigration of communities of color, thereby falling short on its mission to benefit society and improve lives.”

According to the resolution, APA had commissioned a series of listening sessions and surveys, by Jernigan & Associates Consulting. "The narrative that emerged from the listening sessions, surveys, and historical findings put into stark amplification the impact of well-known and lesser-known actions. It leaves us, as APA leaders, with profound regret and deep remorse for the long-term impact of our failures as an association, a discipline, and as individual psychologists."

Officials said the work was spearheaded by the APA Task Force on Strategies to Eradicate Racism, Discrimination, and Hate and its five-member Apology Advisory Subcommittee, composed of psychologists who were chosen for their knowledge and expertise.

The second resolution outlines APA’s and psychology’s role in dismantling systemic racism in the United States. Areas of focus include education, science, healthcare, work and economic opportunities, criminal and juvenile justice, early childhood development, and government and public policy.

Examples of action items include the following:

"APA will encourage higher education admissions policies that require a comprehensive, holistic review of each applicant, including an assessment of applicants’ attributes that support the mission of the institution, and balance quantitative data with these qualitative characteristics. "APA will encourage programs to consider interview processes that are not cost-prohibitive to applicants of color and do not disadvantage applicants who cannot travel;

"APA will invest in the training of scientists to ensure all can identify, understand, and address the historical and contemporary rootedness of much psychological science in White sociocultural norms;

"APA affirms that scholars strive for samples that take a more careful approach to representative sampling in quantitative research, so that research results are applicable beyond merely White, middle class, college-educated populations, and that genuinely and thoroughly integrates intersectionality;

"APA will partner in interprofessional and interdisciplinary program development, consultation, and advocacy efforts in support of culturally derived, informed, and adapted evidence-based and practice-based evidence, assessments, and interventions that reflect the knowledge, experience, and inclusion of intersectional communities of color;

"APA will encourage employers to use reliable, valid, and fair employment testing and personnel selection practices that minimize bias, reduce adverse impact, and comply with professional standards, legal requirements, and ethical guidelines;

"APA will advocate for the development of empirically rooted, culturally informed policies, programs, and practices that seek to eliminate the disproportionate criminalization and punishment of people of color by reducing opportunities for discriminatory outcomes."

The final resolution pledges that APA will work to advance health equity in psychology. Included are action items for education and training, science and research, professional practice, and advocacy.

Examples are: "APA will leverage its influence to promote the use of resources for the inclusion of health equity in psychology curricula;" and "APA will support practice innovations that deliver competent and financially viable clinical assessment, intervention, and prevention services to diverse populations and communities."

The full text of the three resolutions can be found online at the APA website.

Nearly \$600M HUD Allocation for Disaster Recovery from Hurricanes Laura and Delta

On October 26, the Gov. announced that Louisiana will receive \$594,931,000 in Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the state's long-term recovery from Hurricanes Laura and Delta in 2020.

"This is a step in the right direction and we are thankful to our congressional delegation for their help in securing this funding," Gov. Edwards said. "However, we don't think the allocation for Hurricanes Laura and Delta is adequate for a full, sustainable recovery of Southwest Louisiana and the other impacted areas of the state, especially when it comes to housing. We will continue to work with our delegation and the White House to get the additional money we need."

The funds are part of a \$5 billion supplemental disaster appropriation Congress passed in September that includes money for all disasters that occurred across the country in 2020 and 2021. It also includes a "down payment" for Hurricane Ida that has not yet been allocated but is expected soon.

"HUD has not yet published the rules that govern this allocation, but as soon as they do we will submit our plan for investing these funds into recovery from the hurricanes that devastated our state more than a year ago," Gov. Edwards said. "We have been working with the communities in Southwest Louisiana for months now to develop a recovery plan that will put these funds to use quickly and effectively. "

The Fisher Project Suicide Prevention Program

The Mental Health Association for Greater Baton Rouge is operating a COVID-19 Emergency Response for Suicide Prevention Project in Louisiana funded by SAMHSA. In partnership with the Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Behavioral Health and other agencies, we are offering comprehensive suicide follow-up and recovery support services. Mental health concerns have increased considerably during the COVID-19 pandemic. Louisiana has been affected by high rates of infection and deaths, and many of our communities are more vulnerable to trauma and increased risk for mental health problems. The services we provide are culturally affirming and trauma-informed. We invite you to utilize our services to better serve your patients. There is no cost to participate.

- Clients enrolled will receive 6 months of care:
- Screening for suicide risk at every appointment
 - Safety planning and means restriction
 - Discharge planning
 - Warm hand off(s) to treatment or community organizations

Services are available via telephone and video telehealth.

To Enroll or Refer a Patient

Call the Fisher Project 225.960.6800 or email sblauvelt@mhagbr.com

Eligible participants are: Age 25 and over and · Have an increased risk for suicide in past 3 months

All services are provided by a certified peer specialist and supervised by a licensed clinical psychologist.

FDA Okays 5-Minute Dementia Test

A 5-minute, computerized cognitive assessment that is completed using an iPad has been given the okay by the US Food and Drug Administration. Developed by Cognetivity Neurosciences Ltd, CognICA the test, now with clearance by the FDA to market, is a cognitive assessment for the early detection of dementia.

The test offers several advantages over traditional pen-and-paper-based cognitive tests, Cognetivity officials said in a news release. "These include its high sensitivity to early-stage cognitive impairment, avoidance of cultural or educational bias and absence of learning effect upon repeat testing," the Cognetivity officials stated.

According to the Alzheimer’s Association, more than 6 million Americans are now living with Alzheimer's disease, and will increase to 12.7 million by 2050.

Cognetivity officials ssid that because the test runs on a computer, it can support remote, self-administered testing at scale and is geared toward seamless integration with existing electronic health record systems.

Truckers Against Trafficking Trucking Human Trafficking Awareness Summit to be Held

The Louisiana Motor Transport Association announced a Trucking Human Trafficking Awareness Summit on November 16 from 10 AM to 2 PM. The summit will be held at the American Rose Center in Shreveport.

