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Editor’s Column
Specialist Editor, Kristine T. Kingsley

It is indeed a humbling distinction to be appointed the next Editor to The Specialist. Dr. Katherine Jones, as the outgoing Editor and ABPP Board of Trustees member of the ABPP Board of Trustees leaves behind an established legacy, which is hard to surpass. My primary intention in accepting this position was and is to serve as a conduit among all 15 specialties, members of the board and the academies, as well as new and seasoned colleagues. Keeping the limelight onto current projects, accomplishments, and endeavors, remains of outmost importance, to our readership and the editors of this newsletter as well. Furthermore, we would like to share with you the personal anecdotes, dreams, and reflections of our board certified members. In the months to come, in addition to what is new and cutting edge among, I aspire to share with you, our readers, the journeys of great leaders, healers and storytellers of all kinds. For now, allow me to introduce to you a diverse and thought provoking content, which was comprised by a number of intriguing contributors, which our editorial committee managed to put together. Please join us in reading some excellent articles on:

- a) How does one approach ethically challenging situations in his/her practice?
- b) How do we treat ourselves with kindness?
- c) What are the intricacies of family systems in relation to cultural sensitivity and competencies?
- d) How do you achieve board certification while serving your country? Counseling Psychology in the Armed Forces.
- e) What is the value of volunteerism for those of us who are board certified: a personal journey.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all my colleagues who took the time to write such wonderful articles, and to my colleagues in Central Office, David Cox, Nancy McDonald & Diane Butcher for their guidance and support.

All the very best,
Kristine T. Kingsley, PsyD

Submission Guidelines

- The theme and content of submitted articles should be consistent with ABPP interests and issues: specialization, credentialing, board certification, and the functional and foundational competencies. Questions regarding suitability for the Specialist and other questions may be directed to the Editor, at thespecialist@abpp.org.
- The BOT, Editor, or Communications Committee may initiate requests for submissions on particular themes and topics.
- The BOT, Editor, or Communications Committee may solicit or invite contributions from individuals and organizations.
- Unsolicited submissions will also be considered for publication, subject to the approval of the BOT, Editor, or Communications Committee.
The length requirements for submissions are as follows:
Board and Academy News – maximum of 800 words
Feature articles – maximum of 1000 words
Continuing education articles may be of any length
• Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.
• Submissions may be in any manuscript style appropriate to the content. APA Publications Manual style need not be followed.
• All submissions are subject to being linked to ABPP’s social media platforms.
• Submissions should be made by e-mail attachment in Word to the Editor’s attention at thespecialist@abpp.org. The submission attachment document itself should clearly identify the author(s).
• All submissions will be subject to review and acceptance or rejection by the BOT, Editor, or Communications Committee. Authors may be asked for revisions based on the review.
Executive Officer Update
By David R. Cox, PhD, ABPP

Consumer warning: this is lengthy…..

A significant aspect of my role as Executive Officer of ABPP is to serve as the face of ABPP and connect with other organizations. A great number of meetings traditionally take place in the spring and fall seasons. This year has been no exception. In the following paragraphs I will try to summarize some pretty significant goings happening across our professional field.

More specifically, I will provide you with information on a) the current status of central office; b) the renewal of our continuing education application with the American Psychological Association (APA); c) an update on the progress made with respect to technical software as well as website, and d) some upcoming publications relative to specialization and ABPP.

Report of liaison activities through mid-April:

APA Council of Representatives (COR) Meeting & APA Psychology Leadership Conference (PLC) (formerly State Leadership Conference) - March 9-12

The COR meeting was historic. APA COR voted roughly 90% to 10% on two separate motions that affect the field at large and members of the APA.

One vote was about the “merger” of membership in the two corporations, a 501c3 and 501c6, which represent the APA and APA Practice Organizations (APAPo), respectively. In spite of the independence of the two corporations, membership dues will be shared between both organizations. The hope of APA governance is that this will provide ongoing funding for the APAPo (which will be renamed the APA Institute for Psychology), advocacy for all areas of psychology, and other anticipated benefits.

An additional vote was to pursue accreditation of Master’s Degree programs. This is monumental shift from 70 years of ignoring the issue or discussing it and, essentially, “kicking it down the road.” The implications of this for the profession are vast and significant in that it is presumed that once accreditation standards are established, there will be a push to establish scope of practice and licensing for Master’s trained individuals. Even though there does not appear to be an immediate or short-term impact for ABPP, as matters progress we will need to consider if/how the change in the sequence of training might be incorporated into our credentials requirements and reviews.

Additionally, APAP COR and PLC provided an opportunity for interacting with numerous leaders and executive directors of state psychological associations, as well as constituencies within APA.

Much discussion was held about the decisions voted on at COR and how those votes (especially the Master’s degree vote) may affect members of state psychological associations, who are primarily doctoral trained practitioners. PLC included many concurrent workshops of which I attended the following: a) “Seizing Opportunities and Thinking Broadly to Advance Practice” (chaired by Arthur Evans, PhD; APA CEO) focused on “cutting edge” areas of practice; b) “Perspectives on the Master’s Issue” (chaired by Katherine Nordal, PhD; APAPo Executive Director) which focused on the accreditation of master’s degree programs. Lastly, I attended a reception with Missouri Senator Claire MacAskill. Much discussion was held about the decisions voted on at COR and how
those votes (especially the Master’s degree vote) may affect members of state psychological associations, who are primarily doctoral trained practitioners. PLC included many concurrent workshops of which I attended the following: “Seizing Opportunities and Thinking Broadly to Advance Practice” (chaired by Arthur Evans, PhD; APA CEO) focusing on “cutting edge” areas of practice; “Perspectives on the Master’s Issue” (chaired by Katherine Nordal, PhD; APAPO Executive Director) which focused on the accreditation of master’s degree programs. Lastly, I attended a reception with Missouri Senator Claire MacAskill.

