

The Southwestern Psychological Association chose Baton Rouge for its 2022 annual convention. Here, the ceiling of the old State Capitol in downtown Baton Rouge.

Louisiana Researchers Converge on Baton Rouge for the Southwestern Psychological Association Annual Conference, April 8-10

The Southwestern Psychological Association will hold its annual convention in Baton Rouge, April 8 through 10, at the Crown Plaza Hotel. Psychological scientists and researchers from across the state will present their work throughout the three-day event.

Representatives include those from Loyola, LSU Alexandria, LSU Shreveport, McNeese State University, Northwestern State University, Southeastern Louisiana University, University of Louisiana Lafayette, University of Louisiana Monroe and other independent researchers. The *Times* will report on researchers in this issue and continue next month.

Dr. Katie Cherry, the Emogene Pliner Distinguished Professor of Aging Studies at Louisiana State University, and the Director of Research and Community Outreach, LSU Life Course and Aging Center, is this year's Psi Chi Distinguished Speaker at the event.

Dr. Cherry will present, "Severe Weather Events and Psychosocial Well Being: Variables that Matter after a Disaster." She will discuss the impact of hurricanes and flooding on health indicators across the adult lifespan and present her research on disaster stressors in connection with the 2016 flooding in south Louisiana, including recommendations for recovery.

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Legislature in Full Swing Gov. Edwards Budgets More for Higher Education

The Louisiana Legislature convened March 14 for the 2022 Regular Session, and hundred bills have been filed and are under review by Legislators. See our report starting on page 8.

The Governor's proposed budget includes: \$31.7 million for faculty pay raises in higher education; \$10.5 million for the MJ Foster Promise Program Fund; \$97.2 million for higher education, which includes \$5 million for Title IX

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Discrimination Complaint Rejected by LSBEP

A Request for Investigation, stating that members of the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists are operating outside of their area of competence in regard to selection-testing and racial discrimination, was rejected by the Board. In a letter dated March 7, Ms. Jaime Monic, the Executive Director, said that the members do not have jurisdiction over themselves. Also, she said, they are not engaged in the practice of psychology as board members. However, they are open to reviewing this issue, Ms. Monic wrote.

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Cybersecurity Expert Offers Essential Ideas for Defending Yourself and Your Clients

by Leslie Todd, LCSW, ACSW
AFCC Correspondent

Those of us who work with victims of intimate partner violence or vengeful ex-partners have seen how badly technology can be misused to harm our clients. And we also know that just as private citizens, we have to be on guard against cyber shenanigans. Then there's our offices, our electronics files, our phones....it's pretty daunting, right?

Fortunately, there are folks who specialize in educating us so we can keep our clients and ourselves safe.

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Editorial Page – Opinions

Illusion of Evidence Based Medicine

by J. Nelson

Last month, authors Jureidini and McHenry, writing in the *British Medical Journal*, called upon colleagues to acknowledge the loss of scientific integrity in the medical profession. In “The Illusion of Evidence Based Medicine,” the authors pointed to the pharmaceutical industries, universities and academic leadership as being corrupted by financial interests. We may have to accept the same situation is true for psychology.

Jureidini and McHenry were engaged by a law firm in Los Angeles who took on Glaxo Smith Kline, exposing the underbelly of Big Pharma and the "crisis of credibility" in clinical research.

This is not really news. In 2013 the Louisiana Psychological Association and Tulane University, brought in Harvard's Dr. Irving Kirsch, a psychologist, who laid out damning evidence that drug companies and the FDA skew research to approve drugs that have little actual value. Stunning the audience with example after example, Kirsch showed that anti-depressants "work" mostly due to placebo effects and the FDA is in bed with Big Pharma.



Fotila

With a focus on profits, the Medical Industrial Complex, and the government that supports it, has a negligible or even opposite effect on health outcomes in this country. The US ranks at the bottom of the industrialized countries, and Louisiana ranks at the bottom of the US states, in outcomes.

Hamilton Moses and co-authors of, “The Anatomy of Health Care in the United States,” in *Journal of the American Medical Association*, wrote that medicine is poorly designed for health, since about 80 percent of illness is related to psychological, social and behavioral factors, not usually considered to be part of medicine.

"Behavioral intervention is the foundation for lifestyle medicine," writes Dr. John Caccavale, author of *Medical Psychology Practice and Policy Perspectives*. "—physicians will have great difficulty demonstrating that they are improving patient health by utilizing medications as a first-line treatment for these classes of disorders."

An analysis by Blake Kruger and Jeremiah Brown, showed that Louisiana spends the most on Medicare beneficiaries per capita compared to any other state. At the same time, Louisiana reports greater health disparities and higher mortality. Kruger and Brown investigated the associations between healthcare intensity, a measure of inpatient days and physician's services, and could find no association to positive outcomes. More spending made no difference.

The lumbering and commercially contaminated healthcare system in the United States became painfully obvious during Covid. We are only now seeing some odd statistical anomalies between the US and other countries in death rates. I experienced firsthand the lack of ideas for early treatment. Our physician had somehow been directed to send us to the hospital. The hospital was told to test us, send us home, where we were to wait until we couldn't breathe—and only then come back. This funneling of people and ideas through the Medical Industrial Complex cost many lives.

What does this have to do with psychology? You cannot free a fish from water. Psychology, a profession founded in scientific integrity and critical rationalism, is affected by the same variables as medicine.

We must also, like Jureidini and McHenry, acknowledge this contamination by political and financial self interests, hopefully before the public, with its "citizen scientists," show us out as fools, or even worse, charlatans.

[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.
We found some typos.
Please send your corrections to:
psychologytimes@drjulienelson.com

State & National News

Governor's Budget

continued

offices across the state, \$15 million increase in GO Grants, and \$25 million into the Higher Education Initiatives fund.

In his opening remarks Gov. Edwards said the state is in a much better place then when he took office six years ago. "At my first state of the state, I had just inherited a billion-dollar budget deficit to close out that fiscal year, and a two-billion-dollar deficit for the year that started July 1, 2016. Today, as I stand here before you, we have hundreds of millions in surplus, even more in current year excess, and billions in federal funding through the American Rescue Plan and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act."

The proposed budget also includes \$43.4 million for early childhood education, with more than \$17 million for the LA-4 Early Childhood program; \$148.4 million for teacher and support staff pay raises, which is at least a \$1,500 raise for teachers and \$750 for support staff; a \$12 per diem increase for intermediate care facilities for people living with intellectual disabilities; and more than \$1.1 billion in funding for critical infrastructure, such as \$500 million for a new Mississippi River Bridge in Baton Rouge, an additional \$100 million for the bridge in Lake Charles, and \$500 million for water and sewer improvements statewide.

"This is a balanced budget that is responsible, transformational, and continues my administration's practice of only using one-time dollars for one-time expenses. It's a promise I made six years ago and one that I have not deviated from. We are not going back to the days of deficits, fiscal cliffs and one-time dollars for recurring expenditures. And we will continue to be focused on empowering families and communities for the future," Gov. Edwards said.

"My legislative package includes a number of bills focused on hurricane deductibles, claim transparency, enforcing insurance fraud laws against bad actors, revamping the adjuster registry so that policyholders can verify their adjusters, and stopping mortgage companies from withholding insurance money from homeowners without good reason.

He noted his Climate Initiatives Task Force had set a goal of reaching net zero by 2050. "This taskforce, which includes scientists, academics, industry leaders and environmentalists, has adopted a Statewide Climate Action Plan," the Gov. said. "What makes Louisiana's plan special, and the most attainable in my opinion, is that instead of working against oil and gas companies, we are working with them."

He made an appeal to raise the minimum wage and reduce the gender pay gap.

Gov. Edwards began his address by saying, "All too often, our world is filled with unrest, and right now our prayers are especially with the people of Ukraine as they defend their homes, their families, and their freedom. We are joined today by Eddy Hayes who is the Honorary Consul of Ukraine. He represents the economic and cultural interests of the country here in Louisiana. I asked him to be here today in hopes that he will relay our unified support to his colleagues in Ukraine."