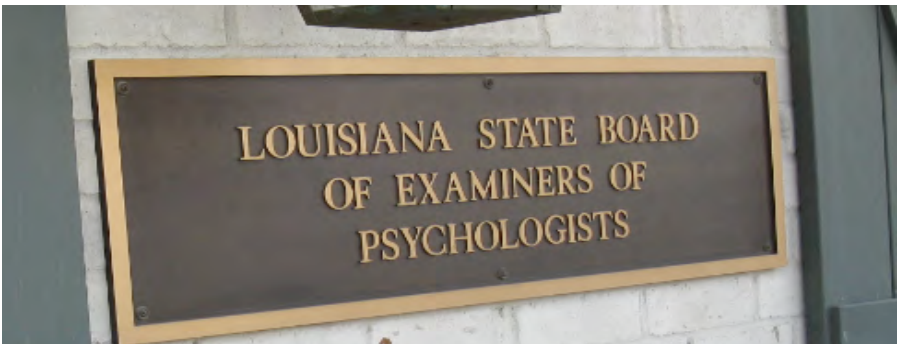
According to the announcement by officials, the half-day summit is hosted by the Louisiana Department of Justice, Greenwood Police Department, Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT), and Busing on the Lookout (BOTL) to bring together key bus, truck stop and casino industry stakeholders, with local, state and federal law enforcement and government agencies to work together to close loopholes to traffickers. The training will feature a Human Trafficking 101 presentation, information on training resources for bus, casino and truck stop companies, a presentation by a survivor-leader/field trainer and a law enforcement panel. The law enforcement panel will delve deeper into trends officers are seeing locally, share case studies, discuss victim-centered approaches and offer recommendations for industry partners wanting to get involved.

DOJ Grants for East Baton Rouge, Lafourche and Livingston Parish Sheriff's Crime Prevention

U.S. Congressman Garret Graves announced that East Baton Rouge, Lafourche and Livingston Parish Sheriff Offices are receiving a combined \$94,261 from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to aid their efforts in preventing and controlling crime. Additionally, East Baton Rouge Parish is receiving \$169,735 for law enforcement efforts.

"It's no secret that there is a relationship between the uptick in crime across communities and the 'defund the police' movement. Now more than ever is the time to double down on providing resources to our law enforcement so they can keep Louisiana and our country safe. [...]"

The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program allows states and units of local government, including tribes, to support a broad range of activities to prevent and control crime based on their own state and local needs and conditions. Grant funds can be used any one or more of the following program areas: 1. law enforcement programs; 2. prosecution and court programs; 3. prevention and education programs; 4. corrections and community corrections programs; 5. drug treatment and enforcement programs; 6. planning, evaluation, and technology improvement programs; 7. crime victim and witness programs (other than compensation) 8. mental health programs and related law enforcement and corrections programs.



From the Minutes Selected Items from August 2021 Minutes of the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (LSBEP)

Complaints Committee – a. Committee Report: Mr. Owens reported for the period 7/24/21 – 8/27/21 as follows: 0 new *Request(s) for Investigation* were received or initiated; there are a total of 13 open investigations, 11 are active (one from FY17-18; one from FY19-20; ten from FY 20-21; and one from FY 21-22. Two are under review and not yet noticed. There are currently no formal hearings scheduled; no disciplinary actions were finalized during this period and no applications received with criminal background.

Legislative Oversight Committee – Dr. Gormanous shared a reference to an article published in the Wall Street Journal Article (8/24/2021) Covid-19 Rekindles Debate Over License Requirements for Many Jobs: Hair styling and medical fields are among the occupations where state rules can bar entry; Biden has pushed for changes. Dr. Gormanous reported that this article specifically mentions psychology and support for license compacts. Dr. Gormanous opined that although he generally supports state compacts, the psychology compact “PSYPact” by ASPPB has anti-trust impacts and the potential to negatively impact the LSBEP as well as the public. Dr. Gormanous reported that he will be watching for legislation regarding potential impacts related to this matter in future legislative sessions.

Ms. Monic reported the Board banking accounts were compromised, due to a fraudulent check cashed inappropriately by the bank, on the Board’s account, causing delays in accounts payable and requiring transfer of funds to a new account. Dr. Gormanous emphasized for the record that this was not the fault of the LSBEP.

Renewal Report – Ms. Monic provided the following renewal report:
[...] OPEN RENEWALS: July 1, 2021 Active Licensed Psychologist - 775 Provisionally Licensed Psychologist - 15 Licensed Specialists in School Psychology – 28 CLOSING RENEWALS: August 1, 2021 742 - Licensed Psychologists 59 - Renewing at 1/2 fee - \$10,325 (amount does not include paper renewal or extension fees) 683 - Renewing at full fee - \$239,050 12 - Provisionally Licensed Psychologist - \$1200 25 - Licensed Specialists in School Psychology - \$2500 Total Renewal Fees 8/1/2021 \$253,075

Liaison to Professional Organizations – Dr. Gormanous reported that APA has conferred a taskforce to develop guidelines and address issues regarding approving masters level programs in psychology which will impact the LSBEP. Additionally, APA will be issuing a resolution on racism and is seeking individual or organizational comments. Dr. Gormanous reported that he shared the link to provide comments to BRASP, LPA and will also share with Dr. Gibson and Ms. Monic to share with board members.

Psychologist Emergency Certificate (R.S. 28:2(30) and LSBEP Opinion #2) - Dr. Gibson discussed the impacts of La. R.S. 28:2(30) related to a prerequisite number of years required for a psychologist to issue an emergency commitment. Particularly that 1) since this was not a provision within the board’s practice act or regulations that there is a concern that there is a lack of awareness of the requirement by licensed psychologists; and 2) that the provision which prohibits a licensed psychologist from acting on the safety and welfare of their client and others, is harmful to individuals and the public. Dr. Gibson suggested the criteria was ambiguous and not based on any data that the public is better served by delaying the ability of licensed psychologists to fully engage in the scope of their practice by a requisite number of years and should be corrected. In the meantime, Dr. Gibson suggested educating psychologists through the jurisprudence examination, newsletter and website of the existence of this requirement.