_Council of Chairs of Training Councils (CCTC) Meeting - March 22_

The mission of the Council of Chairs of Training Councils (CCTC) is to provide a forum for communication among doctoral, internship, and postdoctoral training associations in psychology. Unfortunately, this year, the Nor’easter Toby precluded me from physically attending the most recent meeting; nevertheless, I have had an opportunity to review the minutes of the meetings.


The Taxonomy provides a means to clearly communicate to professionals as well as consumers, the level of education/training involved in a specialty area training program. The Taxonomy does not, however, serve as formal standards or guidelines (in the APA sense of those terms). The Council of Specialties (CoS) has requested that each specialty complete the education and training information utilizing the Taxonomy, and provide a document to CoS for posting to their website. Many specialties have completed this already; if yours has not, please do so.

Also at CCTC, there was a discussion of accrediting bodies for doctoral and/or other training programs. The VA has made a statement that they will hire graduates from programs accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (DoE) and will also hire those from programs accredited by the Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS). This provides a dilemma for the field. In response to that, the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) is working on a policy for participation in the internship match.

APPIC is considering a policy that would state that:

_An "eligible accrediting organization" is one that accredits doctoral programs in Health Service Psychology and/or Professional Psychology and is (a) recognized by an Approved Government Agency for programs located in the United States or (b) the Canadian Psychological Association for programs located in Canada._

_Definition of Approved Government Agency= an approved Government Agency is a United States governmental department, agency, or body that either (a) formally reviews and/or recognizes doctoral psychology accrediting organizations; or (b) has explicitly recognized a doctoral psychology accrediting organization in its hiring qualifications; and (c) has been approved in APPIC’s sole discretion. Approved Government Agencies currently include the United States Department of Education and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs._

I will hopefully be able to provide an update on the progress of this APPIC plan in a future article, once the APPIC meeting has taken place in early May.
A workgroup was established last year during the CCTC meeting, in an attempt to consider the development of a new APA division focused specifically on issues of education and training in psychology. The workgroup will be continuing its work and develop a petition for the new APA division, and focused specifically on issues of education and training in psychology. The workgroup is planning to continue its work and develop eventually a petition for the new APA division; that petition will firstly, require at least 700 signatures to move forward in consideration.

CCTC is working on a meeting for 2020, which may possibly occur in conjunction with other organizations. This idea is based on a previously successful collaborative meeting which took place in 2010; there has been discussion of having once more a joint meeting. ABPP will continue to monitor the development of this proposal, and should it come to fruition, it would behoove us to become involved as a possible sponsor, presenters, etc.

**APA Consolidated Meetings - March 23-25**

The Consolidated Meetings provided the opportunity to engage with several of the Boards and Committees of APA. I spent most of my time with the Board of Professional Affairs (BPA). The agenda included many updates and, again, review of the impact of the vote on the Master's degree accreditation issue. Considering our recent discussions about international psychology issues, I also spent some time talking with the APA Staff Liaison of CIRP (Committee on International Relations in Psychology) and reviewed the CIRP agenda and Guidelines for Psychologists Engaging Internationally.

Also during the consolidated meetings, I met with several members of the Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) to review CE items including concern by some APA CE Sponsors that the renewal application was too cumbersome, and to discuss items of continuing professional development. Members of this group, and some other individuals, had held several conference calls in recent months addressing some of these concerns and discussing ways of improving the process.

**Association of State & Provincial Psychology Board (ASPPB) - April 12-15**

The theme of the meeting was “Turning the Lens on ourselves: Accountability in Regulation”. The presentations and discussion of licensing boards focused their process, procedures, and issues that can arise when errors are made. Related to this, were presentations/discussions about whether licensing boards should have a code of conduct, making sure that applications are reviewed in a fair and consistent fashion and that disciplinary actions are also fair and consistent. As always, the attorney for ASPPB and the Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards (FARB) presented relevant legal cases that have been heard that can affect licensing and regulation. The status and plans regarding the EPPP-2, now referred to as the Enhanced EPPP, were presented. The plan is to permit for the administration of the first section prior to completion of the doctorate, while the second phase of the exam, can be conducted after receipt of the doctorate. Issues about cost and other potential hurdles were discussed.

There were also updates on other ASPPB programs including PSYPACT (telepsychology compact), PLUS (universal licensing system), PSYPRO (credentials banking system) and the PEP (psychopharmacology) exam.

In addition to what happens at meetings, there are valuable moments shared in-between sessions. For example, during the last ASPPB, I had the opportunity to spend time with Sverre Nielsen, a prominent psychologist from Norway, who has been significantly involved in leading the international competency movement. ABPP had been present at a previous meeting of this group in Stockholm in 2013, and has consistently reviewed documents arising out of that group. It is not clear as to whether or not, ABPP will be able to be present at the upcoming International
Congress of Applied Psychology (ICAP) meeting in Montreal, where members plan to continue the competency group’s work into exploring the realm of specialty areas of practice. I am hoping we will reconsider it.

Last but not least, it was my sincere honor and pleasure to have been invited to a very special ceremony in recognition of Stephen DeMers, the ASPPB CEO, and his contributions. Steve is retiring this September and this was his last ASPPB meeting. To his great surprise, his wife and children, brother, sister, brother-in-law, and several ASPPB past-presidents attended the recognition ceremony. Steve started with ASPPB, in 2005, just a year earlier to my involvement with ABPP in 2006. Over the year, we got to spend many days in meetings together, and developed a deep respect for one another and a true friendship. During the ceremony, a few of the attendees including myself, were asked to share stories about Steve and his professional contributions. It was a terrific send-off to one of the significant people in our field. The search for a new ASPPB CEO is ongoing, although no one can “replace” Steve.

