



A reconnaissance Marine with landing team of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. (Photo by Cpl. Gene Allen Ainsworth, III)

Veterans' Suicide Rates Remain High

This Department of Veterans Affairs published it's 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report noting a slight decrease in Veteran suicide deaths and suicide rates during the two most recent years for which mortality data is available, 2019 and 2020. Researchers said that in 2020, there were 6,146 Veteran suicide deaths,

which was 343 fewer than in 2019. The unadjusted rate of suicide in 2020 among U.S. Veterans was 31.7 per 100,000.

According to the researchers, from 2001 through 2020, suicide rates of Veterans exceeded those of non-Veteran U.S. adults. The difference was largest in 2017, when the Veteran rate was 66.2% higher.

Cont pg 11

APA's "Stress in America" Researchers Find Dissatisfaction, Stress

In their annual "Stress in America" survey, the American Psychological Association' (APA) has found deep dissatisfaction and stress related to the state of the country and the government.

According to the APA press release, the researchers found that 70% of adults do not think people in the government care about them and 64% said they felt their rights are under attack.

Almost half of adults (45%) said they do not feel protected by the laws in the United States and more than a third (38%) said the state of the nation has made them consider moving to a different country, said APA.

More than three-quarters (76%) said that the future of our nation is a significant source of stress in their lives, while 68% said this is the lowest point in our nation's history that they can remember.

A significant majority noted stress from inflation (83%), violence and crime (75%), the current political climate (66%), and the racial climate (62%) as major sources of stress.

A total of 27% reporting that most days they are so stressed they cannot function.

Cont pg 3

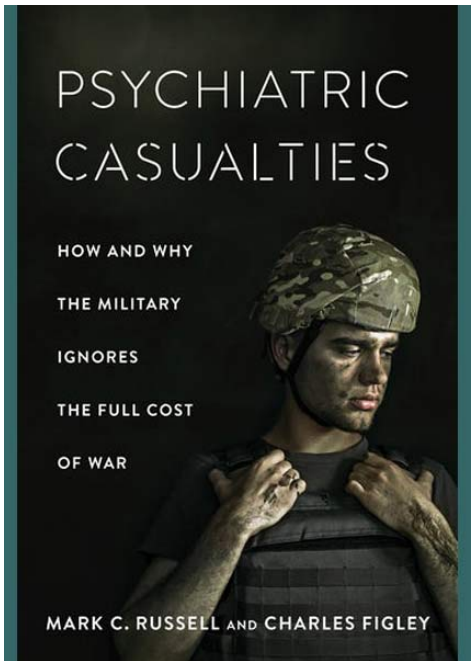
Dr. John Simoneaux to Speak on Law, Ethics and Mental Health

Forensic and clinical psychologist, Dr. John Simoneaux, will speak about the ethical interface between Louisiana law and mental health, on Friday, November 18, 2022, from 8 am to 5 pm for the Louisiana Psychological Association Fall/Winter Workshop. "This year's workshop provides a deep dive into ethics and risk management for psychologists," said officials. Presenting also is attorney William "Chuck" Credo III, Esq. who will speak on the protective custody process, legislative updates, and liability.

Dr. Simoneaux will be helping psychologists understand how to communicate with attorneys and judges in a way that ensures orders from the court appointing psychologists to serve as experts are correctly written, said association officials.

Dr. Simoneaux said he will be providing psychology-specific information about "dealing with the courts, navigating dangerous legal landmines, and avoiding calamities, etc."

Cont pg 9



INSIDE

Gov. Edwards Makes
Appointments
– Page 3

Department of Health Reviews
Successes & Plans for 2023
– Page 4

From the Minutes
– Page 5

EHCL Conference on Coastal
Resiliency– Page 6

Dr. Andrews' Stress
Solutions & Margaret Mead
– Page 6

Todd on New AFCC
Guidelines– Page 8

Bookshelf
– Page 13

Dr. Burstein's Review
– Page 14

Feature: "10 Years Ago"
– Page 15



Editorial Page – Opinions

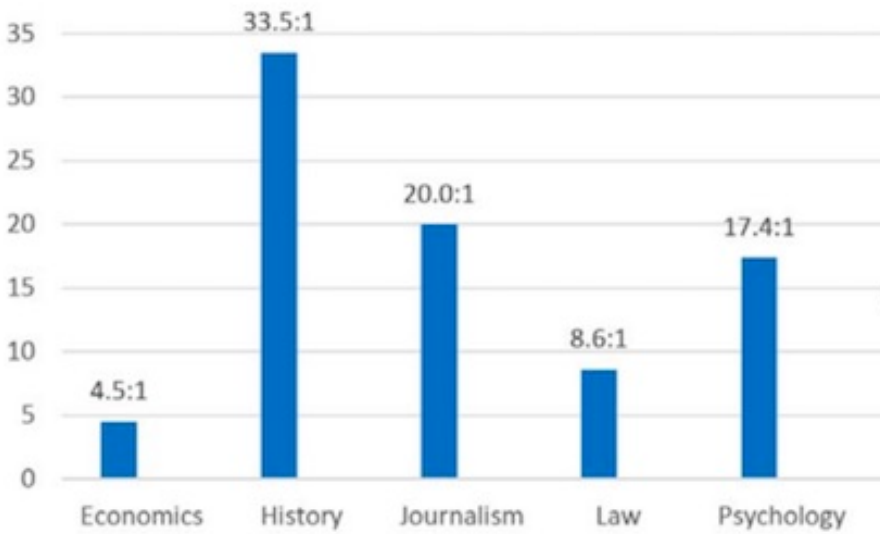
Political Diversity by J. Nelson

The country is in quite a tizzy. Even the Stress in America survey is showing that most people are fed up, stressed out, and down on government. Being the one profession that might be able to help resolve conflicts of this type and magnitude, does psychology have a role in this? I think yes. But only if we make a paradigm shift.

In an article, "Faculty Voter Registration in Economics, History, Journalism, Law, and Psychology," in *Econ Journal Watch*, some economists got together and figured out what we already know— but it is shocking anyway. The faculty ratio of Democrats to Republicans in psychology is 17.4 to 1. Sadly, journalism is even worse at 20 to 1.

Some years back, a study by Yoel Inbar & Joris Lammers, found that psychology is predominately liberal. Only six percent described themselves as conservative “overall.” The report was picked up by the media which emphasized the juicy news that psychologists discriminate against their conservative colleagues, and those colleagues are hiding in the closet.

Figure 2. D:R ratios in the five fields



This lack of diversity of values leads to a homogeneous, groupthink culture and a tendency toward overconfidence in group judgment. Limited political diversity, just like limited ethnic/racial diversity in a group, reeks havoc on quality decision-making. Psychologists are well versed in this dynamic—at least when it comes to everybody else.

But we are just as vulnerable to the unavoidable traps of social judgment: ignoring base-rates, being misled by compelling details, my side bias, selective attention, and so on.

When problems are complex, when the issue in front of our nose clashes with our preexisting beliefs, when time separates our dots, when we are tired, and so on, we are prone to flawed judgment. Nobel Prize winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman would probably tell us that we are influenced by “WYSIATI” – What You See Is All There Is.

The most common human judgment error is probably overconfidence. Even when we are 98 percent sure that we are correct, we are only right 68 percent of the time.

Are we in an age of overconfidence? Stanley Silverman, an IO psychologist, might say so. “Arrogance has run amok lately,” he wrote in, “Arrogance: A Formula for Leadership Failure.” He said that we are in an “age of arrogance” which promotes a “weak learning orientation.”

Psychology’s liberal worldview is certainly an honorable one: concern for the well-being and dignity of all people, compassion for those in need, openness, tolerance, appreciation of intellectual pursuits. But at 94 percent, can we prove we aren’t neck deep in groupthink?

Groupthink. The warm, comforting molasses of friends who feel and think exactly the way we do, who support us and never criticize. To know we’ll be always validated, that we and our best friends are on the right side of things. That all is well in Mudville. That our daddy’s rich and our mama’s good looking.

The military suicide rate is a serious concern. Our returning servicemen and servicewomen say we don’t get it. “The public does not understand the problems faced by those in the military or their families,” 84 percent of the veterans say.

Could undiagnosed groupthink account for problems that appear to have no straightforward answer? “The amount of fundamental discovery is staggering, and medical journals are chocked with spectacular science,” writes Julio Licinio, MD, editor of *Molecular Psychiatry*. “Paradoxically, research advances have not led to new cures,” he writes in an editorial.