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Filling Gap in OCD Services

Psychologists Open Center for Specialized OCD Treatments, continued

"One size does not fit all in mental health," said Dr. Dufrene. A given patient may benefit from a general behavioral health intensive outpatient program, she explained. However, individuals struggling with severe OCD are unlikely to make substantial progress in a similar program because major components of specialized treatments for OCD are missing.

The Rise Center will be the only one of its kind in this area and Dufrene and Fitch hope it will help resolve a critical shortage of intensive treatment for individuals suffering from OCD disorders.

"Rise is launching our first intensive program in January 2022," the two psychologists said. "This group is geared towards college age individuals and will support them in making substantial gains during the holiday break when they are not distracted and stressed by academic obligations. "

Diagnostic interview data from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication estimated 1.2% of U.S. adults had OCD in the past year and the lifetime prevalence was 2.3%.

Drs. Dufrene and Fitch pointed out that this is 1 in 100 adults in any given year and 1 in 40 adults in their lifetime. Also, they note, the prevalence includes 1 in 200 kids each year

The condition causes suffering and can often be serious. National survey data indicates that 14.6% consider their condition mild, 34.8% considerate it moderate, while half, 50.6%, rate their condition serious.

The Rise Center for OCD and Anxiety will help with reducing both of the most serious obstacles to the availability of effective OCD services, Drs. Dufrene and Fitch explained. They hope to help resolve the lack of specialty trained providers as well as the absence of intensive treatment programs in this geographical area.

"The fact is," they note, "that many providers advertise that they treat OCD and related disorders, yet few

have advanced training in the most efficacious implementation of exposure and response prevention, the gold-standard treatment approach."

Dufrene and Fitch recognize that many providers lack this special training due to limited resources, time and money, or for other reasons do not engage in specialized training for OCD conditions. "In response we have partnered with The Chicago School of Professional Psychology at Xavier University to serve as a practicum site for their students. We will also offer a post-doctoral fellowship in 2022."

The new Rise Center for OCD and Anxiety will specialize in the treatment of obsessive compulsive disorder, anxiety disorders, obsessive compulsive spectrum disorders, and other related conditions, including Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder, Specific Phobias, Social Anxiety Disorder, Body Dysmorphic Disorder, Hoarding Disorder, Body-Focused Repetitive Disorders, and Illness Anxiety Disorder.

Drs. Dufrene and Fitch continue their work to inform and educate practitioners about this specialized training. On behalf of OCD Louisiana, they host a monthly virtual consultation group for professionals on OCD/OC Spectrum Disorders. "In the future, we plan to offer additional professional networking and consultation opportunities, as well as training programs through Rise and our partnerships with local and national organizations," they said.

"This peer consultation group provides an opportunity for mental health practitioners and trainees in our region to discuss cases and learn about relevant resources to provide evidence-based treatment to individuals with OCD and OC Spectrum Disorders. Professionals in other healthcare disciplines are welcome. There is no cost associated with the group.

"Evidence-based treatment of these disorders, across the developmental spectrum, will primarily be discussed with reference to cognitive behavioral and relational frame theories, and relevant psychotherapies including

Cont next pg



Psychologists Open Center for Specialized OCD Treatments, cont'd

exposure and response prevention, acceptance and commitment therapy, and habit-reversal therapy, among others."

Dr. Melissa Dufrene is a licensed and Board Certified clinical psychologist. She completed a bachelor of science in psychology at Louisiana State University, and earned her PsyD in clinical psychology from The School of Professional Psychology at Forest Institute in 2012. She has trained in a wide range of facilities, including inpatient and residential hospitals, schools, community health centers, and private practices. Dr. Dufrene gained extensive training and experience in OCD-spectrum disorders during her predoctoral internship at Rogers Memorial Hospital in Wisconsin. While at Rogers, Dr. Dufrene spent significant time working at the residential OCD treatment program.

Dr. Kristin Fitch is a licensed clinical psychologist. For her undergraduate studies, Dr. Fitch attended Boston University, where she earned her bachelor of arts degree in psychology and was introduced to research in OCD. She completed her doctoral studies in clinical psychology at Florida State University. Her graduate research focused on hoarding disorder and obsessive compulsive disorder, including her master's thesis on information processing deficits in nonclinical hoarding and dissertation research evaluating an exposure-based treatment. She received her PhD in 2015 after completing her predoctoral internship at the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System with a specialty in posttraumatic stress disorder. Dr. Fitch specializes in the treatment of OCD, body dysmorphic disorder, hoarding disorder, and illness anxiety disorder using behavioral or exposure-based interventions integrated with mindfulness and acceptance-based approaches.

Drs. Dufrene and Fitch first met as part of a team of Louisiana mental health professionals working together to form an official affiliate of the International OCD Foundation serving the state. The successful creation of OCD Louisiana (<https://ocdlouisiana.org/>) highlighted what the founding members explained what

they already knew—the demand for treatment of OCD and related conditions greatly surpasses the availability of the few professionals in the region trained to work with this population. Drs. Dufrene and Fitch found Dr. Suzanne Chabaud, director of the OCD Institute of Greater New Orleans, and collaborated with other OCD specialists in the region, and founded OCD Louisiana, an official affiliate of the International OCD Foundation.

Act 294 Calls for More Support for School Children Falling Behind

Sen. McMath's bill was signed into Act 294. The new law requires public schools, for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, to provide expanded academic support to each student in grades four through eight who failed to achieve mastery on any statewide assessment administered pursuant to the state's school and district accountability system during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.

Also, the new law requires each city, parish, or other local public school board to develop an education plan and supporting budget to provide expanded academic support to students using federal funds provided for educational relief relative to COVID-19. The new law allows a student identified as needing expanded academic support to be provided accelerated instruction or prioritized placement in a class taught by a teacher labeled as "highly effective."