Central Office

As always, I must sing the praises of the staff of our organization. We have a hard-working staff that stays on top of things and pitches in to assist one another as needed. This has been proven to be an exceptionally important aspect of our teamwork, especially given some recent absences due to health and/or other issues keeping one or another of us away from the office. I am so pleased and proud to be a member of an organization comprised of staff that works well together for so many years. Four out of the five of us, have worked together for approximately 10 years now. Nancy and I have worked together for 12 years. The lack of turnover speaks volumes to the dedication of our staff and their loyalty to the organization. Comments made in a recent survey regarding ABPP and were sent out to both Board of Trustees representatives and Specialty Board Presidents were uniformly laudatory. Please be sure that you let everyone on staff with whom you interact with know of your appreciation of their hard work on behalf of our organization.

CE Renewal

The process of applying (and renewal) to become a continuing education provider recognized by the American Psychological Association is a time-consuming and tedious one. Last fall, Nancy and I worked on the application to renew our status as an approved continuing education provider. I am pleased to let you know that ABPP has once again been recognized as a provider of CE for psychologists. We received recognition for another five years (the maximum).

The new process put in place by APA provides for a separate and distinct application for recognition for home study programs. We have not historically had a huge response to our online CE and, initially, we felt that going through the process of completing the home study supplemental application would not be worth our while. In discussion with the Office of Continuing Education at APA, I came to learn that they considered the fact that we grant CE for successful completion of the board certification process to be something that required completion of the home study supplemental application. Therefore, I undertook that task. In so doing, I also sent a survey to all of our board-certified psychologists, which queried specialists as to how many hours each individual felt they had studied and/or prepared for board certification. Within about a day or two, I got over 1000 responses! It became clear that the 20 hours of CE that we grant is well below the number of hours that people spend preparing and/or studying. In the renewal application for home study, I have indicated that we will be granting 40 hours of continuing education for successful completion of the ABPP board certification process. I have not yet received a response from APA as of yet, and will refrain from making any changes until then. I am however, hopeful that our application proposal will be approved. At this time, I believe the APA continuing education committee is preparing responses to the applications reviewed.
Web Site and Technology Update

Our new website is up and running! Hopefully, you have had a chance to visit it? Many thanks to all of our staff, especially Diane Butcher, for making it happen. Note, that this is only the tip of the iceberg. Moreover, there is the database, SharePoint workflows, and other behind-the-scenes aspects of the project that we have been working to develop with Code a Site (CAS). Although, there is still plenty left to do, such as debugging with the programming team, and implementing workflows for the handling of applications and credential reviews we are making progress, and have gotten much praise for the public facing website. Please check out the website, if you have not yet.

Once this phase is completed, we will return to having them work on the handling of practice samples. The processing of practice samples was put on hold when we realized that it was really a priority to have the credential review and application process in place; the interaction of the existing process with the programming created more difficulties than we wanted to deal with. The new system allows for a reviewer to go directly to a specific item (e.g., has

I have had the opportunity to see the first sets of credentials and applications that have come in through the new platform. The user interface allows for a reviewer to go directly to the specific item (e.g., license verification, transcript, or internship certificate) which needs to be reviewed, which is a great asset.

Publications

As part of educating the body of psychologists, and others about ABPP we need to establish our organization in the literature. Toward this end, I search for opportunities to get our “brand” out in the context of specialty training, education and public interest issues. The APPIC-sponsored Postdoctoral Summit which occurred in the fall of 2016 resulted in a special issue of Training and Education in Professional Psychology (TEPP) focusing on the purpose and components of residency training. A number of presentations will take place at the May 2018 APPIC meeting, as a result of that summit; discussing several issues addressed in the article. I contributed to the article on the purpose of training as a means for development of specialty competencies, with one eventual outcome being ABPP board certification. The issue is in press, and the article is titled Postdoctoral Training in Health Service Psychology: Current Perspectives in an Evolving Profession.

I am working on an upcoming invited article on continuing professional development and specialty competency as an outcome of the CE Summit that occurred last August. Greg Neimeyer of the APA Office of Continuing Education is editing a special issue of Professional Psychology: Research and Practice on the topic “Critical Conversations in Continuing Education and Professional Development in Psychology.” I have been asked to contribute an article tentatively titled From Continuing Education to Continuing Competence.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Several committees have been working in recent months on issues (e.g., marketing; workshops and conferences; strategic governance and planning; financial issues and investing etc.) all related to future directions for ABPP. We will be discussing these topics at the May BOT meeting, looking for the “inward” as well as the “outward”, paying attention to the short and long term, and taking note of the direction, the field as a whole is taking, and how does it impact ABPP and vice versa.

David R. Cox, PhD, ABPP
Executive Officer, ABPP Board of Trustees
Avoiding Common Ethical Difficulties: How To Enhance Ethical Awareness With Some Practical Suggestions

By Barney Greenspan, PhD, ABPP
Board Certified in Clinical Psychology,
Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology, & Psychoanalysis
Vice-Chair, ABPP Ethics Committee

By being aware of foreseeable potential conflicts, and discussing them frankly with colleagues and clients, practitioners may evade misunderstandings, hurt feelings, and difficult situations which in turn may lead to hearings before licensing/ethics boards, lawsuits, suspension/revocation of license, loss of professional membership or other dire consequences.