Research doesn’t lead to cures? Imagine that.

[Julie Nelson is a licensed psychologist, journalist, 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:
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APA's "Stress in America"
Researchers Find Dissatisfaction, Stress continued

The nationwide survey was conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of APA.

Seventy-five percent of Black adults pointed to the racial climate in the U.S. as a significant source of stress, while 70% of Latino/a adults, 69% of Asian adults and 56% of white adults reported the same, said the researchers.

"Furthermore, Latinas were most likely, among racial/ethnic groups, to cite significant sources of stress related to violence, including violence and crime (89% Latinas; 80% Black women; 79% Asian women; 77% Latinos; 75% Black men; 73% white women; 72% white men; 70% Asian men), mass shootings (89% Latinas; 78% Latinos; 77% Black women; 77% Asian women; 73% white women; 71% Black men; 67% Asian men; 66% white men) and gun violence (87% Latinas; 83% Black women; 77% Asian women; 76% Latinos; 75% Black men; 69% white women; 68% white men; 63% Asian men).

"Adults reported that stress has had an impact on their health; 76% of adults reported they had experienced at least one symptom in the last month as a result of stress—such as headache (38%), fatigue (35%), feeling nervous or anxious (34%) and feeling depressed or sad (33%). Seven in 10 adults (72%) experienced additional symptoms in the last month, including feeling overwhelmed (33%), experiencing changes in sleeping habits (32%), and/or worrying constantly (30%).

"Various disparities in stressors emerged among population subgroups. For example, 72% of the members of the LGBTQIA+ community reported feeling as if their rights are under attack, which is a higher proportion than non-LGBTQIA+ adults (64%). Younger adult women (ages 18 to 34) were more likely to report that most days their stress is completely overwhelming, in comparison with older women (62% vs. 48% 35–44; 27% 45–64; 9% 65+) and men ages 35 or older (62% vs. 48% 35–44; 21% 45–64; 8% 65+)," noted the report.

"It's clear that the impacts of uncontrollable stressors are profound for most Americans, but psychological science shows us that there are effective ways to talk about and cope with this type of stress," said Arthur C. Evans Jr., PhD, APA's chief executive officer. "Focusing on accomplishing goals that are in our control can help prevent our minds from getting overwhelmed by the many uncertainties in life. From using our breathing to slow racing thoughts, to intentionally limiting our social media consumption, or exercising our right to vote, action can be extremely empowering," he said.

"With so many people suffering health effects from these unrelenting external stressors, it's important that all health care providers understand the research and offer their patients evidence-based techniques to reduce the effects of extreme stress and build their resilience," said Evans.

The 2022 Stress in America™ survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of the APA between Aug. 18 and Sept. 2, 2022, and included 3,192 adults age 18+ who reside in the U.S. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish, according to APA.

Data are weighted where necessary to reflect their proportions in the population based on the 2021 Current Population Survey (CPS) by the U.S. Census Bureau. Weighting variables included age by gender, race/ethnicity, education, region, household income and time spent online, said APA.

More information on the survey findings and how to handle stress related to uncertainty is available from APA at www.stressinamerica.org (<http://www.stressinamerica.org>).

Gov. Makes Oct. Board Appointments

In October, Gov. Edwards announced his appointments to boards and commissions. Among those were:

Darce B. Byrd of Lafayette was appointed to the Acadiana Area Human Services District Governing Board. Ms. Byrd is coordinator of the Lafayette Family Preservation Court. She will serve as parent, consumer, or advocate in the field of substance-related and addictive disorders.

The Acadiana Area Human Services District (AAHSD) was created by the Louisiana State Legislature to provide administration, management, and operation of behavioral health (addictive disorders and mental health) and developmental disabilities services to the residents of Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, and Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin and Vermilion parishes.

Kathy Sheppard of Rayville was appointed to the Louisiana D.A.R.E. Advisory Board. Ms. Sheppard is the D.A.R.E. officer and a deputy sheriff with the Richland Parish Sheriff's Office. She will serve as president of the Louisiana D.A.R.E. Officers' Association.

The Louisiana D.A.R.E. Advisory Board is charged with developing, promoting, monitoring, and evaluating the DARE program throughout the state. The board serves as an advisory body to the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Criminal Justice in this respect.

Anthony T. LaCour Jr. of Natchitoches was appointed to the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council. Mr. LaCour is the managing member of A&G Computer Services LLC. He will serve at large and represent small business interests.



State & National News

Louisiana Department of Health Reports Successes, Launches New Business Plan and Initiatives

On October 31, the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) released its outcomes report from its fiscal year (FY) 2022 business plan, and its second business plan, detailing key initiatives and policy goals for FY 2023.

According to the outcomes report for the FY 2022 business plan, LDH successfully completed 95% of all deliverables and met 88% of its goals. The FY 2023 business plan titled “Invest: Teaming Up for a Stronger LDH and a Healthier Louisiana,” contains 18 initiatives, 45 goals and 253 deliverables under five major commitments that will measure progress and provide accountability to Louisiana residents and stakeholders.

The plan addresses preventative health, workforce expansion and diversification, transparency and accountability, and many more health issues facing Louisianans, said the announcement.

“I am proud to see the progress made at the Louisiana Department of Health over the last year, and I appreciate the effort to measure and report that progress in an understandable and transparent way,” said Gov. John Bel Edwards.

“Dr. Phillips and her team are continuing the Department’s improvements with the launch of their new business plan, which will deliver real results for Louisianans, including expanded and improved quality of healthcare outcomes and services. I appreciate the commitment to making us a stronger and healthier state.”

“After closing out a highly successful year of work, #TeamLDH has laid the groundwork for an even more promising 2023,” said Secretary Phillips.

“Strategic planning by the agency and its community partners and stakeholders delivers measurable results. Our FY 2023 business plan will advance our efforts in vital areas, including behavioral, maternal, and dental health; chronic disease; workforce expansion and diversification; and transparency and accountability.”

The FY 2023 plan relies on partnerships with Louisiana schools and institutions of higher education to expand and diversify Louisiana’s healthcare workforce; as well as collaboration with local providers to further move the needle on chronic conditions like colorectal cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure, while also targeting cardiovascular disease, asthma, and Sickle Cell Disease.

LDH also will leverage relationships with nonprofit organizations and other state agencies to increase access to nutritious foods and safe physical activity, and expand Medicaid access to smoking cessation programs for those seeking to quit.

Additionally, the FY 2023 business plan initiatives will include continued



collaboration with legislators and providers to expand behavioral health crisis intervention services, now in place for adults, to also encompass adolescents.

In the announcement, authors noted that LDH is committed to protecting and promoting health across the lifespan of all Louisianans, a mission that aligns with the World Health Organization’s definition of health: “a state of complete mental, physical, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

Included in the announcement were:

“The new 988 suicide prevention hotline offers a critical source of support 24/7, free of charge, but too many Louisiana residents remain unaware of this crucial resource. As residents are struggling more than ever with mental health needs, I am pleased that LDH will focus on promoting this important tool, with plans to launch a media campaign aimed at reaching some of our most vulnerable Louisianans.” — Tonja Myles, Certified Peer Support Specialist, Set Free Indeed Ministry.

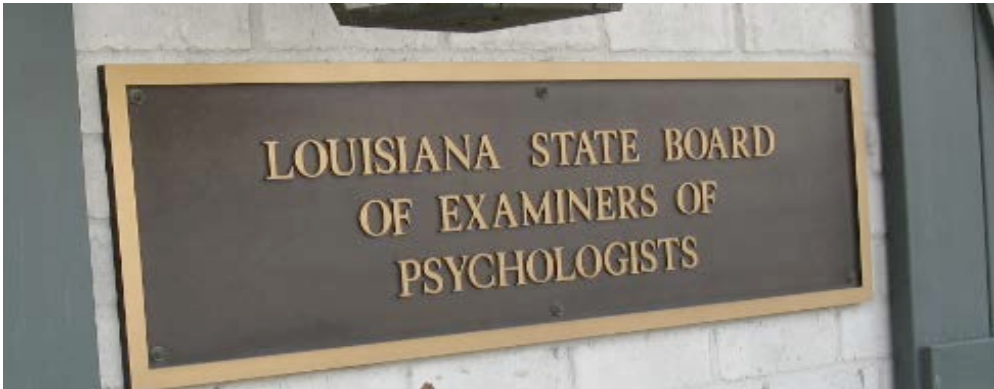
“Young people across our state and country are struggling with mental health issues, especially since the start of the pandemic. I am heartened that the Louisiana Department of Health is committed to expanding behavioral health crisis intervention services to encompass adolescents. This comprehensive, community-based crisis care system represents a substantial move in the right direction in terms of how we view mental health needs, as well as how we address those needs. It is essential to expand and improve behavioral health services for youth, and I applaud LDH for prioritizing

these needs. — Susan East Nelson, J.D., Executive Director of the Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families.