Gov. Edwards' Appointments to Boards and Commissions Announced

Gov. Edwards made appointments to several Louisiana boards and commissions over the last month, including:

Melinda McGee Richard of Baton Rouge has been appointed to the Louisiana Department of Health. She will serve as assistant secretary of the Office of Aging and Adult Services. The Louisiana Department of Health protects and promotes health and ensures access to medical, preventative, and rehabilitative services for all citizens of Louisiana.

Claude A. Guillotte of Hammond has been reappointed to the Louisiana Licensed Professional Counselors Board of Examiners, and reappointed to the Marriage and Family Therapy Advisory Committee. Guillotte is a self-employed therapist who offers services to individuals, couples, and families. He will serve a licensed marriage and family therapist.

Abigail B. Hays of Rayville has been appointed to the Louisiana Licensed Professional Counselors Board of Examiners and to the Marriage and Family Therapy Advisory Committee. Hays is a behavioral health specialist for Richardson Medical Center School Based Health Clinic. She will serve as a licensed marriage and family therapist.

Rekesha "Renee" G. Antoine of Prairieville has been appointed to the Office of the Governor. Antoine is the former state director of Maternal Child Health and Government Affairs March of Dimes. She will serve as executive director of the Office on Women's Policy.

William A. "Bill" Sommers Sr. of Lake Charles has been reappointed to the Imperial Calcasieu Human Services Authority. Sommers is deputy secretary of youth services for the Louisiana Department of Corrections. He will serve as an advocate in the field of mental health.

The Imperial Calcasieu Human Services Authority provides behavioral health and development disability services to the residents of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Jefferson Davis, and Cameron parishes.

Candace L. Blood of Pineville has been appointed to the Central Louisiana Human Services District. Blood is a director of clinical services for Longleaf Hospital. She will serve as an advocate in the field of addictive disorders.

Douglas L. Ryland of Alexandria has been reappointed to the Central Louisiana Human Services District. Ryland is the executive director of Evergreen Life Services. He will serve as an advocate in the field of mental health.

Central Louisiana Human Services District provides mental health and addiction-related counseling and treatment for adults, children, and adolescents in the parishes of Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Grant, LaSalle, Rapides, Vernon, and Winn parishes.



"How do I know if I'm being indecisive?"

Discrimination Complaint about LSBEP Rejected, continued

The psychologists who submitted the request, Drs. William Costelloe, Julie Nelson, and Marc Zimmermann, are all business psychologists who have extensive experience with high stakes selection testing in the private sector. In their request for an investigation submitted in January, the three said, "There is evidence that confirms that the EPPP has adverse impact against African-Americans and Hispanics. [...]

"Once adverse impact has been shown for a test it is improper to ignore the selection problems. Furthermore, the way in which the test is used by the Board members drives up adverse impact. As just one example, the use of a hard cut off, and one that sets a higher bar considering the restricted sample, on a test with proven adverse impact, is an error in professional selection testing design."

The March 7 letter noted:

"Dear Dr. Nelson, Dr. Costello and Dr. Zimmermann,

On January 11, 2022, the office of the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (LSBEP) received your *Request for Investigation* form and a statement of complaint against current LSBEP Board Members. Please be advised that individual members of the LSBEP in their capacity as board members do not have jurisdiction to initiate a formal investigation or action against themselves under the authority of La. R. S. 37:2351 *et al.* All current Board Members meet the requisite requirements established by the Louisiana Legislature under Chapter 28 of Title 37 of the La. Revised Statutes to serve the LSBEP and are uniquely qualified to carry out this authority by way of their service, teaching, training, or research in psychology, degree and licensure as outlined under the provisions of La. R. S. 37:2353 *et al.* However, Board Members are not engaged in that which is defined as the 'practice of psychology' in their work as a Board Member.

"In consideration of the above, your Request for Investigation of the Board Members is rejected. However, the LSBEP will consider your concerns, "...that the EPPP has adverse impact against African-American and Hispanic populations", including your concerns regarding LSBEP's continued use of the EPPP (Part I – Knowledge) as a tool to assess professional knowledge as required under R. S. 37:2356. (A)(7). This review is consistent with LSBEP's statutory authority and its ongoing endeavors to increase multicultural awareness through assessment of candidates for licensure and continuing education offerings provided to all licensees who are involved in direct client services to ensure public protection.

"You will be notified in writing of the final disposition of this matter on completion of the review. If you have any documentation, including peer reviewed articles, valid documentation or studies to support your claims, and/or alternate valid assessments that measure entry level professional knowledge that should otherwise be considered, please forward that information directly to the office of the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists at 4334 S. Sherwood Forest Blvd., Suite C – 150, Baton Rouge, LA 70816. Due to security and resources, emails or email attachments will not be accepted or downloaded for consideration in this matter.

"Thank you for calling our attention to any practices that raise concern regarding the practice of the profession. Sincerely, Jaime T. Monic, Executive Director"

According to Dr. Zimmerman, copies of Dr. Sharpless' two articles on the adverse impact of the EPPP have been sent by US mail to the Board and more information will be sent to them for their study of the issue.



Board members and staff at a previous meeting. From left, Ms. Jaime Monic, Ms. Courtney Newton, Dr. Michelle Moore, and Dr. Gina Gibson.

Graves Announces Nearly \$1.3 Billion in Hurricane Funding from HUD

U.S. Congressman Garret Graves said that \$1,287,770,000 is allocated and related to natural disasters in 2020 and 2021. These funds are from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

So far, only \$600 million of \$5 billion had been allocated for those impacted by Louisiana's 2020 hurricanes. Graves said, "Within one month of Hurricane Ida's landfall, we secured billions of dollars in federal funding to help south Louisiana recover and are continuing to work on more funds. This is welcomed

news, but it shouldn't have taken six months for the funds to be allocated. We have hurricane victims that needed these funds back in September when we passed the law."

Breakdown of the current allocations are:

- * State of Louisiana is receiving \$1,272,346,000.
- * Baton Rouge is receiving \$4,648,000.
- * Lake Charles is receiving \$10,776,000.

Crisis Counseling Program Receives \$9.2M Additional Funding to Support Ida Survivors

The Louisiana Spirit Crisis Counseling Program (CCP) operating under the auspices of the Louisiana Department of Health's Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) is receiving \$9.2 million in additional funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The OBH announced that this funding will allow Hurricane Ida survivors access to disaster behavioral health and emotional support resources. FEMA awarded this supplemental funding through the Immediate and Regular Services Programs Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program grants. The funds allow OBH and five local governing entities to provide short-term crisis counseling

services to survivors located within the impacted communities. CCP services include reducing stress and providing emotional support; assisting survivors in reviewing their disaster recovery options; promoting the use or development of healthy coping strategies; connecting survivors with appropriate people and agencies that can assist providers in their rebuilding efforts; and referrals to other disaster recovery programs.

A resource available through CCP is the Keep Calm helpline at 866-310-7977, operated by VIA LINK, a local call center provider, available 24 hours a day,

Cybersecurity Expert Offers Essential Ideas for Defending Yourself and Your Clients, continued

by Leslie Todd, LCSW, ACSW
AFCC Correspondent

Steven Bradley began his career with the FBI, starting a task force which investigated technology and cyber-related crimes. Later, he worked with state coalitions and local domestic violence/sexual assault center as a liaison between law enforcement and community partners to better support survivors and victims. Today, he works with Our Family Wizard to promote healthy communication between co- parents via technology. He has been an international trainer for over 25 years, and recently presented at the AFCC-LA State Conference on March 18th on this subject. He agreed to share further information with *The Psychology Times* regarding handling the very difficult cyber abuse issues our clients may bring in—and tips for protecting ourselves as well.