Incorporate ethics by asking, “How may I be even better in my practice?” Good ethical practice is good professional practice, which is good risk management practice. When in ethical quandaries, it is often because one unwittingly slid too far down a slippery slope, a result of ignorance about ethical obligations or thinking one could deal with a situation that spiraled out-of-control.

Many problems are situations that develop gradually, moving step-by-step beyond what were once initially firm professional boundaries. Although each step seemed harmless at the time, many practitioners later realize that they have landed themselves in deep trouble.

Below are ways practitioners may avert two common ethical dilemmas.

UNDERSTAND WHAT CONSTITUTES A MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIP
Is it ethical to volunteer at your daughter's softball team fund-raiser, if you know a client is going to be present? Should you purchase a vehicle from a client who owns the only dealership in your small, rural town? Should you ask an intern to drive you to the airport? A central question in any multiple relationship situation is, “Whose needs are being met?” Whenever the answer pertains to the needs of the psychologist, it is a time when the psychologist needs to take great care and obtain a consultation.

According to the APA Ethics Code, psychologists should avoid relationships that could reasonably impair, exploit or harm performance. Multiple relationships without such effects may not necessarily be unethical. When weighing the pros and cons in situations, think about three factors:

A. POWER: how much of a power differential is there between the psychologist and the other party?

B. DURATION: will the contact be brief, continuous or episodic over a period of time? Prior to entering into a dual relationship psychologists should consider whether, for example, a client could return for additional services.

C. TERMINATION: has the therapeutic relationship been permanently terminated with mutual understanding by the client? If a psychologists treats clients with a chronic condition, treatment could stop and start for years, therefore complicating a relationship, which may otherwise be appropriate.

It is only an ethical problem, if there is reason to believe of a foreseeable risk, and the psychologist fails to perceive it, acknowledge it, or ignore it and proceed anyway. In the case where a psychologist recognizes the existence of a
multiple relationship with potentially harmful repercussions, s/he is ethically mandated to take steps in resolving it in the best interest of the person or group, and in compliance with the Ethics Code.

An important ethical consideration pertains to sexual relationships with current and former clients. While sexual relationships with previous clients are not automatic violations if they occur more than two years after termination of psychotherapy, psychologists need to remain mindful of the harm that may arise from a sexual involvement with a client—no matter when it occurs.

IDENTIFY YOUR CLIENT AND YOUR ROLE
When practicing psychologists work representing organizations or groups of individuals, they should establish from the onset who were they hired to help, and what is expected of them. Dilemmas are often introduced during a variety of situations, causing potential anguish and pain. Here are some illustrated examples:

➢ In couples therapy, a psychologist may occasionally work with a dyad, where one partner strives for a better marital life, while the other person is leaning toward a “painless” divorce. A therapist will need to clarify, at the beginning of the treatment, that s/he will refrain from offering advice and will not profess whether the couple should remain together, and neither will s/he decide whether the couple should stay together or offer subsequent expert opinions during a divorce suit.

➢ In court, when it is unclear whether the psychologist is serving as an expert witness or an advocate for one side. Court-appointed evaluators should express well-balanced, objective opinions, while advocates are often psychologists for one party and who have had little, if any, direct contact with the other party. As they are frequently unable to provide an objective evaluation, psychologists who are psychotherapists for one of the parties should not serve as expert witness.

➢ When psychologists provide services to a person or entity at the request of a third party, such as a parent requesting psychotherapy for their child, or a Police Department requesting an evaluation of an Officer. A psychologist may have one legal client, but several ethical clients. In each case it is crucial to know who is being served, and what role does a psychologist play in rendering competent services. Staying transparent about what it is that you do, and being mindful about the professional boundaries which may arise, are two generally good and effective guideposts for one to practice.

These points suggest that a psychologist should, at the outset of their work, have frank discussions with all parties involved about the relationship s/he will have with each person or organization.

The most effective strategy that a psychologist may take to minimize exposure to ethical and legal problems is to strive to be mindful, compassionate, wise, genuine and honest.
The internship year represents a critical point in doctoral school psychology training; for some trainees it serves as the final preparation before assuming the role of school psychologist, while for others yet, it may solidify a desire to pursue postdoctoral training and work toward clinical licensure. Whichever path pursued, it is essential for all interns to learn to navigate new professional roles, independently address complex situations, and engage in reflective practice- all while maintaining a sense of personal well-being. These professional skills are reflected in the American Psychological Association (APA) profession wide competencies (APA Commission on Accreditation, 2015) as well as the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) foundational competencies of professionalism and reflective practice/self-assessment/self-care As such, accredited doctoral programs in school psychology have been tasked with addressing these competencies in their curricula and integrating them with the practice standards established by the National Association of School Psychologists. Whereas this domain may have been considered incidental to other training experiences in the past, it is now recognized as a distinct set of professional skills that should be explicitly addressed in the training of new psychologists.

Developing a Professionalism and Self-Care Curriculum Series

Clinical training supervisors (and the authors of this article) from the Illinois School Psychology Internship Consortium (ISPIC) collaborated to develop a curriculum series targeting these competencies of professionalism, self-care, and wellness. The goal of our professionalism/self-care curriculum series was to stimulate discussion and thinking, with the intent of helping interns begin to construct their own definitions of personal and professional wellness and self-care, thus allowing them to intentionally and mindfully begin to target this area of practice (Wise, Hersh, & Gibson, 2012).

The professionalism/self-care curriculum series consisted of 13 “think-piece” activities that were delivered as part of the monthly (sometimes bi-monthly) training seminars required in the internship program. Interns reviewed the activities prior to the training, and clinical supervisors facilitated a discussion on the topic during the training. Professionalism topics included: coping with loss, grief, and mistakes; establishing a professional support network; dealing with ego and competition; work efficiency; self-care through activity; self-mindfulness; financial self-care; seeking personal help; balancing work and self/family; self-care and spirituality; intersectionality; and self-confidence/imposter syndrome. Several recent articles from the APA Monitor on Psychology were referenced in creating the activities (e.g., Clay, 2016; Stringer, 2016; Weir, 2016; Winerman, 2016).