“Expanding behavioral health crisis intervention services to include adolescents is essential to promoting overall health and improving quality of life in Louisiana. This represents the next wave of a culture change that began with implementing a crisis care response system for adults. That important culture change will extend to our adolescents, providing Louisiana youth with appropriate care while continuing to lessen our reliance on police and emergency departments for behavioral health needs. Our state’s adolescents and teens were struggling with mental health issues and substance use disorders prior to the pandemic. A growing mental health crisis among youth, both nationwide and in Louisiana, has expanded the need for crisis support services for our young people. I applaud LDH’s decision to develop a framework for expanding access to community-based crisis care to young Louisiana residents.” — Jan Tarantino, LMSW, RHD Regional Director, Behavioral Health and Housing Division, Resources for Human Development, Inc.

The Louisiana Department of Health includes the Office of Public Health, Office of Aging & Adult Services, Office of Behavioral Health, Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, and Healthy Louisiana (Medicaid).

To learn more, visit www.ldh.la.gov



From the Minutes
Selected Items from August 2022 Minutes of
the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of
Psychologists (LSBEP)

Thursday, August 26, 2022
Posted October, 2022

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

c. Steps Toward Licensure (updated) - Dr. Moore recommended a revision to the Steps Toward Licensure to add the completion of a candidates Declaration of Competencies as a step, since it is and has been the practice of the Board to require such declaration. A draft with this revision was presented to the Board. The Board reviewed this form in its entirety and determined that the step to require a copy of the doctoral dissertation was not necessary for the licensing process. Dr. Moore moved in favor of adopting revisions to the Steps Toward Licensure to add the Declaration of Competencies as a step and remove the requirement to provide a copy of the title page of the Doctoral Dissertation. The Board discussed the motion, the motion being put to a vote failed as follows: In favor: (2) Moore, and Holcomb; Against: (0); Abstained: (2) Harness and Sam; Absent: (2) Gormanous and McNeely. Dr. Harness acknowledged a misunderstanding of the motion and requested reconsideration of Dr. Moore's motion. The Board again discussed the motion presented by Dr. Moore with clarification that the board would collect the information on the application, but would not collect separate documentation of the doctoral dissertation. The motion then passed by roll call vote as follows: In favor: (3) Moore, Harness, and Holcomb; Against: (0); Abstained: (1) Sam; Absent: (2) Gormanous and McNeely.

2. Rulemaking Update: (a. Fiscal Impact Statement, b. Notice of Intent, c. Public Outreach, d. Confirm hearing date/time) - Ms. Monic updated the Board on the status of the Fiscal Impact Statements filed with the Legislative Fiscal Office on August 19, 2022, explaining that the rules were divided into four filings according to subject including, 1. Registration of Assistants & Fees, 2. Continuing Education, Exemptions and Fees, 3. Ethical Standards for Licensed Specialists in School Psychology, and 4. Supervision, Training, Credentials, Public Information and Technical revisions. Ms. Monic reported that Dr. Gormanous requested that the Board reconsider the decision of July 15, 2022 to schedule a hearing. The Board discussed Dr. Gormanous' request and affirmed their intent to schedule a hearing on the substantive rules. Ms. Monic also discussed public outreach on the rules and provided resources previously developed for presentation to the Louisiana Psychological Association. Dr. Moore charged Board members with reviewing the information and returning the item for discussion on public outreach on September 23, 2022.

3. ASPPB 62nd Annual Meeting of Delegates, Oxon Hill, Maryland, October 26-30, 2022 a. Confirm Attendees for Annual Meting - The Board discussed and confirmed attendance, including approving travel and hotel accommodations according to State Travel Policy PPM 49 adopted by LSBEP for Dr. Gormanous, Dr. Harness, Dr. Sam and Ms. Monic.

c. Request for Presenters 1.5 hour presentation: “Defining the Regulatory Role in Social Justice Matters” - The Board discussed the request from ASPPB for a presenter on the topic “Defining the Regulatory Role in Social Justice Matters” Dr. Sam volunteered to do the presentation since this was within her wheelhouse. A discussion was had about deadlines for the presentation and whether the Board would need to review the presentation, or if a disclosure statement citing that the presentation was her personal views, rather than the views of the Board was sufficient. Ms. Monic stated she was not sure if there was a conflict with the Code of Governmental Ethics where the Board funded the trip for a board member and the board member provided an independent presentation, but would inquire further.

4. POLICY AMENDMENTS: a. Section 1002: Committees (i. Certifying/Credentialing & Ethics Code Committee: Charge - study, discuss, prepare, deliberate, address & embed long range implications in the context of protecting the public. (a). Whether or not to adopt the new APA Code, implications & relevant issues like adoption by reference or by codifying, in entirety or modified, timetable & transition, etc. (b). Whether or not to certify or credential persons with master’s degrees in health service psychology & general applied psychology, etc. (c). Committee Appointments if committee is established. - The Board reviewed this item requested to be docketed by Dr. Gormanous. The Board briefly discussed the proposed committee. Dr. Holcomb moved that the matter be tabled until October because he was not comfortable discussing or making assumptions about Dr. Gormanous' intent. The Board discussed this motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote of the members present as follows: In favor: (4) Moore, Harness, Sam and Holcomb; Against: (0); Abstained: (0); Absent: (2) Gormanous and McNeely.

Items b. through l. The Board reviewed and discussed the remaining policy items docketed as: b. Section 1010. Board Meetings (Update Re Board Meeting Dates)

Section 1015. American's With Disabilities Act, ADA Compliance (NEW)
Section 3000. Oral Examination Practices and Procedures Policy (T.S. Sam Update)
Section 1002.A. and 3007: Pre-application Determination review procedures (NEW)
Section 5007. Website Posting Requirements (NEW)
Section 5009. Agency Reporting Requirements (NEW)
Section 5011. Data Sanitization Policy (adopted 7/23/2022)
Section 7000. Complaints Committee: Delegation of Authority
Section 7004. Summary Suspension Delegation of Authority and Procedures

Noting that the sections were not consecutively lettered an "c" and "j" were missing, Dr. Moore moved in favor of adopting b. Section 1010. Board Meetings (Update Re Board Meeting Dates) as written; d. Section 1015. American's With Disabilities Act, ADA Compliance (NEW) with an amendment to delegate the Executive Director as the ADA Coordinator responsible for facilitating the interactive, evaluation process relative to any request for accommodation for employees, applicants for employment, an applicant or candidate for licensure, licensees, and members of the general public and the Board's General Counsel as the ADA Coordinator responsible for facilitating the interactive, evaluation process relative to any request for accommodation for any Board Member; f. Section 1002.A. and 3007: Pre-application Determination review procedures (NEW); g. Section 5007. Website Posting Requirements (NEW); h. Section 5009. Agency Reporting Requirements (NEW); i. Section 5011. Data Sanitization Policy (adopted 7/23/2022); k. Section 7000. Complaints Committee: Delegation of Authority; and l. Section 7004. Summary Suspension Delegation of Authority and Procedures.

5. Petition for Rule Change LAC:46:LXIII.Chapter 15, Section 1501.C. by LA Association for Psychological Science (LASP), Marc Zimmermann, Ph.D. (La R.S. 42.14.D) - The Board discussed the petition from Dr. Marc Zimmermann on behalf of LAPS dated August 11, 2022, requesting a rule change to LAC:46:LXIII.Chapter 15, Section 1501.C. from the current language which reads, "*Unless otherwise provided by law, the board may delegate its authority and responsibility under these rules to a committee of one or more board members, to a hearing officer, or to other persons.*" to the following: "Unless otherwise provided by law, the board may delegate its authority and responsibility under these rules to an examiner, who shall be a psychologist, and who shall, when necessary, recruit community psychologist volunteers, as subject matter experts, as necessary, to

From the Minutes

Continued

review validity of complaints and participate in investigations as needed." The Board discussed this request and concluded that current law adequately and lawfully covers delegations for the purpose of facilitating Chapter 15 complaint investigations and is not aware of any issue or legal requirement that the requested change would address. Following this discussion, Dr. T. Shavaun Sam moved that there be no changes to the rules based the request by LA Association for Psychological Science (LASP) and Marc Zimmermann, Ph.D.