First, let's start with Bradley's pet peeve: people who don't use passwords, or use them poorly. Your first defense against hacking is to have a complex password, and to keep it private. Too many of us still use lazy and highly guessable ones like "12345" or "password"-- and many people don't even put a password on their smartphones. If you worry about not being able to keep up with all your passwords (and no, you should not use one password for everything), then allow your device to generate a complex password which will then be stored for you. And do NOT tape it to your laptop or otherwise leave it handy for others to discover.

So—sloppy security starts with sloppy passcode management. If you have a client who is endangered or may be at risk of being stalked, have them list ALL their social media and other sensitive sites and discuss changing their passwords and security questions to things the stalker could not possibly know. That means no birthdays, pet or child names, or any other easily-guessed information. Remember to have them check medical portals as well.

Thanks to "the internet of things," it is possible that your client is being monitored via a car's nav system or some other device. Make sure you discuss with your clients what technologies are being used such as Bluetooth, GPS, On-Star, etc.

Bradley stresses that we should all keep our Bluetooth OFF unless we are actively using it, because it is easily hacked. Also public access internet, such as in hotels or cafes, is highly vulnerable to hacking. Malicious software can be installed, including tracking devices. And remember to check the location services in a phone's settings to be sure you or your client is not giving away your location. Bradley noted that when he was to meet an abused client at court, he would first meet with them near the courthouse in a fast-food place, where they would both then turn off their location and Bluetooth settings. After court, they would return to the same fast-food place or gas station and turn them back on. That way, anyone monitoring would only track them to the innocuous site and not know about Court or other more sensitive destination.

Also, check with your vulnerable client to see if they have devices that were provided by the suspected person. If a cellphone has been provided by the abusive party, ask your client to consider using a donated or new cell phone. Same for a computer. If the client is looking for a new place to live or making travel plans, ask them to use a computer at a public library.

The client should also update all privacy settings on any dating sites and social media sites (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, TikTok, etc.) and be very wary of what they post. Remember that pictures and images can be searched as well as names and words.

Another way to safeguard a phone is to choose an optional service, like Google Voice, to keep a personal number safe. Some of these services will let you forward calls and messages to up to five different phones while you simple have one phone number. That way, if the client's number is compromised, they can log in and change one phone number instead of having to contact the phone company to change many.

Other than tracking people, cyberhacking can allow the bad guys to "spoof" your phone. This means that you may answer a call which looks like it's coming from your mom, but it is really the hacker. Spoofing allows threatening texts to show up from anonymous numbers (or highjacked ones, like Mom's.) In one of



my high-conflict divorce cases, each of the spouses was spoofing their OWN phones with threats ostensibly from their ex.

As a mental health professional, you may have tried to secure your office space and your files—but your cellphone and your car may betray you. Bradley points out that a judge may feel safe in her courtroom, but once she gets in her car, she is as vulnerable as the next person unless she takes cyber precautions to safeguard her devices (including her car). In a world where our clients can Google images of our home and family, we need to keep this in mind.

If you do work with court systems or government agencies, you should know that they often publish records online. Ask them how they protect or publish your records and request that access to your files is sealed or restrict to protect you and your client's safety.

Bradley lives in this cyberworld everyday, but understands that we are far less aware than he is. He notes that he most common mistake he sees professionals make is to brush off a client's suspicion that someone may be monitoring them. Since abusers love to make their clients feel or look crazy, we should be wary not to add to the gaslighting. Abusers can use highly subtle methods that will make your client sound paranoid. For instance, I had a client who would frequently find she had a flat tire in the morning. She assumed she was hitting nails around a construction site—until her mechanic pointed out the frequency and types of punctures and boldly asked her if she was going through a divorce. Bingo. She ended up seeking counseling, and we discovered many more dangerous indications of stalking.

Bradley's talk was such a hit at our AFCC-LA State Conference that we are going to have him return to do a half-day training later in the year, specifically for mental health and legal professionals. We'll be sure to publicize that event. Meanwhile, if you'd like a handout from Bradley on this basic information, email me at Leslie.todd@leslietodd.com and I'll pass it along to you.

[Editor's Note: Leslie Todd served as the founding President of the Louisiana Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC). Her contributions were acknowledged by AFCC when they named her an "AFCC Ambassador," a designation exemplifying the collegial and collaborative spirit of AFCC membership.]



Environment and Health Council of Louisiana to Address Coastal Resiliency

The Environment and Health Council of Louisiana (EHCL) is hosting its annual conference on April 21 at Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge. This year’s conference theme is “Coastal Resiliency—Louisiana Initiatives.”

The most recent conference focused on Medical Marijuana in Louisiana. Other conferences have explored the topics of Living a Better Life in Louisiana, Effective Water Management, Diabetes, a Report Card 2 years later on the 2010 Oil Spill, Alzheimer’s Disease and Obesity in Children.

The 2022 conference will feature Charles Sutcliffe, Chief Resiliency Officer for the state; Chip Kline, Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Chair; and Ramsey Green, CAO and Resiliency Chief in the Mayor’s Office New Orleans.

They will discuss Coastal Governmental Initiatives. A review of Coastal Resiliency Research Initiatives will be led by Dr.Traci Birch; LSU School of Architecture and Dr. Nina Lam with LSU Environmental Studies. Providing a perspective on Local Initiatives to manage the coast will be provided by Archie Chaisson, President of Lafourche Parish. Wrapping up the conference will be a discussion of the History and Culture of Coastal Resiliency. Dr. Mike Pasquier of LSU Religious Studies and History and Dr. Craig Colten of the Water Institute of the Gulf will lead that discussion.

The event is free and open to the public. Pre-registration is suggested 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 assessment of health issues related to the environmental and economic wellbeing of Louisiana by providing a forum for developing perspectives on health and environmental issues and assisting the public in understanding those issues.

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 isProfessor in Behavioral Medicine at Pennington.

Stress Solutions

by Susan Andrews, PhD

Acute Stress is Helpful... Chronic Stress is Harmful

Of course, the key to successful management of stress is recognizing acute stress from chronic stress. So many things stress us during the average day that it is hard to be aware of when acute stress becomes chronic stress. Webster defines acute in this context as “characterized by sudden onset...and lasting a short time.” Webster gives 136 synonyms and antonyms of acute. The word, acute, comes from the Latin word, acutus, meaning sharpened, pointed, having a violent onset, and less than a 90-degree angle. If your nervous system is healthy, it redresses itself when the acute stress is over and is better off for the process in many cases.

On the other hand, the meaning of chronic according to Mr. Webster is “continuing for a long time or returning often.” Of interest, there are only 41 synonyms of the word, chronic. In medical care, an illness that lasts more than 90 days is considered chronic. The Greek root of chronic is time. The psychological context of chronic stress is more like habitual, returning often.

The difference between Helpful and Harmful is based on how successful the person is at managing their stress. If a person is in a chronically stressful situation, good management has to include frequent breaks during which you can clear your mind, think, and do something relaxing and happy-making before returning to the stressful situation either in your mind or in action.

So, there really are two important keys involved in keeping stress from becoming harmful: 1) Learn how to recognize when you are in stress. 2) Learn how to best manage your stress to keep it acute (i.e., by taking frequent breaks) and finding things you can do that are relaxing. Or, if your stress primarily comes from your mind and the fact that you have a busy mind and your mind seldom or never shuts off, then finding a way to clear your mind long enough to reduce the body’s stress reaction.

Sadly, many of us tend to deny that we are under stress, therefore failing to recognize it. There are so many triggers and situations that produce the stress hormones, but none are as present as our mind and thinking. Do you remember those childhood years when an adult might have said: “What were you thinking?” And, the response was truthfully, “Nothing!”

Well, for most of us, those days are long gone. That is why the technique that is now called, Mindfulness, is sweeping the world. It is easy to do for anyone and if done often enough it will produce the desired result of a peaceful, quiet mind. Mindfulness only takes a minute or two to do and the only thing most people have to do is sit back, close your eyes, focus on your breathing, and spend a quiet, mindful minute or two. Try it right now. It only takes a minute. Your To Do List can wait a moment.