At the end of the first year of implementation, the 19 interns in the cohort and their clinical supervisors completed a survey evaluating their satisfaction with the professionalism/self-care curriculum series as well as their perceived effectiveness of the series. The survey will consist of four open-ended short answer questions (likes, dislikes, areas for improvement, desired topics) and 20 Likert items (rated on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree) inquiring about perceived effectiveness, changes in attitudes/behaviors, consistency/integrity in lessons, and overall satisfaction with the curriculum. A sampling of results highlighted that interns valued having discussions around professionalism and self-care (88% agree), changed their views on self-care (81% agree), and incorporated new behaviors into their personal daily lives (62% agree). Qualitative responses highlighted the
perceived relevance of topics covered (both from the supervisor and intern perspective), an appreciation for the attention given to self-care and wellness, and a need to devote more time to the discussion of these topics.

**Moving Forward**

The results of our initial program evaluation were affirming. As developers of the curriculum series, we were quite pleased that a large majority of our interns valued the discussions around professionalism and self-care. We were also reassured by consistent reports from both interns and supervisors that the discussions were viewed as genuine and not hypocritical (i.e., why are our supervisors teaching us this when we do not see them practicing it). We planned to continue delivering the curriculum in a similar format and monitor satisfaction and perceived effectiveness over time. Unfortunately, we also assumed that because it was well-received, supervisors would naturally continue to incorporate the scheduled professionalism and self-care curriculum according to our shared training calendar. We learned after a few months that was not the case, and many trainings had not included these topics. Since then, we have been sending more regular reminders about the professionalism and self-care topics to be covered in the monthly training seminars.

As we reflected on our second year of implementing the professionalism and self-care curriculum, several challenges and opportunities became apparent: Our doctoral interns highly value what we have to share about professionalism and self-care, and they view this as an important part of their training. As the supervisors responsible for their training, perhaps it is time for us to make a shift to more closely align our views, training approaches, and self-care behaviors.

The ISPIC training model provides natural opportunities to emphasize the professional and self-care curriculum series. We plan to discuss the curriculum in greater detail at our orientation in August with all interns and supervisors present. Discussions around the topics of professionalism and self-care will also be incorporated into our quarterly meta-supervision calls.

Professionalism and self-care, as targets of explicit training, are not equally valued by all supervisors, or maybe some supervisors were not sure how to address it given our flexible curriculum model. As the developers of the curriculum, we now realize that we need to be sending monthly reminders about the think-piece activities and discussions. We need to offer more concrete suggestions, if desired, about how these discussions can be structured. Finally, we need to communicate to supervisors how important these topics are to our interns.
At the most recent meeting of the Board of Couple and Family Psychology in San Francisco, a significant change was approved to the examination process for those applying for certification in Couple and Family Psychology. With APA’s approval of the most recent multicultural guidelines (American Psychological Association, 2017), a set of relevant professional recommendations was placed centrally into the examination process. While cultural awareness and cultural competency have historically been included as essential aspects of board examinations, the recent shift in the exam process was deemed particularly salient given the important conceptual change and systemic language now embodied by this detailed guidance. Additionally, some of the relevant language and framework integrated in the newly adopted multicultural guidelines emphasize the importance for a contextual reference, bidirectional model of self-definition, intersectional identity, and interpersonal awareness, all linguistic and concept choices which in turn define the diplomate in Couple and Family Psychology.

More specifically, an overview of the guidelines demonstrates a focus on identity as being fluid, complex, interactional, and involving the salient role of intersectionality. The themes of cultural variability and interpersonal/systemic communication across the developmental landscape are significant factors in competency for diplomate status in the Couple and Family area. In addition, the guidelines underline the dynamic awareness of power, privilege and oppression contextualized within the framework of the individual and family system. The recent 2017 revision, highlights all developmental stages and how those stages intersect within a larger bio-sociocultural context, while incorporating concurrently, a strength based approach in the work with individuals, families, groups, and communities.

There has been a significant effort and discussion among board members over the last three winter meetings, on how to include the previously published 2003 guidelines (American Psychological Association, 2003). As such, this dialogue did not exist in isolation, but rather presented itself as an ongoing conversation of substance. With the introduction of the new guidelines and particularly with the emphasis on a systemic framework, the integration became clearer with regard to its appropriate place within the examination process. Following significant discourse, commentary, and justification of the guidelines within the examination, this set of principles now embodies our formal assessment of competency. Consequently, the examination for the Couple and Family Psychology Board will require all applicants to demonstrate previous familiarity and concrete application of the multicultural guidelines to their client population, intended to set the tone after the official greeting by the examination committee. Following the initial greeting and welcoming, the examining committee will invite the candidate to introduce herself/himself within a cultural context of a personal, professional, familial, and community identity. After this initial introduction, the candidate will be encouraged to describe how the multicultural guidelines have been understood and incorporated within his/her professional awareness and identity, with direct implication for clinical practice. This introduction is intended to alert the candidate to the relevance of the guidelines to practice as a Board-certified Couple and Family Psychologist, and the role that diversity and systemic thinking place within the conceptual and professional understanding of this competency area. Following the dialogue of establishing the guidelines as a fundamental base for the examination, the examination will proceed to the core/foundational issues in couple and family psychology competency specific to this diplomate examination. The multicultural guidelines are expected to be interwoven into the candidate’s presentation relative to their knowledge base, conceptual framework, and ethical awareness.
In summary, the multicultural guidelines are framed within a layered ecological and systemic model which informs practice, education, research, and consultation. This conceptual guide is consistent with the objectives in the Couple and Family certification process. The foundation of the Board of Couple and Family Psychology, which is systemic and contextual in its core competency, will now embody the multicultural guidelines as a prominent framework within its examinations. It is the intention of the Board to: a) highlight the importance of these guidelines within its ranks by fostering a higher level of care relative to systemic conceptualization, practice, and teaching endeavors; and b) strive to attract qualified psychologists who are equally committed to this model of understanding and intervention.