Online Intensive Group for Young Adults With OCD

This 10-day program is being offered by Drs Melissa Dufrene and Kristin Fitch. Treatment components include exposure and response prevention (ERP), acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and holistic wellness. Participants will receive 20 hours of group intervention that will be supplemented with one-on-one support.

Ages 18-26

January 3-7 and January 10-14, 2022: 10am-12pm
Individual sessions will be scheduled based on client availability.

For more information: www.riseocdandanxiety.com,
office@riseocdandanxiety.sprucecare.com,
504-977-2229



*Participants must be located in Louisiana during all virtual sessions. In some cases, out-of-state participation could be permissible. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and must be brought to the attention of Dr. Dufrene or Dr. Fitch at least one month prior to the start of the group.

LSU's Dr. Calamia Earns Prestigious Early Career Award from National Academy of Neuropsychology, continued

Weight Loss, and Cognitive Decline in Late Life, with co-investigators, Drs. Owen Carmichael and Corby Martin.

Dr. Calamia is a licensed psychologist with a specialty designation in clinical neuropsychology. He provides direct patient care as well as training and supervising graduate students with the neuropsychology emphasis.

The National Academy of Neuropsychology is the professional association for experts in the assessment and treatment of brain injuries and disorders, and its members are at the forefront of cutting-edge research and rehabilitation in the field of brain behavior relationships.

"I was excited," Dr. Calamia said about the honor. "I worked in a neuropsychology lab at LSU as an undergraduate. When that professor retired, I was lucky enough to be able to come back home and start my own lab. Over the years, I've managed to recruit an amazing group of graduate student mentees into my lab," he said. "The work coming out of my lab is all a shared effort and so this award is really theirs as much as it is mine. It's nice to be recognized and I hope this little boost in visibility makes future graduate applicants consider LSU."

Dr. Calamia's contributions include several areas. In partnership with the Institute for Dementia Research & Prevention at Pennington Biomedical Research Center, he and his team have explored predictors of cognitive change in cognitively healthy older adults and individuals with mild cognitive impairment. He also collaborates with the Adult Development and Aging Laboratory led by Dr. Katie Cherry at LSU.

Some of Dr. Calamia's most innovative applications and research efforts involve technology. He and his team are working on creating and validating computerized tools for use within a variety of clinical populations. Currently they are looking at the effectiveness of incorporating a non-immersive virtual reality paradigm into functional rehabilitation for older adults with moderate cognitive impairment.

Dr. Calamia and his team are piloting virtual reality as a quality of life intervention for older adults in assisted living facilities.

"This month we have been going each week to Francois Bend Senior Living in Gonzales to have residents there participate in enjoyable activities using VR headsets," he said.

"There is one resident there who is not from this area originally who cried from being able to go and 'visit' her hometown—in what is basically VR Google Maps—and each week she 'visits other places she has lived and traveled. This is such a neat technology for reminiscence and also escape given how people have been limited in that due to the pandemic. We are planning to expand to other senior living communities," he said.

"We are using standard commercial VR headsets [e.g., Oculus Quest 2, HTC Vive] to give residents in these communities a chance to immerse themselves in a virtual reality experience based on their interest. Right now we are just piloting to look at changes in mood and what they like/don't like about the experiences but we hope to build on this to look at other outcomes. We are also planning to expand this work into other senior living communities," he said.

Dr. Calamia's projects also look at using specific memory scores on list-learning tasks to predict future cognitive decline. His team is examining the impact of natural disaster on health, well-being, and cognition in adults and older adults.

Among other goals, Dr. Calamia and his group are examining the benefit of a brief memory screening program to community dwelling older adults.



One of Dr. Calamia's graduate students, Daniel Weitzner, with a senior citizen from Francois Bend.

Dr. Calamia and his team are piloting virtual reality as a quality of life intervention for older adults in assisted living facilities.

"This is such a neat technology for reminiscence and also escape given how people have been limited in that due to the pandemic. We are planning to expand to other senior living communities," Dr. Calamia said.

(courtesy photo)

LSU's Dr. Calamia Earns Prestigious Early Career Award from National Academy of Neuropsychology, continued

"I have conducted studies examining predictors of cognition functioning and decline in older adults," he explained. "These studies have sought to carefully unpack associations by moving beyond global measures of cognition or other variables and using multiple measures as well as statistical techniques such as structural equation modeling to address gaps in prior research."

Along with co-authors, Calamia has published numerous articles including, "Serial Position Effects on List Learning Tasks in Mild Cognitive Impairment and Alzheimer's Disease," in *Neuropsychology*, and "Social factors that predict cognitive decline in older African American adults," in *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*.

Dr. Calamia is also strongly involved in the study of the psychometrics for neuropsychological tests. Some of this research involves using archival clinical data from the Psychological Services Center and Jefferson Neurobehavioral Group and data collection at the Baton Rouge Clinic.

Current projects in this area include examining associations between measures of noncredible performance and self-report in clinical and forensic settings. He and his team are also examining practice effects on neuropsychological tests of attention, the validity of existing neuropsychological measures in diverse clinical samples, comparing the predictive validity of multiple measures of everyday function in older adults with and without cognitive impairment, and examining psychometric properties of self-report measures across the lifespan.

"A major emphasis of my research," he said, "has been on examining the validity of psychological or neuropsychological measures including the validity of measures in terms of their hypothesized brain-behavior relationships, examining the validity of new scores derived from existing measures or new measures being used in the field, and examining the degree to which different measures of related constructs yield different associations with cognitive functioning," he said.

He and his team members have authored, "The Incremental Validity of Primacy as a Predictor of Everyday Functioning," which is in press at *Neuropsychology*. "Psychometric Properties of the Expanded Version of the Inventory of Depression and Anxiety Symptoms (IDAS-II) in a Sample of Older Adults," is another example of his team's contribution, this one for *Aging & Mental Health*. Advance Online Publication.