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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Rep. Jefferson's HB 272 Changes Law for Divorce Evaluations

HB 272, authored by Rep. Jefferson provides, for mental health evaluations in divorce and child custody proceedings. A notation indicates that the bill is on the recommendation of the Louisiana State Law Institute.

The present law (R.S. 9:327) allows a court to order a mental health evaluation of the parties when determining an award of final spousal support. The proposed law requires the appointed mental health professional to be licensed. Additionally, new language states:

"C. 'Licensed mental health professional' as used in this Chapter means a person who possesses at least a master's degree and who is licensed in counseling, social work, psychology, or marriage and family counseling.

"D. When a licensed mental health professional has been appointed by the court, there shall be no ex parte communication by the litigants or their attorneys with the licensed mental health professional unless authorized by law or court order or agreed to by the parties. All oral communication with the licensed mental health professional shall be by teleconference or meeting in which each party to the proceeding participates either through the party's attorney or as a self-represented litigant. All written communication or correspondence to the licensed mental health professional, along with any attachments thereto, shall be provided contemporaneously to all parties to the litigation or their attorneys of record."

The measure was reported favorably at out of the Committee on Civil Law and Procedure, March 29.

HB 517 Creates Medical Advisory Council for Dept. of Corrections

Present law (R.S. 15:827) outlines the duties of Department of Public Safety & Corrections, or DPS&C. The proposed law creates the DPS&C Medical Advisory Council composed of 13 members from each of the following disciplines or associations: orthopedic surgery; obstetrics or gynecology; cardiology; interventional pain management; family practice; physical and occupational medicine; oncology; psychology or psychiatry; general internal medicine; La. State University School of Medicine dean, or designee; Tulane Medical School dean, or designee; Xavier University College of Pharmacy, or designee; and La. Dept. of Health director, or designee.

Present law provides that the professional association that represents each discipline shall provide the secretary with three nominees. The secretary shall choose the representative to represent their respective discipline on the council and the secretary may appoint additional representatives.

The measure has been referred to the Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice.

HB 582 Adds Louisiana to Professional Counselor Interstate Compact

HB 582 by Rep. Stagni adds Louisiana to the Licensed Professional Counselor Interstate Compact. Proposed law allows Louisiana to join the Licensed Professional Counselor Interstate Compact. Louisiana, as a participating state, to adopt the same uniform professional counseling licensure requirements as the states in the Licensed Professional Counselor Interstate Compact. Proposed law establishes telehealth technology for states in the Compact.



Rep. Firmment Seeks to Prohibit Gender Change Procedures on Those Under 18 Years of Age

HB 570 by Rep. Firmment prohibits certain procedures to alter the sex of a minor child and to designate this act as the Save Adolescents from Experimentation (SAFE) Act. The bill is pending in Committee on Health and Welfare.

Proposed law states that the risks associated with the allowance of irreversible, permanently sterilizing genital gender reassignment surgery outweigh the scientific benefits.

The author notes "It is a grave concern to the Legislature of Louisiana that the medical community is allowing individuals who experience distress at identifying with their biological sex to be subjects of irreversible, and drastic non-genital gender reassignment surgery and irreversible, permanently sterilizing genital gender reassignment surgery, despite the lack of studies showing that the benefits of such extreme interventions outweigh the risks.

"Studies consistently demonstrate that the vast majority of children who are gender non-conforming or experience distress at identifying with their biological sex come to identify with their biological sex in adolescence or adulthood, thereby rendering most medical healthcare interventions unnecessary.

"Scientific studies show that individuals struggling with distress at identifying with their biological sex often have already experienced psychopathology, which indicates these individuals should be encouraged to seek mental healthcare services before undertaking any hormonal or surgical intervention."

Rep. Firmment's proposed law prohibits any physician or other medical healthcare professional from performing any gender transition procedures on any person under 18 years of age or referring any person under 18 years of age to any medical doctor for gender transition procedures.

The proposed law prohibits school personnel from encouraging or coercing a minor to withhold from the minor's parent or legal guardian the fact that the minor's perception of his gender is inconsistent with his sex.

"Only a tiny percent of the American population experiences distress at identifying with their biological sex. According to the American Psychiatric Association, prevalence ranges from five thousandths of a percent to fourteen thousandths of a percent for natal adult males and from two thousandths of a percent to four thousandths of a percent for natal females."

HB 605 Bans Health Professionals from "Conversion Therapy" with Minors

HB 605, authored by Representatives Landry, Duplessis, and Freeman, define "conversion therapy" and prohibit certain licensed health professionals from engaging in that practice with any minor. The bill is pending in the Committee on Health and Welfare.

Proposed law sets forth legislative findings relative to the practice known as conversion therapy including the following:

- (1) "Conversion therapy" is a general term that encompasses practices intended to change a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or two-spirit individual's sexual orientation, gender identity, or both.
- (2) According to the American Psychiatric Assoc., there is no rigorous scientific research supporting claims that an unwanted sexual orientation can be "cured" through any method.
- (3) The American Psychological Assoc., American Psychiatric Assoc., and American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry have all taken public positions against the use of conversion therapy.

The proposed law defines "conversion therapy", for purposes of proposed law, as any practice or treatment conducted without a person's consent which is intended to change the person's sexual orientation or gender identity, including efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions, or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same sex or gender.

The measure provides that conversion therapy includes all of the following:

- (1) Any practice by a healthcare provider that attempts or purports to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity conducted without the person's consent.
- (2) Any practice by a healthcare provider that attempts or purports to change the behavioral expression of a person's sexual orientation or gender identity conducted without the person's consent.
- (3) Any practice by a healthcare provider that attempts or purports to eliminate or reduce a person's sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same sex or gender conducted without the person's consent.



SB 34 Changes Online Meetings for Advisory Committees at LSBME

Present law provides for advisory committees to the La. State Board of Medical Examiners (LSBME) relative to occupations regulated by the board such as medical psychology, physician assistant, polysomnography, and others.

SB 34 provides that an advisory committee of the LSBME which is comprised of members from various locations statewide, and which acts only in an advisory capacity, may conduct and its members may attend and participate in a meeting via electronic means if the board and the advisory committee and its presiding officer comply with all the requirements of proposed law.

The proposed law provides for public notice and participation requirements including the publication, no later than 24 hours prior to a meeting conducted via electronic means, of a notice and agenda for the meeting and detailed information regarding how members of the public may participate in the meeting and submit comments regarding matters on the agenda.

SB 34 further requires the advisory committee to provide a mechanism to receive public comment electronically both prior to and during the meeting and to properly identify and acknowledge all public comments during the meeting and maintain those comments in its record of the meeting.

The proposed law provides that the presiding officer of the advisory committee shall ensure that each person participating in the meeting is properly identified and all parts of the meeting, excluding any matter discussed in executive session, are clear and audible to all participants in the meeting including the public.

The measure is pending in Senate and Governmental Affairs.

Rep. Seabaugh Seeks Change in Orders for Added Medical Opinions

HB 705 by Rep. Seabaugh provides for the procedure and orders for additional medical opinions regarding physical or mental conditions in controversy. The bill is pending in the Committee on Civil Law and Procedure.

The language includes "examinations by vocational rehabilitation or licensed clinical psychologist opinions if the party has been given notice."

The present law provides that when the mental or physical condition of a party is in controversy, the court may order the party submit to an additional medical opinion.

The proposed law changes present law and requires the party to submit to an examination as soon after the incident that caused the action in controversy as demanded and from time to time thereafter as often as reasonably necessary.

The proposed law changes present law and provides that a party shall submit to additional medical opinion examinations by vocational rehabilitation or licensed clinical psychologist opinions if the party has been given notice.

Present law provides that regardless of the number of defendants, a plaintiff shall not be ordered to submit to multiple examinations by multiple physicians within the same field of specialty for the same injury except for good cause.