References


**Dr. Cervantes** is a clinical psychologist, licensed in the states of California & Hawaii. He is a board certified in the areas of clinical psychology, and couple & family psychology. Dr. Cervantes has long been recognized as an expert in the areas of child and family psychology, divorce mediation, reunification of children with a parent following divorce, and blended families. His private practice is in the city of Orange, where he is part of a multi-disciplinary group of independent practitioners. Dr. Cervantes additionally works with adults and has long established competency in serving Spanish speaking families.
The American Board of Counseling Psychology (ABCoP) welcomes military applicants and specialists.

By Allison Clark, Ph.D., ABPP*

Counseling psychology and military psychology have a lot in common. Specifically, counseling psychologists are trained not only to treat those with mental health diagnoses, but to use a strengths-based model to promote psychological and emotional stability in healthy populations as well. A military psychologist is a great example of the diverse type of work that a counseling psychologist is trained for – they join military units as the subject matter expert on mental health in all forms. An active duty psychologist may spend one day conducting clinical work in a hospital setting and the next day be embedded in a training exercise offering performance improvement counseling to marines, sailors, airmen, or coast guardsmen. Yet on a different day s/he may spend time using testing and interview assessment to make determinations about safety with firearms or appropriateness for special duties like joining a Special Forces team.

As a United States Navy psychologist, an Early Career Psychologist (ECP), and a counseling psychologist, I am committed to helping colleagues in these groups achieve board certification. The military psychology community was supportive of my goal of achieving board certification through yearly bonuses for board certified practitioners, paid time off during the oral exam phase, reimbursement of testing fees, and ubiquitous mentorship/encouragement toward this career milestone. After I achieved board certification, the Navy also allowed me to use work hours to offer supervision to other psychologists in support of their efforts toward board certification. In turn, The American Board of Counseling Psychology (ABCoP) is very welcoming of military applicants and specialists, given their training and/or practice demonstrates their identity as a counseling psychologist. There are two military psychologists on the board of examiners who advise on the unique needs of the community and in 2017, the ABCoP offered a special occasion oral board to accommodate an overseas military member who could only make the long trip to the United States at one specific time of the year.

My current role with the ABCoP is as Practice Sample Review Chair; I review practice samples and determine when the samples reach the level of quality to pass through to the next stage- the oral exam. Each practice sample is reviewed by two board certified counseling psychology specialists; my role is to analyze and integrate those responses in order to present feedback to the candidate on the quality of his/her work, a step followed by directing them to the editing/resubmission process accordingly. While many counseling psychologists are therapists, the ABCoP offers pathways to board certification for candidates who do not engage primarily in a counselor/therapist role. Candidates can apply under one of several select competency tracks – research, teaching, management/administration, or supervision.

Having had the experience and exposure thus far, I would like to use this opportunity to suggest three tips which may enhance your submission of the practice sample with the ABCoP, and bolster your chances of satisfying the competencies of this stage:

(1) Don’t apply under a select competency track like supervision or research if this is not the area where your experience and strengths truly lies. Sometimes candidates are tempted to submit work in an area they dabble in because it is easier to gain consent or to skip the video recording requirement. However, I can tell you it is much harder to be endorsed as a specialist by submitting a sample showing work which you don’t truly specialize in.
(2) Don't delay! We have a 12 month practice sample phase, but not all 12 months are necessary for many candidates to get an impressive sample of their work together. Trust in your abilities, work with a mentor available through the American Academy of Counseling Psychology (AACoP), and submit recent work so you are more easily able to defend it in your written and oral exams.

(3) In preparing your work sample, select an example of your typical day-to-day work. You don't need to impress or entertain the reviewers by presenting a once-in-a-career case involving significant forensic, cultural, medical, and ethical implications. These cases can be hard to fully explore within the page limits of the practice sample. Give us an example of the work you are good at. Show us what you do on a typical day. If you are offering evidence-informed, compassionate mental healthcare, we want to see it and help you grow by analyzing it on a deeper level.

In sum, Counseling Psychology is a supportive, welcoming community for psychologists with a training history in community health, strengths-based intervention, and self-improvement in addition to the clinical treatment of psychopathology. Check us out through Division 17 of the American Psychological Association or through our specialty link on the ABPP website. It is a pleasure to work with my specialist colleagues within the American Board of Professional Psychology.

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*The views presented in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of DoD, its components, the U.S. Navy, or U.S. Naval Hospital Guam*

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On Giving Back

By Charme Sturkie Davidson, PhD, ABPP

I was inspired to write this article about my experience as a volunteer with the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP), on account of my friend Michael Tansy, past-president of ABPP and the Board of Trustees (BOT).

In the mid-1970s, while I was a doctoral student, my program was in the process of making the transition from a Community Counseling program into a Counseling Psychology program. The focus of the faculty of the new Counseling Psychology program was to subsequently seek APA approval, nowadays known as APA accreditation.