6. Dismissal of Gregory Gormanous v Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists Et Al. Case No. 1:22-Cv-01425
- Ms. Monic reported that Dr. Gormanous requested this matter be formally docketed on the agenda. Dr. Sam reported that Dr. Gormanous wanted clarification that he requested the dismissal of the lawsuit.

CLOSING RENEWAL REPORT

Renewals closed on July 31, 2022.
733 Active Licensed Psychologists:
669 renewed at \$400
64 renewed at a reduced fee \$200 (last renewal 58 out of 174 eligible requested a reduced fee)
26 Licensed Specialists in School Psychology \$100
8 Provisionally Licensed Psychologist \$100

Experts Discuss Coastal Resiliency Initiatives

The Environment and Health Council of Louisiana (EHCL) is hosting its annual conference on November 10 at Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge. This year’s conference theme is “Coastal Resiliency—Louisiana Initiatives.”

Each year EHCL hosts an annual conference in support of its mission to provide factual discussions on environmental, health and economic development topics. The most recent conference focused on Medical Marijuana in Louisiana. Other conferences topics included Effective Water Management, a Report Card two years after the 2010 BP Oil Spill, Alzheimer’s Disease and Obesity in Children.

Dr. Phillip Brantley, psychologist, serves as a Member-at-Large and was previously an EHCL board member. Dr. Brantly holds the John Stauffer McIlhenny Endowed Professorship in Nutrition, John S. McIlhenny Endowed Professor and is Professor in Behavioral Medicine at Pennington.

The 2022 conference will feature Charles Sutcliffe, Chief Resiliency Officer for the state and Ramsey Green, formerly CAO and Resiliency Chief in the Mayor’s Office New Orleans. EHCL conferences are free and open to the public. Pre-registration is urged via the EHCL website at www.ehcla.org. The Environment and Health Council of Louisiana is a nonprofit organization founded in 1983 to facilitate independent, balanced, and factual assessments of health issues related to the environmental and economic well-being of Louisiana.

Stress Solutions

by Susan Andrews, PhD

Are There Benefits to Masking? Margaret Mead on Halloween and the NOLA Mardi Gras Holidays

Few people, even most social scientists, would think of masking and playing dress-up as a stress reduction activity. On the other hand, most agree that children playing dress-up is akin to a rite of passage, a common and positive activity of young children that has developmental social and emotional benefits. Dress-up is also a form of imaginative play and building imagination in children results in increased problem-solving acumen and skills for self-regulation. An entire article could be written just listing all the benefits that dressing up and pretending to be someone else can serve in a young child’s development. Hopefully, readers will remember some of the fun they had playing dress-up or pretending to be a star ranger, like Buzz Lightyear or Buck Rogers (depending on your age). Still, few speak of dress-up play as stress reducing. Children, however, do have stress and maybe play of any type is stress reducing.

What about adults? No question that we all experience stress from many different things. One form of stress that is epidemic in our current world is that of living up to our responsibilities and to other people’s expectations. How do I connect the benefits of children playing dress-up with adults playing dress-up and the whole area of stress reduction?

Well, Halloween marks the end of October. Halloween is one of the most widely celebrated events of the year, usually celebrated on the 31st of October, All Hallows Eve. Children love Halloween and many identify it as their favorite holiday of the year. Of course, there is candy; however, they get to change roles and pretend to be the aggressor. More, they get to dress up and even play a slightly scary role.

In most parts of our country, Halloween is not as much for adults as it is for children. New Orleans is a little different. Many years ago (maybe 1971 or 72), I was fortunate to see Margaret Mead give an invited talk at Tulane Medical School. It was during the Mardi Gras season as I remember. Dr. Margaret Mead (1901-1978) was considered the foremost American Cultural Anthropologist. I remember that she sat on the stage and actually fell asleep while she was waiting to speak. When introduced, she awakened with the applause and walked to the podium with her cane. Her talk was related to the unique culture of New Orleans and the NOLA popular ritual of masking and attending costume balls.

The point of my story is that Dr. Mead spent part of her talk discussing the enormous value of the ability to put on a mask and let yourself take a break from role expectations and just have fun. She spoke of how she loved New Orleans for its unique cultural opportunity to take a break from traditional habits and society’s rules. Dr. Mead never used the words, stress reduction, but if you let yourself take a break from role expectations and just have fun, it should have that effect.



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.



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New AFCC Guidelines for Plan Evaluators Contain Wisdom for Those Working with Families

by Leslie Todd, LCSW, ACSW
AFCC Correspondent

After two years of review and revision, The Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) Board of Directors has approved new Guidelines for Parenting Plan Evaluations. These Guidelines replace the former Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluations. They are offered as a roadmap to make certain the evaluator is properly trained and employs proper methodology to ensure an unbiased and comprehensive evaluation.

The 33-page document is an excellent resource for mental health professionals who may be interested in adding Family Court work to their services. Here is a brief summary of the subjects which are more fully covered in the Guidelines:

1. *An overview of guiding principles and values:* Transparency and accountability are essential, as is informed practice that is sensitive to just and equitable processes. Families undergoing evaluation deserve the utmost respect of their personhood during this stressful process.
2. *Education and competency:* A master's degree is the minimum educational requirement, but family law work requires specialization. AFCC provides in-person and on-line training throughout the year in every aspect of custody evaluation.
3. *Knowledge of family law:* A sufficient understanding of state law and local procedures is necessary. Mental health practitioners are often afraid to ask, but they can request formal clarifications from the Court regarding the particulars of an Order or a procedure. The Court is usually eager to assist its mental health experts—they need us!
4. *Multiple relationships and role conflicts:* This is usually where mental health professionals get in trouble. It is essential to keep very clear boundaries between therapeutic and evaluation work: they cannot occur in the same case. Once you're the therapist, you can't become the evaluator, and vice versa.
5. *Communication:* This begins with the Court's Appointment Order, and the scope should be very clear. Your own policies and procedures, contracts and other written information should be very clear. All parties, including children, must be made aware that there is only limited confidentiality in court-ordered evaluations.
6. *Records:* Meticulous record-keeping is essential, from phone calls to contemporaneous notes. The Guidelines suggest that records should be kept until the youngest child in the case reaches majority. Ensure your paperwork covers all the bases and refine it continually by consultation with peers.
7. *Data gathering:* Multiple data streams are necessary for an objective, well-sourced evaluation. The use of questionnaires as well as interviews of each party are discussed. It is important to cover specialized topics such as domestic violence, substance misuse, and information regarding possible relocations, for examples.
8. *Child interviews:* Special skills are required to gain the trust of children and elicit relevant information. Advanced training is necessary not only in the stages of child development and the effects of familial separations in those stages, but also in attachment theory and ACES. Also, forensic interviewing skills are necessary to insure the reliability and validity of the information gathered.
9. *Observational and interactional assessments:* Use of playroom toys and interactional games between parents and children help assess the quality of relationships. The Guidelines note that evaluators should look for clues about the parent's empathic attunement and methods of influencing or managing the child's behavior during the session.



10. *Collateral data collection:* Medical and mental health records, school records and other data from third party sources are necessary. Policies addressing submissions are also discussed.
11. *Use of formal assessment instruments:* The decision whether to use testing instruments like the MMPI must be explained, and of course if they are used, they must be administered and interpreted only by qualified experts. The Guidelines cautions that there may be “an aura of precision which may be misleading,” and recommends that test results are not granted greater weight than the sum of the other data points.
12. *Interpretation of the data:* The Guidelines discusses how to write a report which clearly links the gathered data to the conclusions and recommendations made, and that keeps within the scope of the Order.
13. *Multiple evaluators:* In institutional or clinical settings, two or more evaluators may work together. In such cases, a lead evaluator should be named (and be available for court appearances.)
14. *Virtual evaluation:* Since the pandemic, Family Courts have shifted rapidly to on-line services. Special care should be taken to assess whether a virtual evaluation is contraindicated.

Parenting Plan Evaluations are evolving into less-traumatic, more family-friendly procedures, and the Louisiana Chapter of the AFCC (AFCC-LA) is very interested in seeing more mental health professionals join us in providing these services. If you are interested, take a look at the Guidelines at www.afccnet.org/practiceguidelines and contact admin@afcccla.org.