The proposed law supersedes present law in circumstances when the party has placed more than one mental or physical condition in controversy, where the court shall, upon motion of the opposing party, order separate examinations regarding each mental or physical condition placed in controversy.

Sen. Luneau's SB 213 to Approve APA Interns, and Other Changes

The present law provides that an individual rendering any CPST services for a licensed and accredited provider agency shall hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college in the field of counseling, social work, psychology, or sociology.

Sen. Luneau's proposed law changes present law to require an individual rendering the assessment and treatment planning components of CPST services to be a fully licensed mental health professional. Proposed law further provides that an individual rendering all other components of CPST services shall be a fully licensed mental health professional, a provisionally licensed professional counselor, a provisionally licensed marriage and family therapist, a licensed master social worker, a certified social worker, or a psychology intern from an American Psychological Association approved internship program.

The present law provides that "community psychiatric support and treatment services" (CPST) are CMS-approved Medicaid mental health rehabilitation services to assist individuals with skill building designed to reduce disability from mental illness, restore functional skills of daily living, and build natural supports and solution-oriented interventions, or such other successor services or requirements subsequently approved by CMS or the La. Dept. of Health.

Proposed law deletes present law language regarding successor services and specifies that CPST services are intended to achieve identified person-centered goals or objectives through counseling, clinical psycho-education, and ongoing monitoring needs as set forth in an individualized treatment plan.

Present law provides that "psychosocial rehabilitation services" (PSR) are CMS-approved Medicaid mental health rehabilitation services provided to individuals with mental illness designed to assist the individual with compensating for or eliminating functional deficits and interpersonal or environmental barriers associated with mental illness, or such other successor services or requirements subsequently approved by CMS or LDH.

Proposed law deletes present law language regarding successor services and specifies that PSR services use skill building to restore and rehabilitate social and interpersonal skills and daily living skills. The measure is pending in committee.



Rep. Duplessis Seeks to Establish Perinatal Anxiety Disorders Act

HB 784 by Rep. Duplessis establishes the Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders Act to improve awareness, screening, and treatment of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders.

Proposed law provides for awareness of all hospitals and birthing centers that provide labor and delivery services.

Proposed law requires screening from healthcare providers who are providing postnatal care to women up to twelve months following the birth.

Proposed law requires the La. Dept. of Health office of behavioral health, in collaboration with the Bureau of Family Health, to develop and disseminate a database of providers who treat or provide support for maternal mood and anxiety disorders and substance use disorders.

"A shortage of perinatal mental health providers who accept Medicaid is a public health issue of concern in this state and has resulted in a shortage of quality providers for Medicaid recipients. Louisiana's Medicaid Program is hereby authorized to take action as appropriate to increase the number of Medicaid providers [...]"

Sen. Barrow Suggests Domestic Violence Offender Registry

SB 365 by Sen. Barrow creates the State Domestic Violence Offender Registry.

SB 365 requires the Louisiana Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information to develop and maintain a central registry which will contain the information transmitted to the bureau pursuant to the provisions of proposed law.

The proposed law requires the offender to provide personal information within 21 days of the date of conviction, if the offender is not taken into custody at the time of conviction, or within 21 days of the date of release from confinement or within 21 days of establishing residency in the locale where the offender plans to have his domicile.

"Psychiatric Collaborative Care Model" Focus of Rep. Echols' HB 278

HB 278 by Rep. Echols provides requirements for the psychiatric Collaborative Care Model and requires mental health or substance abuse benefits for services delivered through the model. The bill is pending in the Insurance Committee.

The proposed law requires a health coverage plan delivered or issued for delivery in this state that provides mental health and substance abuse benefits to reimburse for such benefits that are delivered through the psychiatric Collaborative Care Model. The model includes the current procedural terminology (CPT) billing codes 99492, 99493, and 99494.

Proposed law requires the commissioner of insurance to update the CPT codes if there are any alterations or additions to the billing codes for the Collaborative Care Model.

Proposed law authorizes a health coverage plan to deny reimbursement of any CPT code provided in proposed law on the grounds of medical necessity, provided that such medical necessity determinations are in compliance with certain federal and state law.

Defined are: (2) "Mental health or substance abuse benefits" means benefits for the treatment of any condition or disorder that involves a mental health condition or substance use disorder that falls under any of the diagnostic categories listed in the mental disorders section of the current edition of the International Classification of Diseases or that is listed in the mental disorders section of the most recent version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. (3) "Psychiatric Collaborative Care Model" means the evidence-based, integrated behavioral health service delivery method described in 81 FR 80230.

Louisiana Researchers Presented at SEPA in South Carolina

The Southeastern Psychological Association held its Annual Meeting last month in South Carolina. Among those presenting were students of Dr. Erin Dupuis, faculty sponsor from Loyola University, and students from Louisiana State University, with faculty member Dr. Mary Lou Kelley.

Taylor Standberry and Dr. Dupuis presented their research, "The Association Between Online Gaming Relationships, Social Support, and the COVID-19 Pandemic." The aim was to examine the possible association between the COVID-19 pandemic, social support, and online gaming relationships.

The authors note, "Previous research has shown that high levels of social support can act as a buffer against stress and can increase well-being. Individuals get social support in various ways, including playing video games. Our study had a primary focus on Massively Multiplayer Online Roleplaying Games (MMORPGs). MMORPGs are a genre of online video games where players join a world inhabited by other players' characters and they often cooperate with other players to complete in-game tasks."

Participants completed the MMORPG Game Involvement Scale (Dupuis & Ramsay, 2011), and the Interpersonal Support Evaluation Scale to measure perceived emotional support from friends, with subscale for tangible support, belonging support, self-esteem support, and appraisal support.

"Playing online games during the pandemic was associated with increased levels of belonging, self-esteem, and social involvement in MMORPGs. The implications of these findings are that playing these games may be helpful during world-wide emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, in maintaining social support and online gaming relationships when individuals cannot give and receive this support through direct, in-person methods."

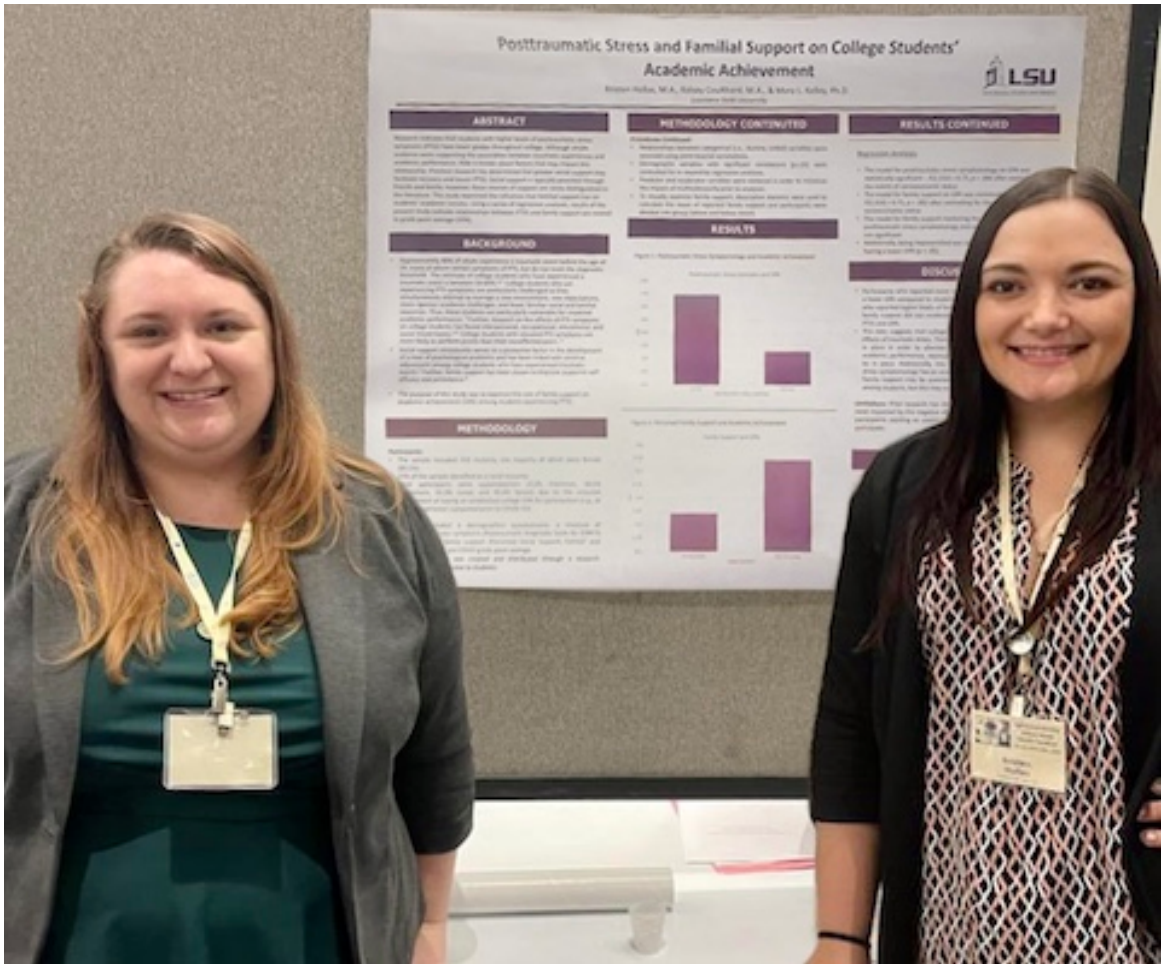
Ms. Standberry said, "This is my first time attending a big conference such as SEPA, so I am really excited to see other undergraduates' work as well as share the data Dr. Dupuis and I collected!"