To enhance the chances of obtaining the desired standing, the faculty of the school then decided to also apply for Diplomate status, now known as Board Certification through the ABPP organization. This move was in marked contrast with the existing focus of those days. Among the majority of my colleagues who completed their doctoral degree in those years, very few of them would entertain the idea of becoming diplomates. Most envisioned licensure to being the last step or hurdle to cross within their professional training. Furthermore, in the 1970s and 1980s, psychologists were expected to have practiced several years (5-10) before considering initiating a diplomate status. It was thought that the distinction was designed to acknowledge professional achievement (work and practice) rather than academic performance. Personally, I always knew that someday I would be applying for board certification, but felt I had had plenty of time before I “had to” face the challenge.

Then, I moved to Minnesota. Having acquired my doctorate degree from The University of Southern Mississippi, I could hardly fathom the “dismissal” I encountered while trying to launch my clinical practice in this “very different” geographical and cultural region. My decision therefore to apply for board certification, was driven primarily by a compelling need to “prove” myself. I had to demonstrate that my graduate training at a southeastern university was comparable to obtaining a degree from the University of Minnesota. So, what if this may have been no longer the “right” reason for applying for the diplomate; I was moving forward with the application.

Here is an interesting digression: I had been on a committee with and felt in awe of one of the “grand old” men (Sam) in the Minneapolis psychology community. I held him in great admiration for his clinical skills and humanity, and while he has passed on, I still do to this date. I remember having to go to the post office in order to send my practice samples (yes, back in the days it was sent from a post office). I was so nervous that I asked my business partner to accompany me to the mailbox. I was mortified by the “gravity” of the undertaking; I stood in front of the mail slot, turned and walked away, went back to the mail slot, and turned back again. When I turned this time, I “saw” Sam, who said “Go ahead; you only have to put it in the slot”. Many years later, I ran into him at a meeting and reminded him of the story. I asked him why he had never sought board certification for himself, which to my great surprise he responded “I was always been too afraid.”

In 1987, I took and passed the oral exam. Shortly after, in part because I come from a family that values volunteerism, I queried Nick Palo, the then executive director of ABPP, about volunteer opportunities. After some time, I began to read practice samples as a reviewer, sat on several examinations, and served as a mentor.

In 1998, I became the Practice Sample Coordinator for the American Board of Counseling Psychology (ABCoP). By 1998, the structure of ABPP had changed from a regionally based model to a discipline-based model with boards and academies — hence, American Board of Counseling Psychology of the American Board of Professional Psychology rather than the Midwestern Board of the American Board of Professional Psychology; this transition in ABPP is another story.
I stayed on the ABCoP board for more than a decade: I served as an ad hoc examination coordinator. I became president-elect; actually, I did that twice; I quit once to spend my energy attempting to get John Kerry elected to the presidency of the United States. (Oh, well.) I served as president as well as past president of the ABCoP. I was elected to the ABPP BOT and served on the executive committee. As a part of my service on the BOT, I was a part of the task force that developed the strategy for Maintenance of Certification.

The truth be told, as far as the ABPP, ABCoP, and its various functions, I was like a bad penny — I just kept turning up. My last formal role with ABPP was to serve first on the board of the American Board of Professional Psychology Foundation and then as its administrator; I played a strategic role in developing the infrastructure for the foundation.

My service to ABPP and ABCoP led me to be honored with the Russell Bent Award for Distinguished Contribution and Service to ABPP in 2015.

So, all of this sound like a lot of work, which, of course it was: BUT, the volume of work has been so much less than the reward. In the course of my volunteering for ABPP, ABCoP, and Counseling Psychology at large, I have learned so much, and I have formed relationships with some of my (now) closest friends. People build friendships as kids by sitting next to each other in the same class and as adults by working in school or careers. I, of course, have had these experiences, early in my life's work, but the friendships that abide most closely to me now are those that resulted from my involvement with the American Board of Professional Psychology.

Sign up, volunteer, and enrich your life.

Charme Sturkie Davidson
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Charme S. Davidson is in private practice in Minneapolis. She has provided psychotherapy to clients as well as training and consultation to clinicians working with clients in the area of chronic trauma and Dissociation for many years. Dr. Davidson's attention in these areas, was an outgrowth of her interest and work within the field of bereavement. Currently, she primarily works with clients who have been diagnosed with dissociative conditions and other personality disorders. Additionally, she continues to provide consultation to mental health professionals working with clients diagnosed with these conditions. She is a fellow of the International Society for the Study of Dissociation.
The ethical practice of psychology can be viewed from a number of different perspectives. At first it might seem quite simple and straightforward. One such approach is to just keep in mind the credo of “do no harm.” But, when trying to implement this approach it may become readily apparent that this is not such simple guidance after all. One might reasonably ask “harm to whom?” and “how do we decide what is harmful?” The issue of harm to whom is not so straightforward when working with multiple individuals. For example, whose needs, rights, and preferences should be paramount in our thinking; for example, the adolescent whom we are treating or their parent who provides the consent to treatment and therefore, actually is our “client”. Furthermore, who gets to decide what is actually harmful? It is quite likely that at times, a parent may hold a different perspective than their adolescent child on what is harmful to the adolescent or to the parent (and we may have an entirely different opinion on this matter than either the parent or adolescent!). Thus, Fisher (2009) recommends that we ask not what obligations do we have to our client, but to which individuals do I have what obligations? The answer to this question should be helpful to psychologists struggling with making the ‘right’ decision, but unfortunately, it still doesn’t tell us what to do.