Dr. Calamia has conducted meta-analyses on practice effects and test-reliability for a number of popular neuropsychological measures. "Both of these projects involved the integration of a large amount of published literature. The practice effects publication included nearly 1600 individual effect sizes," Dr. Calamia explained.

Findings were published in a prestigious journal read by neuropsychological researchers and clinicians, *The Clinical Neuropsychologist*, and designated for CE credit. The practice effect publication has been cited 334 times since being published.

Other examples of his work include, "Test-Retest Reliability and Practice Effects of the Virtual Environment Grocery Store (VEGS)," in *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology*; "Practical Considerations for Evaluating Reliability in Ambulatory Assessment Studies," in *Psychological Assessment*, and "The Robust Reliability of Neuropsychological Measures: Meta- Analyses of Test-Retest Correlations," in *The Clinical Neuropsychologist*.

Dr. Calamia and his team are also conducting studies examining ethnic and racial disparities in cognitive aging. Collaborators in this area include Dr. Robert Newton at Pennington Biomedical Research Center. Current projects include examining racial differences in the association between trauma symptoms and their impact on cognitive and everyday function. They are also evaluating the utility of a novel cognitive screening measure in a diverse sample of older adults and minority representation in neuropsychological research.

Dr. Calamia has led or been involved in neuroimaging studies using either the lesion method or functional magnetic resonance imaging to study brain-behavior relationships in patient populations. This research has focused on clinical populations with the aim of improving understanding of the neural correlates of emotional and cognitive functioning. "Examining the Neural Correlates of Psychopathology Using a Lesion-Based Approach," in *Neuropsychologia*, is an example.

Throughout the variety of his work, Dr. Calamia is committed to issues around diversity within neuropsychology. He participates in the Society for Black Neuropsychology mentorship program and is on the executive board of the recently formed Queer Neuropsychological Society. He has recruited graduate students from diverse backgrounds into his lab. One of his students led a recent lab publication in the special issue on "Black Lives Matter to Clinical Neuropsychologists" in *The Clinical Neuropsychologist* focused on reporting practices and representation in neuropsychology studies.





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The
Psychology
Times'
BOOKSHELF
Who's Writing What?

*Bedtime Stories from the
Barn*

*Beverly Stubblefield, PhD
Illustrations by James Yanno.*

When everyone has settled down for the night, the horses at the Equestrian Therapy Center talk with each other about their day, the people they've helped, the challenges they've confronted, and the fun they've had. These stories are based on actual experiences. Since they are "straight from the horses' mouths," the author has taken liberty to embellish the facts.— From the introduction.

Dr. Beverly Stubblefield has produced a delightful book based on her experiences in animal-assisted psychotherapy and her years of running The Equestrian Therapy Center in Slidell. The effort weaves together Stubblefield's strong understanding of psychological elements, endearing characters, and her own faith-based approach to life and its challenges.

Bedtime Stories from the Barn is designed to be used with children and their parents and easily accomplishes its goals. The simple, interesting, and engaging stories are written clearly, with often fascinating details. And after all, how many times do we get to ease drop on horses, starting out with JR, Roanie, Skeeter, and Slick, discussing their day and their emotional reactions? Adding to this is an array of beautiful illustrations by James Yanno.

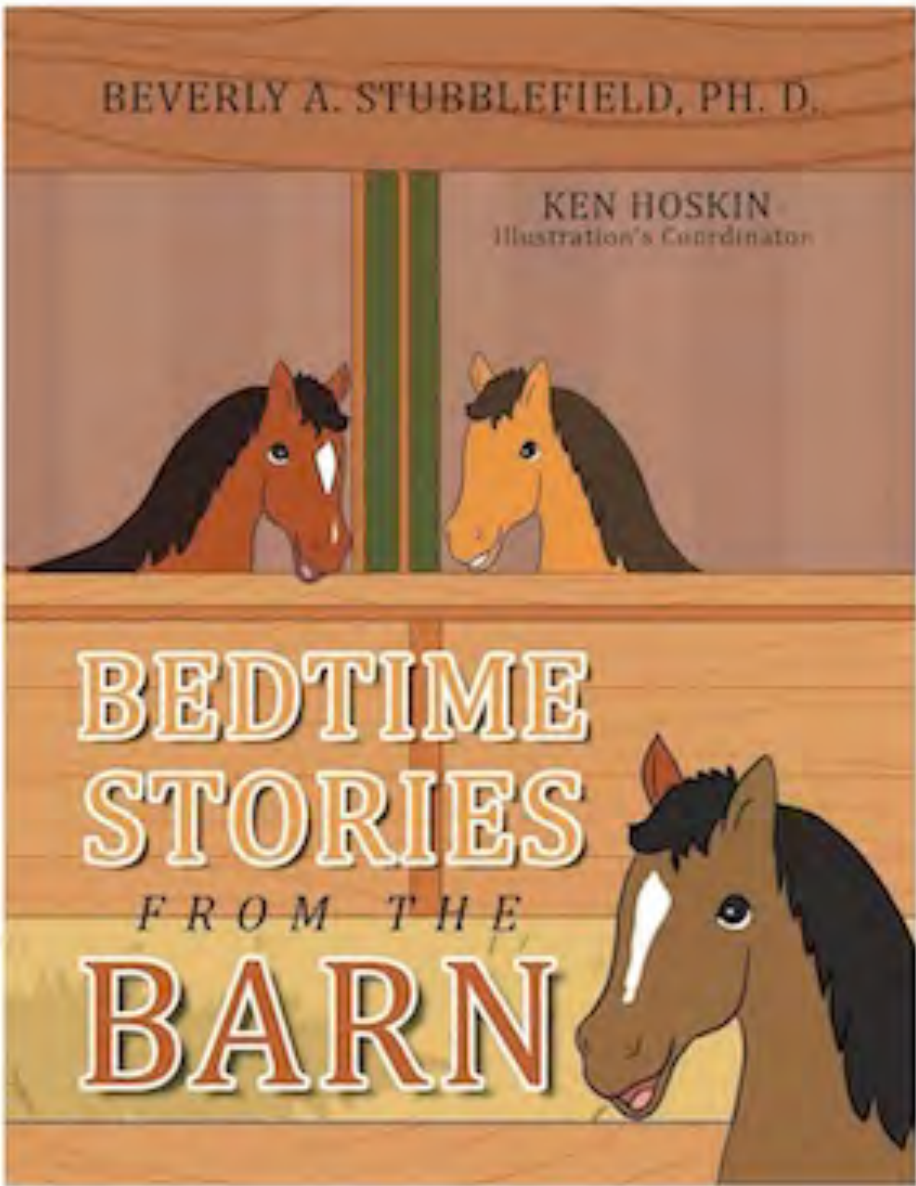
But it would be a mistake to think the book is a simple children's text. Stubblefield directly and often courageously lays out the psychological and spiritual elements of life—loss, fear, trust, disability and much more. Through her characters, the horses, children, and the adults, she blends an array of psychological and spiritual topics.