Adrian Ridley and Dr. Dupuis presented their design for an ongoing project, "The Relation Between Differing Kinds of Fear and Compassion."

The authors note that fear is a survival response and is inherently self-interest based. Because of this it is associated with reduced empathy and compassion for others. Their research attempts to explain this relationship further by separating fear into specific subcategories of fright and dread.

From Louisiana State University, Kelsey Coulthard, Kristen Hollas, and faculty member Dr. Mary Lou Kelley, presented, "Coping Behavior Across Adults and Genders."

Coping, is categorized by problem-based and emotion-based, and across positive



Kelsey Coulthard (L) and Kristen Hollas, students of Dr. Mary Lou Kelley at Louisiana State University Baton Rouge, presented at the Southeastern Psychological Association last month in South Carolina. (courtesy photo)

(approach & adaptive) and negative (avoidant & maladaptive) strategies. "Positive coping skills include meditation and receiving social support which are associated with positive outcomes. Negative coping methods such as behavioral disengagement and substance use which are associated with more negative outcomes.

"Numerous studies have examined coping styles in specific groups or clinical samples such as adolescents, college students, and minorities but few have examined general adult populations. [...] The present study examines coping styles across a diverse, adult sample."

The researchers found that age is a significant predictor for several coping responses. Younger adults were more likely to use negative coping styles, maladaptive and avoidant coping strategies. Older adults were more likely to use approach-based positive coping. Adaptive coping skills tended to be used more by older adults but this this was not statistically significant. Gender identity was significantly associated with different coping styles.

"These results suggest differences between both age groups and sexes regarding the types of coping skills used. The implications from this data help us understand how adults respond to stressful situations. Specifically, younger adults were more likely to use negative coping strategies compared to older adults, who were likely to use positive coping skills. Further, female participants were more likely to use more coping skills, both positive and negative, compared to men."

Kristen Hollas, Kelsey Coulthard, and Dr. Kelley also presented, "Posttraumatic

Stress and Familial Support on College Students' Academic Achievement."

Authors note that research indicates that students with higher levels of posttraumatic stress symptoms (PTSS) have lower grades and that greater social support may facilitate recovery and lessen PTSS. For this study, initial analyses indicated that familial support was significantly correlated with GPA. "After controlling for the effects of race and socioeconomic status, hierarchical regressions revealed that family support did not moderate the relationship between PTSS and GPA, due to the interaction term between PTSS and family support being insignificant. However, individual regression analyses found significant relationships between PTSS and GPA, PTSS and family support, as well as GPA and family support. Additionally, being impoverished was significantly associated with having a lower GPA."

From the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Taylar Johnson and Dr. Manyu Li, presented "Fandom Communities' Engagement in Black Lives Matters Digital Activism: A Study of Intragroup Processes." (See the March issue of the *Times*.)

Also at the Southeastern Psychological Association were members of the LSU Health Sciences Center who presented a workshop, " Making a Difference: Breaking the Intergenerational Cycle of Foster Care Through Baby Court Team."

Presenting were Amy Dickson, PsyD, Sebastian Del Corral Winder, PsyD, and Amy Rinner, PsyD, all from LSU Health Sciences Center.

Louisiana Researchers Converge on Baton Rouge for the Southwestern Psychological Association Annual Conference, continued

Researchers at SWPA include those from Loyola, LSU Alexandria, LSU Shreveport, McNeese State University, Northwestern State University, Southeastern Louisiana University, University of Louisiana Lafayette, University of Louisiana Monroe and other independent researchers.

LOYOA UNIVERSITY

"Relationship Between Social Media and Undergraduates' Friendship Development"

Angelica Hofstetter and co-author Kim Ernst, PhD, both of Loyola University New Orleans, will be presenting, "Relationship Between Social Media and Undergraduates' Friendship Development."

The authors note that "the intricacies of friendship development during adolescence" are important because these "relationships have lasting influences on personal identity and social behaviors [...] Furthermore, social media is changing how people interact and form relationships with one another."

Researchers investigated whether "individuals would rate social media profiles that display a similar level of extraversion to their own as more socially attractive than profiles that display a different level of extraversion. Four mock Instagram profiles, created by the researchers, depicted 1 of 2 levels of extraversion: high and low. The Big Five Inventory was used to measure participants' extraversion."

The results revealed a significant correlation between "participants' high extraversion and perceived social attractiveness of profiles that display extravert characteristics," suggesting "a relationship between similarity of extraversion and perceived social attractiveness of social media profiles for extraverts. More data are needed to determine if this relationship might occur in introverts."

"The present research contributes to a growing body of evidence suggesting that individuals prefer friends that have similar personalities."

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY ALEXANDRIA

"Vaccine-preventable illnesses kill more people than necessary because of vaccine hesitancy"

"Vaccine-preventable illnesses kill more people than necessary because of vaccine hesitancy," will be presented by Ronna Matthews, with co-authors Mark LaCour, PhD, and Zebulon Kade Bell, PhD, all from LSU Alexandria.

Researchers examined the thought processes of vaccine skeptics. Participants chose between simulated gambles and then took a vaccine attitude survey. The gamble decisions were used to estimate people's risk preferences according to Prospect Theory. A previous study found that people's willingness to try the yet-to-be-released COVID-19 vaccine and the seasonal flu vaccine is associated with a greater willingness for risk-taking. However, this study measured willingness for risk-taking in a way that is ambiguous.

"We found the opposite of the past study. By linking participants' gamble choices to clearer measurements of people's willingness to take risks, we found that general vaccine acceptance is related to risk aversion (not risk seeking) and that skepticism towards the COVID-19 vaccine, in particular, was not related to risk-taking.

"Researchers and public health advocates should not assume that the public views getting vaccines as risky behavior. Public health messaging should emphasize and explain the risks of not vaccinating.

"Political Influences on Vaccine Hesitancy"

Madelyn Clark, of Louisiana State University at Alexandria, will be presenting "Political Influences on Vaccine Hesitancy."

Clark found that, "People higher in self-reported conservatism were more likely to say that their attitudes towards vaccines in general have changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Conservatives also reported that their attitudes toward the COVID -19 vaccine are

separate from how they feel about other vaccines such as the flu vaccine or MMR."

The researcher also found higher levels of distrust among the conservatives toward the government and other institutions such as the pharmaceutical industry.