Leslie Todd, LCSW, served as President of the Louisiana Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts at its founding and again in 2018-2020. She is the 2022 recipient of the international organization's Tim Salius President's Award for her contributions. Learn more about the La. Chapter at www.afcccla.org.

Education & People

Dr. John Simoneaux to Speak on Law, Ethics and Mental Health at LPA Workshop, continued

"I'm going to try to integrate it directly with our Ethical Principles.," he said. "For example, I will spend some time talking about the fact that APA's ethical principles lionize the concept of "confidentiality" by saying it is our '**primary obligation** and/[to] take reasonable precautions to protect confidential information obtained through or stored in any medium, recognizing that the extent and limits of confidentiality may be regulated by law or established by institutional rules or professional or scientific relationship.'

"At the same time, we have 'informed consent' obligations that require us to explain most everything, for example: '*psychologists inform clients/patients as early as is feasible in the therapeutic relationship about the nature and anticipated course of therapy, fees, involvement of third parties, and limits of confidentiality and provide sufficient opportunity for the client/patient to ask questions and receive answers.*' However, there are legal exceptions to privileged communication that many therapists don't understand or explain, posing a conundrum for a treating or evaluating psychologist."

"I want to outline that an allowable breach of confidentiality may be different for a psychologist as opposed to a social worker because of rather subtle differences in ethical codes/practice laws, etc.," Dr. Simoneaux said. "In connection, I hope to explain 'allowable' breaches as opposed to 'mandated breaches' and to explain how, many times, a patient or a former patient may have unwittingly waived confidentiality/privilege when they enter into

a seemingly unrelated civil or criminal matter.

Dr. Simoneaux will cover topics that include:

- State laws in Louisiana pertaining to psychologists, privileged communication and confidentiality and exceptions thereof, tips and warnings regarding communications with legal professionals and potential legal pitfalls.
- Subpoenas, record requests and record-keeping tips, as well as various ethical/legal conundrums and conflicts that are common to psychologists.
- Appropriately navigating potential landmines surrounding court appearances and depositions, mistakes to avoid regarding expert testimony, and keys to being a helpful expert.
- Why psychologists are essential to custody evaluations as well as why one might want to stay away from such endeavors.
- Laws, precedents, and practices regarding sanity and competence hearings.

Dr. Simoneaux is a forensic psychologist in central Louisiana. He notes that he has been in practice for 35 years and is the owner of Consulting Psychologists of Central Louisiana and Professional Training Resources, Inc. His clinical practice involves work for the courts and legal professionals throughout the state, including court-ordered child custody evaluations, sanity/competency assessments, legal consultations, etc. For more than 20 years, he has offered continuing education seminars for mental

health and legal personnel throughout the state on a wide variety of topics.

Also presenting for the workshop will be William "Chuck" Credo, III, Esq.

Mr. Credo notes that since his 2009 retirement as a Jefferson Parish Assistant District Attorney with over thirty years of service, he has served as a Judge Pro Tempore for Divisions A and E in the 24th Judicial District Court and in the First Parish Court for the Parish of Jefferson. As a practicing attorney, he specializes in representing Louisiana coroners in the areas of death investigation, mental health law, and sexual assault law. He has appeared at every level of state and federal court including the U.S. Supreme Court.

As a lecturer on law at Tulane Law School, he explains that he has taught in the Trial Advocacy program for over 13 years and hopes to institute a mental health law experiential learning course in the near future. He has also lectured for Loyola University and LSU Law Schools. He is a frequent lecturer for the Louisiana Judicial College, Louisiana State Bar Association, Jefferson Bar Association, Louisiana District Attorneys Association as well as various sheriff and municipal police academies across Louisiana.

He is the past chairman of the Louisiana State Bar Association Continuing Legal Education

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Industrial-organizational psychologist, Dr. McKay Bonner, (L) and husband Sgt. & now Dr. Mark Johnson,, talk with Dr. John Simoneaux (R) at a past meeting of the Louisiana Coalition for Violence Prevention. Ms. Michelle Faust, LCSW, listens to the discussion.



Dr. John Simoneaux to Speak on Law, Ethics and Mental Health at LPA Workshop, continued

Committee, and is current chairman and on the advisory board of the Louisiana Organ Procurement Association (LOPA) and Coroner Subcommittee. He has also served as past president of NAMI New Orleans and is a certified Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) instructor. Most recently, he was selected as the 2019 recipient of the Gillis Long Poverty Law Center at Loyola Law School award for public service.

Mr. Credo will cover the topics:

- Tarasoff to telemedicine and ethical points in between.
- Legislative updates on the process of orders of protective custody (OPC) versus psychologist's emergency certificate (PEC) with legislative updates
- Liability concerns regarding Louisiana case law with the psychologist as an expert witness – a view from the bench
- Working with law enforcement and the coroner
- Liability concerns: experiences and case law
- Telemedicine: friend or foe?

Dr. Simoneaux presents to an audience of Louisiana judges, attorneys, district court clerks, peace officers, legal assistants and court reporters, at the annual Nuts & Bolts Judicial Seminar hosted by Appellate Judge, Hon. Harmon Drew, Jr., and his research attorney wife, Jean Drew.

The Louisiana Nuts & Bolts Judicial Seminar has been in operation since 1992 and the creators, Judge Harmon Drew and wife Jean, have focused on presenting important and practical training for the regularly attending 250 court Louisiana officials who travel to Destin, Florida to attend the highly rated event.

Dr. John Simoneaux is the only psychologist who regularly helps train the court professionals, and he is a favorite of the group, said the Drews.

Attendees include individuals from Louisiana's District Courts, City Courts, Appeal Courts, Police Departments, Sheriff's and Marshal's Offices, the state Supreme Court, law firms and others.

For the coming workshop for the Louisiana Psychological Association Dr. Simoneaux said, "My observation is that many very competent professionals within psychology try to stay very far away from cases that might eventually involve having to deal with lawyers and/or the courts because of fears/aggravation revolving around possibly having to testify, having records become subject to subpoena, and/or being subject to scrutiny from another psychologist or other MH professional," he said.

"I think we actually have a lot to offer to the courts within our science and that we are missing an opportunity to have our important voices heard in ways that can substantively enhance and benefit individuals and beyond simply because we are scared or don't want to be inconvenienced. I hope to point out that there is little to be afraid of, that working with the courts can be satisfying and important, and that there is even good money to be made with a forensic specialization. For example, I want everyone to realize that when under oath, there is simply one answer to every question asked (and "I don't know" is a perfectly legitimate and helpful response). I want colleagues to realize that if we are of right mind, we actually should hope that it is revealed IF we are wrong in what we are telling the court. I want colleagues to understand how to respond to subpoenas.



Dr. John Simoneaux (L) talking with a participant at the Louisiana Nuts & Bolts Judicial Seminar. He is a favorite presenter of the group. Attendees include individuals from Louisiana's District Courts, City Courts, Appeal Courts, Police Departments, Sheriff's and Marshal's Offices, the state Supreme Court, law firms and others.

"I want psychologists to understand how to communicate with attorneys and judges in a way that ensures orders from the court appointing us to serve as experts are correctly written. More importantly, I want to offer information that guarantees (as much as is possible) that we are paid reliably and adequately for our services.

"I hope to discuss a particularly vexing problem for many psychologists of all stripes (i.e., child, clinical, school, family, etc.) who find themselves unwittingly involved in child custody matters, personal injury disputes, workers' comp. cases, malpractice cases, etc. I want to give basic information about being appointed to sanity commissions as well as sitting on a medical malpractice panel," Dr. Simoneaux said.

"I frankly hope to motivate more psychologists to consider becoming involved in forensic work because, too often, after one bad experience professionals vow "ever again" — and the number of qualified and willing 'experts' among us is dwindling."

Veterans' Suicide Rates Remain High

continued

In 2020, the rate for Veterans was 57.3% higher.

The authors are encouraged by the downward trend pointing out that it followed the VA's launch of the 2018 National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide. This effort was built on the U.S. Surgeon General's and National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention's 2012 National Strategy, which "reflects a comprehensive public health approach to Veteran suicide prevention. This combines community-based suicide prevention strategies and clinically based interventions," said the authors.