"These stories are to be read nightly by a parent, caretaker, or loved one to children ages six to twelve. Each story has a psychological lesson based on Biblical principles. Each story is designed to teach coping strategies, to provide insights into emotional and spiritual safety and security, and to promote sweet dreams for all attentive ears." – From the introduction.

Bedtime Stories from the Barn offers valuable bibliotherapy tool for families with children experiencing challenges and trauma. Her heartwarming stories and honest, candid approach can help to open up a family's discussion and support vicarious experiencing of emotional issues for youngsters not yet ready or mature enough to talk their way through their challenges.

Psychological themes include fear, with stories titled, "Confronting Fear," "The Wild Boar," "Midnight Trail Ride," "The Parade", "The Obstacle Course," and "Entangled."

The psychological theme of Caring includes stories such as, "Thirst," "A Winter's Night," "Birthday Celebration," and "Gentle Spirit."



"Special Treatment," "The Jockey," "The Ramp," "Helping Hands," and "Speechless," engage the reader in the theme about disabilities.

And, "Rescued Horses," "Camp Bearable," "Trust," and "The Memorial Service" are stories about grief.

The stories are sweet, tender and often amusing. They are also sometimes quite surprising, especially when someone gets bucked off a horse. What can be a little unexpected is the poignancy of many of the stories, which stems from the fact that the Center involved real people in real lives.

The story "Camp Bearable" deals with children that have lost a loved one during the year. The children attend a camp sponsored by the Hospice Foundation and Stubblefield's horses are part of the activities. "The Foal" tells a story of the birth and new life, and the story, "Confronting Fear," describes the opening of "Horses and Me Day Camp" where children of all ages and backgrounds attend the therapy center and confront their emotions.

Dr. Stubblefield is currently working on the Parental Guide as a companion to the book. The guide will "... help parents and caretakers teach children the understanding of basic psychological principles found in God's Word through the metaphor of the horses' conversations. As with the Proverbs of King Solomon, the purpose of the Parental Guide is to teach wisdom, discipline, and provide insights that will help children live successful lives by discerning and doing what is right, just, and fair according to God's Word. (Proverbs 1:1-4)."

She explains that parents are to read the stories, listen to the children's comments and questions, explore the true meaning of the bedtime stories, and provide understanding and guidance. In addition to Scripture references, psychological principles and techniques are provided in this guide to help parents and children learn effective coping skills to deal with today's issues. A glossary of "horse" words is included to better understand the horses' world the stories tell about. The guide will also be a resource for family therapists to give to their clients to facilitate the therapeutic process at home, explained Dr. Stubblefield.

Inspired by the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association, Dr. Stubblefield opened The Equestrian Therapy Center of Slidell, Louisiana, in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina.



The Psychology Times'
BOOKSHELF, cont'd

Who's Writing What?

Equine assisted psychotherapy helped children and their families overcome fear and anxiety resulting from the hurricane. Her innovation of using horses in the treatment of emotional and behavioral disorders won the New Orleans City Business Innovator award in 2007.

The *Times* reported on Dr. Stubblefield's activities at the center some years ago. "After hurricane Katrina, things were really in a mess," said Dr. Stubblefield, previously explained to the *Times*. "People's lives were in disarray, nothing was the same, and anxiety became a normal feeling." She noted that during those days more children began to experience feelings of insecurity, phobias increased, and families disintegrated.

It was at that same time that Beverly brought into being The Equestrian Therapy Center of Slidell. “Most people are familiar with therapeutic riding for the handicapped,” she said. “But our Center had adapted a different approach—EAGALA—Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association’s nontraditional therapy techniques—for the primary presenting problems of anxiety, mood disorders, marital discord, and pervasive developmental disorders.”

“In Equine Assisted Psychotherapy,” she explained, “horses are used in a similar fashion as in play therapy to improve patients’ well-being and lifestyle functioning.” And she noted, “This type of therapy tends to effect behavior change more rapidly than more traditional forms of psychotherapy.”

The Center dealt with a host of diagnoses, from Asperger's Syndrome and Pick's Disease to Bipolar Disorder and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. The primary goals were to stabilize mood, develop self-esteem, improve social skills, and help individuals accept everyday responsibilities.

According to Beverly, the therapeutic mechanism includes the fact that horses are large animals and some patients may not be comfortable around them initially. "If you can control an 800-pound horse," said Dr. Stubblefield, "you can accomplish anything!"

Overcoming their fear adds confidence and completing tasks and obstacles improves self-esteem.

Other animals were also used with many patients at the Center. "People respond differently to the cats and dog depending upon their age and diagnosis," she said.

Parents and children reported that equestrian therapy helped improve self-efficacy, coping abilities, behavior problems, and stress. The horse work teaches characteristics like trust, loyalty, responsibility, and friendship. “Self-esteem is built when one overcomes fears and challenges presented with the horses,” she said. “These herd animals simulate human social groups so social skills, cooperation, and patience are dynamic in equine assisted psychotherapy.”