"How to communicate risk factors effectively when making decisions"

Gavin Ray James Janise of Louisiana State University of Alexandria will present, "How to communicate risk factors effectively when making decisions."

"The purpose of this study was to show how important it is to effectively communicate the risks associated with several real-world decisions (e.g., medical, retail). We also sought to investigate the way in which common verbal probability qualifiers (e.g., "very rare", "is possible") affect decisions compared to numerical qualifiers (e.g., "1% chance", "1 in 1000 chance").

"We asked people to make a hypothetical decision with one of 7 probability qualifiers across 3 decision contexts (vaccine, abstract, and retail). There were 4 verbal conditions and 3 numerical conditions. We analyzed the proportions of people making risk-averse decisions in each context.

"When the risks were communicated verbally more people made the risk-averse decision. When the risks were communicated numerically most people showed very little risk aversion, even if the numerical probabilities were on vastly different orders of magnitude.

"A qualitative assessment of undergraduate research opportunities at peer institutions"

"A qualitative assessment of undergraduate research opportunities at peer institutions," will be presented by Logan Duff, LSU Alexandria.

Based on the results, it appears universities who take an active role in recruiting student participation have significantly higher levels of engagement. Regarding recruitment, all universities assessed with less structure or at the same level, rely upon students to seek out research experience. In contrast, the universities with more structure actively recruit students to their respective programs. The universities that have more funding available for undergraduate students have more easily accessible online resources that provide an overview of the structure of the research program."

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Louisiana Researchers Converge on Baton Rouge for the Southwestern Psychological Association Annual Conference, continued

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY SHREVEPORT

"Understanding trust: A cross-national comparison between Americans and Chinese"

Yong Dai, PhD, Goodloe Stuck Endowed Professor for Psychology, and Chair of Psychology Department at Louisiana State University in Shreveport, will present "Understanding trust: A cross-national comparison between Americans and Chinese."

Dr. Dai and his co-author Qing Zeng, PhD, from University of Texas Rio Grande Valley compared Americans and Chinese opinions on trust using the data set from a cross-national survey, known as "World Values Surveys and European Values Surveys Wave 7."

"This cross-national survey examined the basic values and attitudes of the peoples of more than 100 societies around the world. It provided standardized cross-cultural measures of people's values and goals concerning politics, economics, religions, sexual behavior, gender roles, family values, and ecological concerns.

"The sample selected for this study consisted of 2,596 U.S. participants with 1,390 males and 1,206 females, and 3,036 Chinese participants with 1,369 males and 1,667 females. Participants were asked to rate how much they trust the following entities: your family, your neighborhood, people you know personally, people you meet for the first time, people from another religion, and people of another nationality.

"Results indicated that there was a clear pattern of differences between American respondents and their Chinese counterparts in their views of how much they trust others. Chinese respondents indicted a higher level of trust for their family compared to American respondents." The Chinese also rated trust in their neighborhood higher then the Americans.

American respondents had more trust for people they know personally compared to their Chinese counterparts, and also indicated less distrust for people they meet for the first time than Chinese respondents. Chinese had less trust for people of another religion and less trust for people of another nationality than American respondents.

These findings reflected the differences between the current American and Chinese societies. These differences may reflect the cultural impact on the value systems of Americans and Chinese due to the differences between the individualistic versus collectivistic cultures.

McNEESE STATE UNIVERSITY

"Priming Self-Objectification and Body Competence through Mere Exposure"

Paige Phillips, of McNeese State University, along with co-authors Linda Brannon, PhD, and McNeese Department Head, Dena Matzenbacher, PhD, will be presenting, "Priming Self-Objectification and Body Competence through Mere Exposure."

According to the authors, many studies have analyzed only the effects of a sexually objectifying prime, but the present research partially replicated Roberts' and Gettman's use of a body competence prime to evaluate any mitigating effects of self-objectification. The researchers examined the main effects and interaction of self-objectification and body competence between gender and priming groups. Participants included 26 women and 24 men from an introductory psychology class at McNeese.

"Although the present study did not show significant effects, it was consistent with previous research that showed that mere exposure prompts self-objectification through media exposure. If mere exposure can induce self-objectification, perhaps it can also reduce those effects."

"Myths About Psychological Disorders and Treatment: Does Education Matter?"

"Myths About Psychological Disorders and Treatment: Does Education Matter?" is to be presented by Dena Matzenbacher, PhD,



Department Head at McNeese State University, and Linda Brannon, PhD, Professor at McNeese, along with Abigail Marie Fruge, Kane Richard Vest, MA, and Assistant Professor, Kevin Yaudes, PhD.

Work by Lilienfield and others produced a list of 50 common myths about psychology topics. "Our previous research using a 50-item true/false test revealed main effects of college classification and college major on myth acceptance (Brannon & Matzenbacher, 2013), as well as the effectiveness of various levels of involvement in myth-busting activities within an introductory psychology course in reducing myth acceptance (Brannon & Matzenbacher, 2015; Matzenbacher, Brannon, & Alexander, 2014)."

For this study, the researchers narrowed the focus to mental illness and treatment. "We developed an 81-item true/false test that included 16 true statements interspersed with 65 myths about various psychological disorders, suicide, and treatments for disorders. Higher scores on the assessment indicated greater accuracy, or lower endorsement of myths."

Researchers found "that greater exposure to psychology courses and completing more advanced psychology courses were significantly related to higher scores on a test of myths about psychological disorders, suicide, and treatment. This is to be expected, given that the most advanced course assessed was a course that covered these topics extensively. Interestingly, the introductory psychology course covered these topics for a full week just prior to these assessments. These data suggest that mere exposure is not the only factor involved in our results; rather, repeated exposures are necessary for "myth busting" to be effective. That finding provides a focus for future research, including an exploration of myths on specific components of our assessment (e.g., suicide and the stigma surrounding treatment seeking)."

SWPA Workshop: "Addressing the Complex Issue of Suicide with a Nascent Community-Based Model"

Kevin Yaudes, PhD, Dena Matzenbacher, PhD, and Sattaria S Dilks, PhD, will present a Workshop: Addressing the Complex Issue of Suicide with a Nascent Community-Based Model.

Panelists, who have been engaged on the topic of suicide prevention in many ways working with local, state, and national organizations, will address the complex topic of suicide from the perspective of a nascent community-based model for suicide prevention.

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Louisiana Researchers Converge on Baton Rouge for the Southwestern Psychological Association Annual Conference, continued

McNEESE STATE UNIVERSITY (Cont'd)

"A conceptual understanding of the suicidal client/patient must involve knowledge that spans suicide prevention to postvention. In addition, this understanding must include knowledge of community and school resources, requirements, and procedures. The panel will share their insight in working with suicidal intensity in a community in which the suicide rate is 42% higher than the national rate."

Two major themes have emerged:

"1. There is very little training on the topic, even for professionals. Locally, in Southwest Louisiana, there are three individuals who are trained as trainers for the evidence-based SafeTalk and ASSIST trainings; this is not enough for a population of 200,000+. In addition, even across CACREP accredited counseling programs, only 2% have curriculum-based training on risk. In other words, counseling programs typically graduate students who have little-to-no formal training on the topic.

"2. Communities can't get past the questions of 'What are the warning signs?' and 'What do we do when someone says they are thinking of killing themselves?' Although these questions are important, the topic of suicide is complex.

"Panelists have created a Suicide Education Program in the Kay Doré Counseling Clinic (KDCC) at McNeese State University with a training focus for students and the community.

"A Suicide Prevention Coalition in Southwest Louisiana that was established in January of this 2019; members work for local agencies/organizations with a vested interest in the topic of suicide. The first author is a member and other panelists have attended.

"KDCC was also was also a major contributor to the success of the Out of the Darkness Walk for suicide prevention held in September 2019 and 2021 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention which is the largest non-profit in the United Sates with suicide prevention, education, and research as its focus.