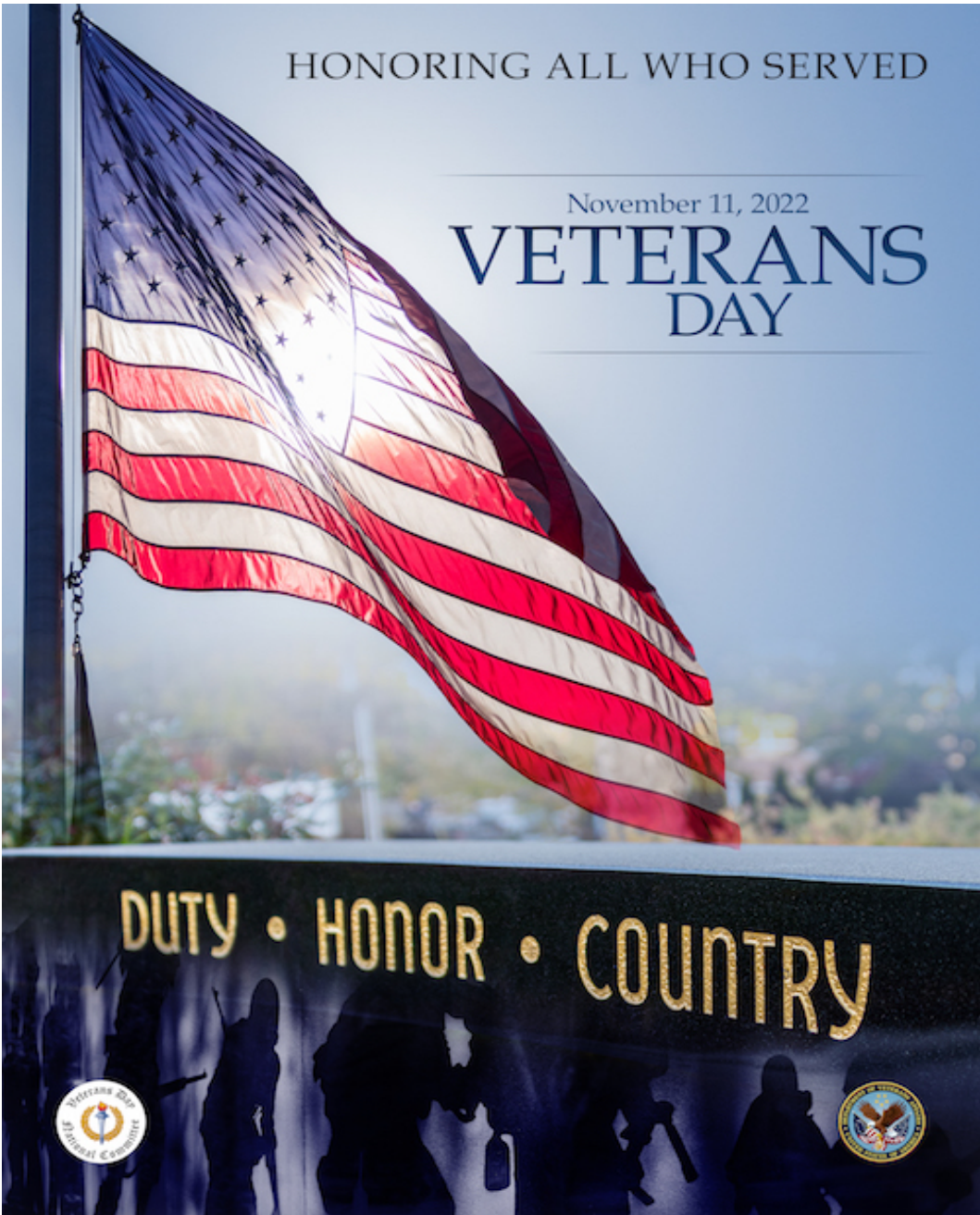
In his 2001 paper, "High Suicide Rates among United States Service Members and Veterans of the Post-9/11 Wars," Thomas Suitt, of Boston University, estimates 30,177 active duty personnel and veterans of the post 9/11 wars have died by suicide. This is significantly more than the 7,057 service members killed in post-9/11 war operations, he notes.

"These high suicide rates are caused by multiple factors," notes Suitt, "some inherent to fighting in a war and others unique to America's "war on terror" framework. Partially, they are due to risks common to fighting any war: high exposure to trauma, stress, military culture and training, continued access to guns, and the difficulty of reintegrating into civilian life. In the post-9/11 era, the rise of improvised explosive devices (IED), the attendant rise in traumatic brain injuries (TBI), the war's protracted length, advances in medical treatment that keep service members in the military longer, and the American public's disinterest in the post-9/11 wars, have greatly contributed to increased suicide rates," writes Suitt. "High suicide rates mark the failure of the U.S. government and U.S. society to manage the mental health costs of our current conflicts."

Dr. Lawrence Salone is the Founder of Post Trauma Institute, in Baton Rouge, an integrated mental healthcare system with a core purpose to deliver better access to psychiatric care. PTI services include psychiatric evaluations and medication management, psychological testing, talk therapy, and intensive outpatient substance abuse services. PTI was founded on the belief that patients deserve better. The core aim of PTI is to fight suicide, hopelessness, and better impact patients living with mental illness," explained Dr. Salone.

What is he seeing in the veteran community?

"The pandemic has strained individuals living with mental illness



and there has been no exception in the veteran community. Veterans typically experience higher rates of psychiatric disorders than the general population. Currently, we are seeing increases in abuse of prescription and illicit substances, anxiousness and suicidal attempts," said Dr. Salone.

"These trends exist despite the advances in access to care through telehealth visits and partnerships between managed care organizations and providers. We, much like other advocate organizations maintain a strong support posture for veterans and their families as the community rebounds from the pandemic. We remain optimistic that with the attention mental health issues are receiving now that veterans will truly have the resources needed to properly impact drug abuse, suicide, and the stigma associated with mental illness."

Dr. Salone served in the US Army for 10 years and was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II (OIF-II). He served as a Signal Officer in 1st Cavalry Division. He earned his doctorate from LSU in organizational systems and is a graduate of the Executive MBA at LSU. He currently serves as an ambassador for the Edward Lowe

Foundation where he mentors 2nd stage companies across the United States.

Dr. Marc Zimmermann is a consulting medical psychologist at PTI.

He said, "I know people disagree as to the primary reason for suicidal ideation and attempts. My belief is that those who actually contemplate or attempt suicide are the hopeless. For whatever reason, they have been emotionally defeated," Dr. Zimmermann said.

"With veterans at least part of the problem is that the U.S.A. has breached its contract with our veterans and it is almost impossible to make the government live up to its obligation," he said.

Dr. Charles Figley, is the Paul Henry Kurzweg Distinguished Chair in Disaster Mental Health, Professor and Associate Dean for Research in the Tulane School of Social Work, and Director of the Tulane's award-winning Traumatology Institute, and the 2021 Distinguished Psychologist recognized by the Louisiana Psychological Association.

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Veterans' Suicide Rates Remain High

continued

His newest book is *Psychiatric Casualties: How and Why the Military Ignores the Full Cost of War*, co-authored with Dr. Mark C. Russell and published by Columbia University Press.

"Most damaged service members were on active duty first and the evidence was there," said Dr. Figley. "Social work officers, as well as psychologists, and other mental health professionals in and out of the military *know the problems* (denial and its enabled problems).

"Just the very little I know about mental health risks within the military as a scientist, practitioner, educator, and scholar, is pale in comparison to my friend and colleague, Mark Russell who served first in the USMC and then as a (Green Side) psychologist in the US Navy, has children who followed him into the military and like their father serves proudly. Mark became rather discouraged while we studying military mental health. What started out as an opportunity to learn from his experiences was coming to the conclusion that bringing a case against the military was the only way. We abandoned that option when we saw the challenging road ahead."

Included among his many accomplishments, Dr. Figley has served on the American Psychological Association (APA) Council of Representatives and on the Executive Council of APA's Division on Trauma Psychology. He has served on numerous editorial boards including for *Family, Systems, and Health, Journal of Family Psychology*, and *Traumatology*. He is founding editor of the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, the *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, and the international journal, *Traumatology*. He is also Founding Editor of the Book Series *Death and Trauma, Innovations in Psychology*, and continues to as Editor of the *Psychosocial Stress Book Series*.

Dr. Mark Russell is a retired Navy Commander and clinical psychologist with over 26-years of military service including 10-years as an enlisted Marine. He is dual-Board certified by the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) in clinical psychology and clinical child and adolescent psychology.

He is co-author of *Treating Traumatic Stress Injuries in Military Personnel: An EMDR Practitioner's Guide* (Routledge, 2013) and *Psychiatric Casualties: How and why the military ignores the full cost of war* (Columbia University Press, June 2021) with Charles Figley, and co-author of *Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR therapy): Theories of Psychotherapy Series* with Francine Shapiro (American Psychological Association, November 2021).