Young campers have experienced good success in the program, said Beverly. “One camper reported it this way. ‘In horse camp I learned to fish, I learned how to ride horses, I don’t think about stuff anymore. I’m happy that I’m not thinking about stuff anymore and I like school much more.’ Her mother reported that she has learned to control her anxiety and not become upset and uncontrollable.”

“A young man who developed Trichotillomania and fear of storms spontaneously reported in camp this summer that he is no longer afraid of storms. He told us, ‘The horses taught me how to not be afraid.’

In 2016, Dr. Stubblefield, a respected member of the Louisiana psychology community and past member of the state psychology board, was netted in to a DOJ "take down," surrounding the high profile Medicare fraud case against Mississippi psychologist Dr. Rodney Hesson. The federal prosecutors argued that Hesson's services were fraudulent because the service was a screening, because it was not medically necessary, and because the time the psychologist provided in face-to- face client contact was exaggerated.

As an employee at Hesson's firm, Dr. Stubblefield's assets were seized, and she was forced into a plea agreement.

She has stated to the *Times* that it was her strong faith that sustained her through the experience.

Dr. Stubblefield received her Ph. D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Mississippi. She also holds a Diploma in Biblical Studies from Samford University. After 30 years of clinical practice, Dr. Stubblefield is now retired and living with her husband Burt Kemp in rural North Mississippi, where she continues to enjoy writing, riding horses, and playing the organ for church.

Dr. Beverly Stubblefield has produced a delightful book based on her experiences in animal-assisted psychotherapy and her years of running The Equestrian Therapy Center in Slidell.

*"These stories are to be read
nightly by a parent,
caretaker, or loved one to
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Each story has a psychological lesson based on Biblical principles. Each story is designed to teach coping strategies, to provide insights into emotional and spiritual safety and security, and to promote sweet dreams for all attentive ears." – From the introduction.

Right: Illustration by James Yanno.



A Shrink at the Flicks

Atonement A Review

by Alvin G. Burstein, PhD

This 2007 film begins in pre-World War II Britain. It has two foci of action. One is Briony Tallis, who bookends the film, appearing first as a thirteen-year-old, precociously involved in writing a play, and again, three or four decades later, as an established writer. She is being interviewed about her latest book, an autobiography, which she characterizes as being her *last* book. She explains the characterization by confessing that her writing ability is being eroded by a series of small, untreatable strokes.

The second focus of action is a struggle by two lovers to reunite. Briony’s older sister, Celia, some five years older, and Robbie, the son of the Tallis’ housekeeper, are star-crossed lovers. Their relationship is ruptured when Robbie is falsely accused of sexually molesting Lola Quincey, a fifteen-year-old cousin visiting the Tallis sisters. The accusation is based on Briony’s insistence that she was an eye-witness of Robbie’s attack on Lola, and her persuading Lola, confused and uncertain, to agree with her.

Briony’s actions have complex determinants. She has misinterpreted some of her earlier observations of Robbie and Celia at poolside as rough sex. She has read—and delivered—a crudely sexual note from Robbie to Celia, mistakenly substituted by him for a more proper apology for his pool-side behavior. She has caught the couple *in flagrante delicto* after their relationship has become explicitly passionate. And,

Guest Columnist,
Dr. Alvin Burstein

Burstein, a psychologist and psychoanalyst, is a professor emeritus at the University of Tennessee and a faculty member of the New Orleans-Birmingham Psychoanalytic Center with numerous scholarly works to his credit. He is also a member of Inklings, a Mandeville critique group that meets weekly to review its members’ imaginative writings. Burstein has published flash fiction and autobiographical pieces in e-zines;



courtesy photo

The Owl, his first novelette, is available at Amazon. He is, in addition to being a movie fan, a committed Francophile, unsurprisingly a lover of fine cheese and wine, and an unrepentant cruciverbalist.



perhaps centrally, Briony has a crush on Robbie that is unreciprocated. And finally, there are unobvious reverberations of “upstairs/downstairs” in the rush to judgment about Robbie.

The upshot is that Robbie is sent to prison for a term that is commuted when, abandoning his college ambitions, he joins the army and is swept up into the battles that eventuate in the British evacuation at Dunkirk.

We follow Robbie as he slogs through graphic battlefield horrors and struggles to get back home, and Celia and Briony as they pursue separate careers as army nurses. Celia, unable to forgive her sister for her role in Robbie’s condemnation, is waiting, hope against hope, for his return from the war; Briony, finally coming to realize that she has wrongfully accused her sister’s lover, is searching for a means of atonement.

The actors’ performances are compelling. The grit and drama of the battlefield gripping. The graphic evocation of the drama of Dunkirk deeply moving. The device of following Briony and her struggles with guilt from the frailties of youth to those of an adulthood crumbling into brain disorder is remarkable.

There is a surprising twist in the resolution of the swirling complexities around Briony’s quest for atonement that I will not spoil by detailing. You can find the film on Amazon, Apple + and other streaming sites. It is worth watching.

Stress Solutions

by Susan Andrews, PhD

Stress and Your Immune System During the Pandemic

Keeping our immune system strong has always been important. However, it has become critical in this age of a 2-year pandemic. While this pandemic appears to be winding down, who knows what might be waiting in the wings.

When we are stressed, our immune system's ability to fight off antigens is reduced making us more susceptible to infection. How does this happen? The stress hormone, corticosteroid, works to suppress the immune system by lowering the number of lymphocytes. Corticosteroid can also increase active immunosuppressive mechanisms, like regulatory T cells. Chronic stress dysregulates immune function by increasing proinflammatory responses.