"KDCC also has an ongoing collaboration with a local high school which provides training to peer leaders and counseling to students as part of a peer-to-peer support system created in 2014 after a number of deaths by suicide at the high school. The focus of the collaboration is addressing suicidal ideation and issues which contribute to suicidal intensity (e.g., bullying)."



NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

"Grit: Passion and Perseverance of Marathoners"

Authors Susan Barnett, PhD, Department Chair, and Neeru Deep, MA, ABD, Northwestern State University of Louisiana and Tonja Fillippino, PhD, Associate Professor at Arkansas State University, will present, "Grit: Passion and Perseverance of Marathoners."

"What does it takes for a runner to become a marathoner? Is it passion or grit? Recent statistics reveals that about .05% of the United States population run a marathon (Track Shack, 2019). According to Masters, et al. (1993) there are 4 main categories of motives for running: 1) physical includes boosts energy, sleep benefits, weight loss, 2) social includes affiliation with other runners, approval from others, 3) psychological includes providing a sense of self-worth, coping with stress, and 4) achievement includes competition and personal goal setting. There may be other factors that make a runner a marathoner. The purpose of this study is to find whether passion or grit make a runner a marathoner. A qualitative research method will be used to gain insight from marathoners. Five marathoners, who have completed a minimum of five marathons, will be asked to participate in this study." Results will be presented.

"Effects of Attachment Styles and Rejection Sensitivity on Motives to Use Dating Apps."

Tierra Blair and Cynthia Ross Lindsey, Psy.D., Northwestern State University, will present the ongoing, "Effects of Attachment Styles and Rejection Sensitivity on Motives to Use Dating Apps."

"The use of online dating services has increased from 185 million users in 2015 to 270 million in 2020. [...]To better understand the allure, it will be beneficial to explore the motivation for using dating apps within the context of attachment theory and rejection sensitivity. Chin et al. (2018) reported anxiously attached individuals desire closeness and intimacy, which makes them more likely to use dating apps to seek relationships and gain sexual experience. They found avoidant individuals were less likely to utilize dating apps, given the apps encourage the development of closeness and intimacy. Individuals sensitive to rejection use dating apps for social approval because of the constant assurance the interactions provide (Romero-Canyas et al., 2010). 200 students enrolled in psychology courses at Northwestern University of Louisiana. Using SurveyMonkey, a demographic questionnaire, the Relationship Scale Questionnaire, Rejection Sensitivity RS-Adult Questionnaire, and the Dating App Motivation Scale will be administered to participants."

SWPA TALK: Helicopter parenting and self-efficacy: The effect on college students' academic entitlement

Authors Kellen Culpepper and Cynthia Ross Lindsey, PsyD, Northwestern State University, examined Helicopter parenting as a parenting style found to associate with academic entitlement in college students, in "Helicopter parenting and self-efficacy: The effect on college students' academic entitlement."

"The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between helicopter parenting, self-efficacy, and academic entitlement and the unique contribution of self-efficacy as a mediator of helicopter parenting and academic entitlement. The goal was to explore these relationships in the Generation population specifically. Studies deemed Millennials as the "most entitled generation" [...]

"Data were examined with 547 undergraduate students, including 335 Generation z, or iGen, students and 162 Millennials. Students born from 1982-1996 are deemed as Millennials, and students born from 1997-2012 are considered Generation z. Participants completed the Helicopter Parenting Scale, the New General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE), and the Academic Entitlement Scale (AES).

"Results of simple bivariate correlations suggested that academic entitlement was associated with helicopter parenting."

Continued coverage of SWPA researchers next month.

A Shrink at the Flicks

I'm Your Man A Review

by Alvin G. Burstein, PhD

This self-described Rom Com surprises with its wit, and its depth. The frothy wit with which it abounds is contrasted by flashes of tragic despair.

German written and acted, with subtitles, directed by Maria Schrader, it more than merits its many awards. The female lead, Maria Egert, won Best Acting Award in the 2021 Berlin International Film Festival. At the 2021 German Film Awards, Egert was named Best Actress; the male lead, Dan Stevens, Best Male Actor; and Schrader, Best Director.

Egert plays the role of Alma, a career-focused archeologist, seeking evidence of poetic writing in ancient relics. In pursuit of funding for her research team, she reluctantly agrees to serve as a subject in another study, one that explores the feasibility of using humanoid robots programed to adaptively modify their behavior, as humans' companions. She is to co-habit with a robot, Tom, for an extended period of time, and to evaluate the experience.

At a fanciful party where many of the attendees are holograms, Alma, while giddily brushing through hologramed guests, literally bumps into her proposed companion, whose appearance is that of an attractive young man. Tom invites Alma to dance, leading her in a hilariously extravagant tango, in the midst of which he begins to malfunction and is carried off for repairs.

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.



Once Tom is refitted, Alma drives him and his baggage to her apartment. The drive is the occasion for an awkward conversation during which Tom assures Alma that he is programmed to modify his behavior in the light of her preferences. Alma makes it clear that the relationship is to be more formal than intimate. As he explores his new setting, Tom notes a painting that Alma says was a gift from a friend. As the story unfolds, the “friend” is the father of Alma’s still-born child. Tom also notes a photo of Alma as a youngster, radiating happiness as she sits next to a male companion, coincidentally also named Tom. Alma tells Tom that the delightful male companion of her youth drifted away from her long ago.

Tom, in the hope of helping, speed-reads all the literature on the topic Alma and her team is researching, and discovers that a competitor has already published proof of the thesis Alma was seeking to confirm. Crushed, in an alcoholic daze, Alma has sex with Tom.

She suffers a second blow, learning that the partner that had given her the painting and fathered the unsuccessful pregnancy, has married another woman who is now pregnant.

Tom tries to comfort Alma and she begins to feel drawn to him, but ultimately despairs, telling Tom, “I’m acting in a play. But there’s no audience. All the seats are empty. I’m only acting for myself. Even right now, I’m only talking to myself. It’s not a dialogue,” a rueful acknowledgement of the psychological truth that without the gap of otherness, real love cannot exist. This confession becomes the framework of a second confession that closes the film.

Alma tells Tom to return to his factory. When she learns that Tom has not returned there but has disappeared, Alma becomes concerned. Looking for him, she returns to the site where she had last seen her childhood companion. She finds her robot companion waiting for her. The film ends with Alma confessing anguished feelings of loss and loneliness to Tom.

The movie is available on Hulu, Amazon and Netflix.

La Psychological Association to Host APA Past-Pres. Dr. Jennifer Kelly at Convention

The Louisiana Psychological Association will host Dr. Jennifer Kelly, clinical health psychologist and past president of the American Psychological Association, at their 2022 Spring convention to be held April 8–9 at the New Orleans Marriott Lakeway. Dr. Kelly will deliver the *Janet and Lee Mathews Invited Address*.

Dr. Kelly was elected the 2021 President of the American Psychological Association. She most recently served as Co-Chair of the newly formed Advocacy Coordinating Committee of the American Psychological Association Services, Inc. She served on the Board of Directors as Recording Secretary for APA from 2013-2018. Prior to that, she served on the Board as a member-at-large.

She has held other leadership positions within APA including service on the Council of Representatives for six years, Past-Chair of the Board of Professional Affairs, member of the Committee for the Advancement of Professional Practice (CAPP), Past-Chair of the Committee of State Leaders, Past-President of the Division of State, Provincial, and Territorial Psychological Association Affairs (Division 31), Division 29 Member-at-large, and numerous task-forces. She served on the Board of Trustees of the Association for the Advancement of Psychology (PAC) and was Chair of the Board 2008-2009.

She was the 2012 recipient of the APA Division of Health Psychology/American Psychological Foundation Timothy B. Jeffrey Award for Outstanding Contributions to Clinical Health Psychology. In 2011 she was presented with the Diversity Award from the Committee of State Leaders of APA. She received the Outstanding Psychologist Award from Division 31 of APA in 2006.



Dr. Jennifer Kelly

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