Why does the military continue to ignore these issues?

"When you ask 'why' the military continues to neglect its obligations to meet mental health needs, I want you to know that this is a pivotal question that never has graced the lips of Congress or the national news media in this, or any generation since WWI," said Dr. Russell.

"You mentioned the 2007 DoD Task Force report, which was mandated by congress in part due to my filing a 2005 grievance with the DoD IG against the ASD for Health Affairs for "gross negligence" resulting in an avoidable mental health crisis. The 2007 findings were 180 degrees from sworn testimony to Congress by military leaders since the 2003 Iraq invasion, despite reported epidemics in suicide, PTSD, etc. Yet, Congress and the rest of the government and the news media simply celebrated the findings as 'groundbreaking!' No one was fired in the scandal because the narrative was not one of a scandal. After reviewing the 99 corrective actions and fundamental failure to meet basic mental health needs, no one asked 'why?'," said Dr. Russell.

"Improvements? Yes, during every major war, leaders react and pour money and resources into the self-inflicted crisis, but as wars end, we enter into what Charles and I refer to as the National Reset, which is a return to baseline of neglect until the next war, and so on. For example, during my recent 4-month stint with the Navy's Fleet and Family Service Center (FFSC), I learned that the Navy/Marine Corps team had developed several new mental health programs that did not exist when I retired in 2009. One is intended to prevent suicide that the Navy called SAIL (Sailor Assistance Intercept Life) and the other is assigning licensed civilian counselors aboard aircraft carriers called Deployment Resiliency Counselors. I managed both of those programs during my time at FFSC-the problem was a familiar one-chronic, severe staffing shortages. What I learned during my brief Navy reemployment, is that throughout the DoD (and country), there is a massive MH staffing shortage and whopping unmet mental health needs, resulting in spikes in suicide even after the wars end," said Dr. Russell.

"Greatly complicating the staffing crises, is the fact the the Navy/Marine Corps have continued its insane policy that I sought to rectify as a whistleblower, that prohibits licensed civilian mental health providers from treating people with suicide, PTSD, depression, etc. by written regulations. This is about 1/3 of the mental health workforce in DoD!

"The DoD operates a Uniformed Services College and uses that to incentivize enlisted personnel and junior officers who otherwise would be discharged from the military, to transfer over to the medical side where they receive free graduate/medical school training to become military dentists, nurses, medical doctors, etc. Only a small fraction are being converted into psychologists or psychiatrists, etc. You can bet that thousands of young military members would answer the call to sign up to become mental health specialists and get paid as an officer during their free graduate training," said Dr. Russell. "This is why I cringe whenever I hear military leaders cite the national shortage of mental health professionals as justification for the tragic state of affairs-there are reasonable actions that can be taken if the DoD was ever interested in being a leader to eradicate mental health stigma and create true parity between mental and physical health and solve its' mental health dilemma."

Dr. Russell is a national expert on war and other traumatic stress injuries as featured in *USA Today* (2007) and the 2015 documentary film, *Thank You for Your Service!* He was awarded the *Distinguished Psychologist Award* by the Washington State Psychological Association and the Meritorious Service Medal by the President of the United States for his sustained effort to transform military mental healthcare, as well as the recipient of the 2018 *Outstanding Service in the Field of Trauma Psychology* by the American Psychological Association Division 56 Trauma Psychology. He is the establishing Director, of Antioch University's *Institute of War Stress Injury, Recovery, and Social Justice*, dedicated to promote equality of mental and physical health by ending the generational cycle of preventable wartime behavioral health crises.

This article is not intended to provide help in a crisis. If you are feeling suicidal or need help for yourself or someone you know, please consult IASP's Suicide Prevention Resources to find a crisis center anywhere in the world. In the US, call toll-free 1-800- 273-TALK (8255) for a free suicide prevention service or visit [SuicidePreventionLifeline.org](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)



The Psychology Times' BOOKSHELF

Who's Writing What?

Psychiatric Casualties

How and Why the Military Ignores the Full Cost of War

Mark Russell and Charles Figley

Dr. Mark Russell and Dr. Charles Figley, experts in trauma related matters, have co-authored a book about the dark side of military service and the institution.

Psychiatric Casualties: How and Why the Military Ignores the Full Cost of War courageously explores the dark side of military mental health and the paradoxical nature of, and challenges in, this tragic situation.

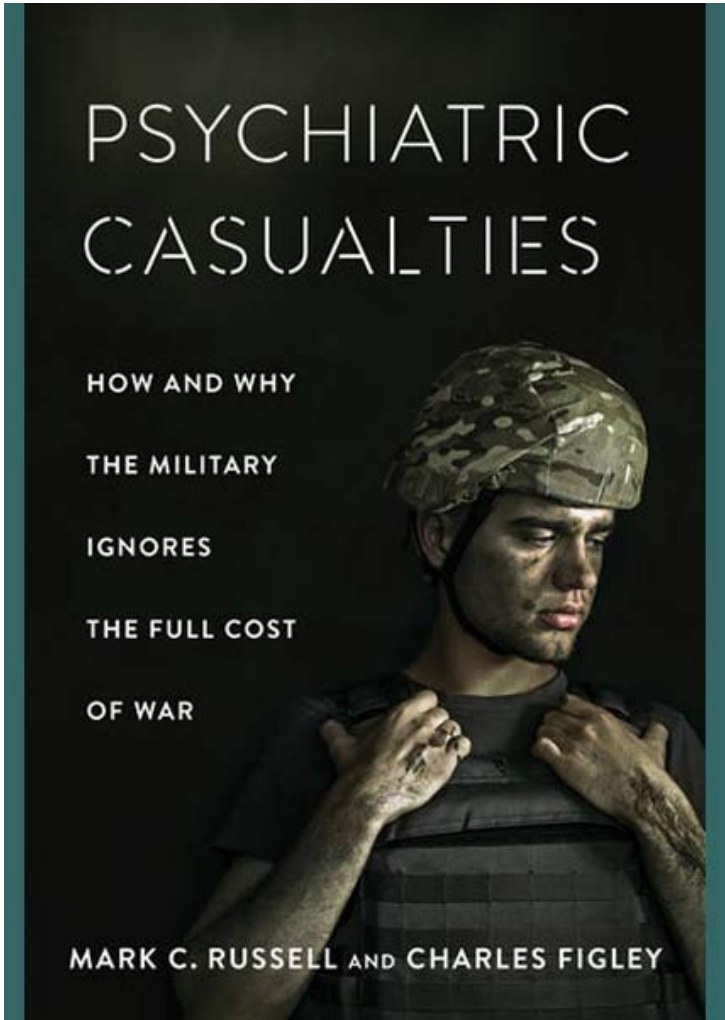
The authors point out that the toll of war is huge and the prevalence of post traumatic stress is underestimated, covered over by stigma and fears of being diagnosed, contributing to a culture with excessive waiting times for veterans, high rates of suicide and addictions, inadequate treatment and organizational scandals.

The two trauma experts offer a courageous critique of the ongoing failures in military mental health care in the United States. They take a hard and honest look at the war culture and the denial of the mental health crisis in the military and the suffering of service members.

In *Psychiatric Casualties* the authors write, "The psychological toll of war is vast, and the social costs of war's psychiatric casualties extend even further. Yet military mental health care suffers from extensive waiting lists, organizational scandals, spikes in veteran suicide, narcotic overprescription, shortages of mental health professionals, and inadequate treatment. The prevalence of conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder is often underestimated, and there remains entrenched stigma and fear of being diagnosed. Even more alarming is how the military dismisses or conceals the significance and extent of the mental health crisis."