There is a big difference between *chronic* stress and *short-term* stress. Short-term stress is the fight-or-flight response lasting minutes to hours. It is a response to an immediate threat. The healthy nervous system will self-regulate by reducing the effects of the fight-or-flight response as soon as the immediate threat is gone. Research has shown the value of short-term stress as a way of mobilizing bodily resources and stimulating immune activity. One particular set of studies done at Stanford University School of Medicine by Dr. Firdaus Dhabhar tracked the paths of key immune cells in response to short-term stress in rats. The hormones that were triggered enhanced the rats' immune responsiveness during the fight-or-flight response. Their findings paint a better picture of how our minds influence immune activity.

Chronic stress, or long-term stress, can suppress our immune system. People with weak immune systems need to pay particular attention to their stress and to ways to systematically reduce it. Signs of a weak immune system include:

- Frequent colds or infections
- Digestive problems
- Delayed wound healing
- Skin infections
- Fatigue
- Blood Disorder or an autoimmune disease

Anxiety and its side-kick, chronic stress, are especially harmful to the immune system. If you recognize that your nervous system reacts quickly with an anxiety or stress response, it is time to pay attention to ways to reduce your stress. A busy mind that never stops or a busy schedule or chronic worry all can lead to chronic stress. One of the most effective ways to manage the problem is to take frequent breaks during the day to stop the mental activity and consequent cortisol production. As a great teacher once said when asked what is the best way to reduce stress: "breathe!"



Dr. Susan Andrews is a Clinical Neuropsychologist, an award-winning writer/author (her book Stress Solutions for Pregnant Moms, published in 2013, has been translated into Chinese,) and 2016 Distinguished Psychologist of the Louisiana Psychological Association.

Up-Coming Events

LPA Hosts USC's Dr. Lopez at Fall/Winter Workshop, Dec 3

The Louisiana Psychological Association will host a blended in-person/virtual LPA 2021 Fall/Winter Workshop for Friday, December 3rd from 8 am to 4:15 pm at the Sheraton Metairie Galleria. The event will provide 7-1/2 hours of continuing education including two hours in ethics.

The keynote speaker, delivering *The Janet & Lee Matthews Invited Address: "Shifting Cultural Lenses in Clinical Practice,"* will be Dr. Steve Lopez, professor of psychology at University of Southern California. Dr. Lopez directs the culture and mental health lab at USC Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences.

The day's training will begin with the presentations in the LPA Science Café, directed by Dr. Amanda Raines. Participants will learn about basic and applied psychological science from researchers around the state, while enjoying breakfast in person or virtually.

Following the keynote speaker, participants will break into experiential learning groups and participate in peer-based problem solving for various specialty areas in psychology, an activity called Lunch and Learn.

The day concludes with a Roundtable Discussion on "Ethical Practice Under COVID-19."

The keynote address by Dr. Lopez will provide contrast to a group-based approach to cultural competence. Dr. Lopez will present a model of cultural competence that encourages clinicians to consider one's patient's social world and individual experience. In addition, Dr. Lopez will identify clinician's behaviors that reflect our model which we refer to as Shifting Cultural Lenses. Dr. Lopez will illustrate key aspects of the model with a case of a young Latinx boy with autism spectrum disorder.

Dr. Steven López has dedicated his 39-year career as an academic clinical psychologist to improving mental health services for the Latinx community. He has developed programs to teach people in Mexico and the United States to identify the early signs of serious mental illness so they can receive prompt care. He has taught mental health professionals to work effectively with culturally diverse communities, especially Latinx communities. And for 15 years, he directed a research training program in Mexico in which over 100 students from across the United States participated. In all his efforts, he strives to promote a conversation about mental health, the role of culture, and effective care.

PTR and Dr. Simoneaux Address Risk Assessment December 3 Webinar

On December 3, 8:30 am to 12:45 pm, John Simoneaux, PhD, Professional Training Resources of Pineville Louisiana, will present the webinar, "Predicting Danger: Evidence Based Strategies." Cost is \$95 and available for four hours of continuing education for psychologists and other professionals.

Dr. Simoneaux will:

- Explain the current evidence-based, scientific literature involving the prediction of future violence.

Cont next pg

Up-Coming Events

PTR and Dr. Simoneaux Address Risk Assessment, continued

- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of clinical data-gathering versus the use of actuarially-derived information in predicting dangerousness.
- Demonstrate the range of “tests” designed to predict future violence and explain how to decide which instrument is best for specific clinical questions
- Analyze and assess the dangers and risks associated with short-sighted predictions of violence (or not) by mental health professionals.
- Design strategies for communicating conclusions about violence risk to clients and other professionals

The agenda includes: What science tells us about risk assessment; Being right (and wrong) about risk assessment; How to collect data about risk – what to look for; Clinical prediction versus actuarial prediction; the Available instruments for assessing risk; Risk assessment tools – the good and the bad; Mistakes made by mental health professionals in predicting danger; and Talking to clients and other professionals about risk

Dr. Simoneaux has presented many times over the years on Risk Assessment and the Prediction of Danger. He has said that as a psychologist he feels that this is a topic that should be a professional requirement. Mental Health professionals are not statistically good at predicting danger and it is his hope that this information will be helpful in changing that, he explained.

LSBEP Presents First CE Webinar on December 10

On December 10, 10:30 am to 12:30 pm, the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists will offer a continuing education event.

The topic is, "Multicultural and ethical issues in psychology: The example of neuropsychological assessment of Spanish speakers." The event will be held live on Zoom. The presentation will be by Antonio E. Puente, Ph.D.

According to the course description, "The demographics of professional psychology in the US are becoming increasingly disconnected from the demographics of the population it seeks to understand and serve. This disparity can result in a series of clinical and ethical challenges ranging from misdiagnosing to questions of professional competence. Using the example of neuropsychological testing of Hispanics (including death penalty situations) these challenges will be considered and mitigation strategies will be presented.

Objectives include: 1. Participants will understand the demographics of both professional psychology and the United States. 2. Participants will appreciate the difficulties and their potential solutions to the emerging disparity. 3. Participants will become more understanding of how to both handle these situations and how to help prepare the field for a future that will be drastically different than psychology has prepared for.

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