Even when treating an individual client, such dilemmas may arise. As psychotherapists, we may view harm differently than our client. For example, we might view hospitalization as being in our client’s best interest and the client may hold a very different view of this, to include viewing it as harmful to them. We may have a different perspective than our client’s and we also may be considering not just our individual client, but the larger society as well. For example, consider the situation of an elderly client whose vision is impaired, who has been in repeated minor automobile accidents, and who wants to maintain their independence, to include driving their car. The decision to recommend revoking this individual’s driver’s license might be viewed very differently by the client, the psychotherapist, the client’s adult children, and residents of the client’s local community. Thus, the rather simple and straightforward approach of just avoiding harm, proves not to be so simple or straightforward after all.

Does the APA Ethics Code Hold the Answers?

While the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (Ethics Code, APA, 2017) has a number of standards that provide very clear guidance to us (e.g., it is never acceptable to engage in sexual relationships with clients), for so many situations we may confront, clear guidance on how to act is not readily evident. Other standards are quite broad and general, such as the need to avoid harm. Due to their aspirational nature, the General Principles of the Ethics Code (APA, 2017) do not specifically tell us what to do in any given situation. They may provide us with guidance, but sadly, no actual answers. Thus, even when utilizing the APA Ethics Code, we must still apply our judgment in determining how to apply the Ethical Standards to any given situation or dilemma.

The Introduction and Applicability section of the Ethics Code makes it is clear that the Ethics Code does not specifically tell psychologists the correct or best course of action to take in each situation. It is only one source of guidance to be used in our ethical decision-making. Additionally, the Ethics Code repeatedly uses the word “reasonable” and indicates that we are to exercise our judgment in applying the ethics code to determine the most appropriate course of action when definitive guidance is lacking in the Ethics Code. We are also advised to consult with colleagues with recognized expertise when faced with dilemmas. So, not only does the Ethics Code not tell us what to do in each of the challenging situations we may face during our careers, we must seek guidance from multiple other sources of information, to include our colleagues. This is not turning out to be simple and straightforward at all!
Ethical Decision-Making

To assist us in this process of deciding on the best course of action when multiple options exist and the Ethics Code does not provide a definitive directive, it is recommended that psychologists utilize an ethical decision-making model.

A wide range of formal ethical decision-making models exist, a number of which are reviewed by Cottone and Claus (2000) and described by the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics (2017). As a representative example, Barnett and Johnson's (2008) model includes the following steps to assist us to reason through the many factors that may be relevant for consideration in deciding the most appropriate course of action when confronted by an ethical dilemma:

- Define the situation clearly, gathering as much relevant information as is possible and clearly articulating the dilemma or conflict present that must be addressed.
- Determine who will be affected, considering the potential impact of potential actions on all individuals involved, being mindful of your obligations to each of them.
- Refer to both underlying ethical principles and the standards of the APA Ethics Code, keeping in mind specific enforceable standards as well as more fundamental ethics obligations.
- Refer to relevant laws/regulations and professional guidelines, being mindful of both ethics and legal issues and obligations.
- Reflect honestly on personal feelings and competence, considering any factors that may impact your judgment and decision-making.
- Consult with trusted colleagues, honestly sharing all information relevant to the situation.
- Formulate alternative courses of action, considering the full range of possibilities.
- Consider possible outcomes for all parties involved, paying attention to potential risks and benefits.
- Make a decision and monitor the outcome, modifying your plan as needed on an ongoing basis.

Summary and Recommendations

Knowing what to do when faced with an ethical dilemma is no easy matter. We first must realize when an ethical dilemma is present. This can include knowing the difference between a legal issue and an ethics issue, as well as possessing the awareness and humility to know that a given situation is complex, with multiple possible courses of action. Seeking consultation from expert colleagues, considering relevant laws and regulations, and utilizing a decision-making process to help discern possible courses of action, are important for achieving the best possible outcomes for those we serve.

Jeffrey E. Barnett, Psy.D., ABPP is Associate Dean for the Social Sciences and Graduate Programs, and a Professor of Psychology at Loyola University Maryland. He also is a licensed psychologist in private practice and a Distinguished Practitioner of the National Academies of Practice. He is ABPP board certified in Clinical Psychology and in Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology. He is a past chair of the ABPP Ethics Committee as well as of the APA Ethics Committee and previously served on the Maryland Board of Examiners of Psychologists. He can be contacted at jbarnett@loyola.edu.

References


The Pacific Institute, a non-profit scientific institute for the study of conflict and aggression, is seeking collaborators. All ABPPs in any specialty area are welcome to participate in the publication of the following books largely written by ABPPs.

- Co-editors (2), authors/coauthors (10) for Hall, H.V. (Editor, 2008). *Forensic Psychology and Neuropsychology for Criminal and Civil Cases*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press. Deemed “very likely” to be accepted by CRC for second edition.


- Co-authors (2) for *Neuroscience and Behavioral Science Contributions to Mindfulness and Meditation* (M&M). Presented as APA-approved workshop in February 2018.

Contributors will be strongly encouraged to donate a portion of their royalties to ABPP. Interested parties should email their CV and a statement on their areas of interest to the Pacific Institute.

Sincerely,

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Since You Asked

- Dr. Howard Cohen, is the recipient of the 2018 *Florence Halpern Award for Distinguished Professional Contributions to Clinical Psychology* voted by the Board of Directors of the Society of Clinical Psychology, via a recommendation made by the Society of Clinical Psychology, Division 12 of the APA. The Award is dedicated to a professional excelling within the area of education, science, service, and clinical practice. The presentation will take place at the APA annual meeting in San Francisco this August.

- Please check out a most interesting article authored by Drs. Robiner & Fossu, on the topic of board certification. *To Be or Not to Be Board Certified? A Question of Quality and Identification for Psychologists*. *Journal of Applied Biobehavioral Research* Volume 22, Issue 3, September 2017, William N. Robiner and Thyra A. Fossum

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