The contents:

- Introduction: The Genesis of the Military's Mental Health Dilemma
- 1. A War to Die For: Casualty Trends of Modern Warfare
- 2. The Dark Side of Military Mental Health: A History of Self-Inflicted Wounds
- 3. Cruel and Inhumane Handling: The First Dark-Side Strategy
- 4. Legal Prosecution, Incarceration, and Executions of Mental Illness: The Second Dark-Side Strategy
- 5. Humiliate, Ridicule, and Shame into Submission: The Third Dark-Side Strategy
- 6. Denying the Psychiatric Reality of War: The Fourth Dark-Side Strategy
- 7. Purging Weakness: The Fifth Dark-Side Strategy



- 8. Delay, Deceive, and Delay Again: The Sixth Dark-Side Strategy
- 9. Faulty Diagnosis and Backdoor Discharges: The Seventh Dark-Side Strategy
- 10. Avoiding Responsibility and Accountability: The Eighth Dark-Side Strategy
- 11. Inadequate, Experimental, or Harmful Treatment: The Ninth Dark-Side Strategy
- 12. Perpetuating Neglect, Indifference, and Self-Inflicted Crises: The Tenth Dark-Side Strategy
- 13. Toward a Resilient and Mentally Healthy Military
- 14. Transforming Military Mental Healthcare: Three Options for Change

"We are eager to reach military members and families as well as military veterans to join our cause and help improve the situation significantly," Figley said in a Tulane interview with Barri Bronston last year.

Figley served a tour of duty in the Vietnam War as a member of the U.S. Marine Corps. And later, as a noted professor at Purdue University, he had a front-row seat to the failures of military mental health in the United States, reported Bronston.

"Military mental health is mismanaged, disorganized and often ignored and misunderstood," said Figley. "The prevalence of conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder is often underestimated, with the military dismissing or concealing the significance and extent of the mental health crisis."

So far, he said the response to the book has been positive, he told Bronston. "Among other good signs: A documentary has emerged and will be released in September; *Military Times* interviewed us, and the article should be out shortly; there has been no negative response so far."

As part of their mission to raise awareness of the problem, Figley and Russell appeared in June in a Facebook Live show titled "Championing Mental Health." Featured were clips from the documentary "Stranger At Home: The Untold Story of American Military Mental Health."

A Shrink at the Flicks

Piggy A Review

by Alvin G. Burstein, PhD

I need to begin this review with a disclaimer: this film is disturbing, both because it stirs up the deep prejudice about the body dysmorphia we call obesity and because of its plot complexities. It is troubling in a third way as well. It combines acting so convincing that it has a documentary feel, and loose ends that belie the extraordinarily artful mashup of humor, pathos, bildungsroman and gore.

This 2022 film, now showing at theaters, is also available on Amazon Prime and other streaming services. It is an expansion of a short film with the same title released a few years earlier, both versions written and directed by Carlota Pereda and filmed in northern Spain. The original won several awards, which doubtless contributed to Pereda's decision to prepare this one, her major film debut. English subtitles with speakers' identification that sometimes obscure the text is one of the rough edges that, along with loose ends in the plotting, sometimes suggest an amateurish documentary. But Laura Galán's stunning capture of young Sara's rage and shame about her dysmorphia and her world's reaction to it is award-worthy. One forgets that she is playing a role—and maybe the documentary feel is intentional. Her parents, played by Carmen Manchi and Julian Valcárcel are also outstanding.



The movie opens with unsettling clips of the butcher shop operations of Sara's family's business, a foreshadowing of the Stephen King like elements later in the movie. The plot line is this. Sara, while trying to take advantage of a swimming opportunity, is subjected to cruel teasing about her fatness by her peers. She becomes involved in a murder scene and subsequent serial abductions. The outcome, after a series of genuinely startling turns that I will not reveal, has a rom com element that seemed surprisingly flat after the wrenching jolts that preceded it.

Do I recommend the film? I was impressed and a bit shaken by it, an unusual reaction to a film for me. If you are open to such an experience, take a deep breath and prepare to be troubled and surprised.

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.

10 Years Ago ... What *The Psychology Times* was reporting on November 2012



Dr. Michael Cunningham (Courtesy photo)

LA School Psychological Association Conference in Lafayette Nov 7 to 9

The Louisiana School Psychological Association will host its Annual Conference, November 7 - 9, 2012, at the Hilton Lafayette, in Lafayette, Louisiana. This year's theme will be "Resilience and Reconnection."

Tulane psychology professor, Dr. Michael Cunningham, will speak on "Promoting Education Resilience in African American Adolescents." Dr. Cunningham is the Suzanne and Stephen Weiss Presidential Fellow in the Psychology Department at Tulane.

LA Psychologists Note Issues for Understanding Military Life

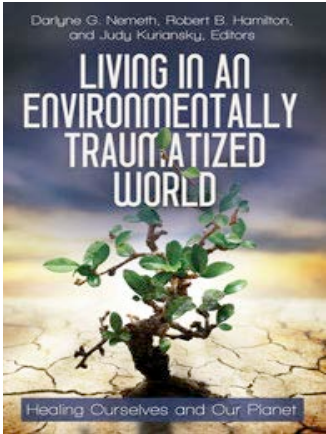
The *Times* spoke with two Louisiana psychologists, Dr. Dana Boose and Dr. Andrew Thrasher, about what their perspectives and what they view as important in the Louisiana community and in efforts to assist the returning servicemen and women to transition back to home.

Dr. Dana Boose is a Clinical Psychologist in the Post Deployment Healthcare Clinic at the Alexandria VA Healthcare System. She is also commissioned as a Captain in the Louisiana Army National Guard. Dr. Thrasher is a licensed psychologist at the Psychotherapy Clinic, LLC, in Sulphur, Louisiana. He is also a veteran and he is member of the Give An Hour program.

Psychology Gumbo

• "Measuring the Suicidal Mind: Implicit Cognition Predicts Suicidal Behavior" -- *Journal of Psychological Science*, 2010. M. Nock, et al. Researchers found implicit associations exceed the predictive validity of known risk factors in suicide.

COMMENT: Dr. Gary Pettigrew, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Dawson Psychological Associates, Coordinator of Complaints, LSBEP. "More impressively, this association predicted future suicide attempts during six-month follow-up better than the patient's own prediction or other clinical factors studied. emotional self-regulation, and self esteem.



BOOKSHELF

Living in an Environmentally Traumatized World: Healing Ourselves and Our Planet

Darlyne G. Nemeth, Robert B. Hamilton, and Judy Kuriansky, Editors

The work is an outgrowth of the 2007 symposium on behalf of the World Council of Psychotherapy (WCP) titled, "Strategies to Facilitate Biosphere Management and Lifestyle Change: Measures to Protect the Environment and Prevent Drastic Sequelae of Current and Future Climate Changes," presented at the 60th Annual United Nations DPI/NGO Conference Mid-day workshops in New York, NY. This is where Dr. Nemeth linked with many of her contributors. "I chaired this event and spoke about the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina," she explained.

AG Opinions Clarify LMFT Scope of Practice, ABA Issues

The Louisiana Attorney General issued an Opinion on October 12, 2012 after reviewing objections submitted last year by the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (LSBEP) about rules for Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs), put forth by the Counselors state board.

The Attorney General (AG) found no problem with the rules, and summarized, "The permitted scope of practice of licensed marriage and family therapists includes the assessment and treatment of emotional, behavioral, personality, and mental disorders, subject to the specific limitations ..." And [...] "do not expand said statutory scope of practice by rule, are not violative of the prohibition on the unlicensed practice of psychology ...".

Children's Cabinet

Dr. Simpson Launches Kid's Dashboard

The Children's Cabinet launched its "Louisiana Kid's Dashboard" on October 9, 2012, a continuing step in the Cabinet's efforts to coordinate and engage agencies, policy makers, families and the larger community, with the goal of improving conditions for Louisiana's children.

The Children's Cabinet is part of the Office of the Governor, and Dr. Tiffany Simpson, a graduate of the University of New Orleans psychology department, is the Executive Director.

ABA Study Group to Begin Final Decision-Making Friday

The "Behavior Analysts Licensure and Regulation Study Commission will meet on Friday, November 2, 2012, to continue efforts in outlining the state's approach to regulation for applied behavior analysts, and preparing for the final and perhaps most difficult of their decisions.

The *Times* spoke with Vice Chair of the Commission, Ms. Catherine Morrell, who explained that on November 2nd the group would watch four presentations, from four different sets of members. These presentations are to prepare the group for a future decision as to where the behavior analysts will fall in the state regulatory structure, Morrell said.

"Yes, But" Opinion on ABAs Practicing Psychology from AG

The psychology board received an answer in October from the Office of the Attorney General (AG) regarding injunctions against behavior analysts who practice psychology. Writing to the current psychology board Chair Dr. Lee Matthews, the AG noted, "...the LSBEP may seek an injunction against a party [...]" "Although the LSBEP has the authority to seek an injunction against a party for violating Chapter 28, it still must meet the injunction requirements of the court," the author, Assistant Attorney General, Jessica Thornhill wrote, on behalf of James Caldwell, the AG.

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