

NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2011

MIAMI-DADE CHAPTER

Florida Association for Marriage and Family Therapy



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

September 2011

Just like that, September and the commencement of the fall season is once again upon us. For most of us this brings a mixture of emotions. There are also the pressures of adding extra activities to already busy schedules, of trying to stretch tight budgets, of being bombarded by relentless messages of the advent of cooler weather and shorter days. Certainly, the ten year anniversary of 9/11 disaster can trigger memories, feelings of loss and sadness, as well as sense of vulnerability.

Given all this, it's important to remind our clients, and ourselves of the necessity for taking care of ourselves and focusing on what really matters by realizing that there are those among us who may be suffering from grief, loneliness, or other painful emotions that necessitates the and need to feel the powerful bond of human connection.

This year that is drawing to a close has been a difficult one for almost everyone I know, with economic hardship, national and global news that is far from solution, personal heartaches for many. But this can have its blessings. It can make us remember to be more sensitive to others, more willing to reach out, to forgive. You may never know the effect you have on someone by acknowledging their presence, smiling, making a kind or gently humorous comment, but it may be just what that person needs at the moment. These are meaningful gifts we give each other that cost only our attention.

I would like to say thank you to all of you who have taken part in helping make this Chapter work this past year. I've enjoyed your enthusiasm, willingness to help, tolerance for glitches, and supportive feedback. We still have much to do and I encourage anyone who is thinking about it to step up; you'll find plenty of support, kind friends.

May this fall season be a good one for you.

Respectfully,



Michael J. Alicea, MS, MSW, (Ed.D. Candidate)
President – Miami-Dade Chapter

NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2011



ALISON MORRIS, LMFT
Secretary
Miami-Dade Chapter

Alison Morris, L.M.F.T., is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist providing individual, family and couples counseling at Delta Psychological Group in Aventura and the surrounding area. She utilizes cognitive-behavioral, systems-oriented and solution focused approaches to address a variety of concerns such as: family issues, life transitions, body image and eating disorders, stress and anxiety, substance abuse, depression and suicide prevention, conflict resolution, grief and loss, self esteem issues, and anger management.

Alison obtained her Bachelor's degree from Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, England in 1994 and her Master's Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from Nova Southeastern University in 2001. Alison worked at Barry University between 2001-2010 as a personal counselor, serving a wide population including: ethnic minorities, the LGBT community and individuals with diverse religious practices and beliefs.

Additionally, Alison chaired the Programming Committee within the Division of Student Affairs. The Committee was responsible for the planning, coordinating, and budgeting of federally mandated alcohol and sexual assault programs. The Committee facilitated its purpose via collaboration with many departments and divisions within the university; working diligently to ensure that every Student Affairs department had representation and acted as a channel of communication to establish a cohesive and knowledgeable division regarding educational programs as well as ensuring that all students had access to information that was inherently important to life as a college student.

In 2007, the Committee established a campus wide Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention Month initiative, involving numerous programs and activities in response to the growing number of students sharing their stories of domestic violence. In 2008, this initiative expanded within the community to collaborative efforts with local academic institutions and agencies, and the provision of presentations to local youth on bullying and ways children and adolescents could mobilize to create societal change in their communities and the world.

Alison continues her efforts to highlight the importance of healthy relationships through her involvement in the Annual College Brides Walk established in 2010. This program is a collaborative effort between several leading universities and community based agencies throughout South Florida. The purpose of the Walk is to bring awareness to the problems of domestic and dating violence on and off our college campuses. The Walk was inspired by the originator, Josie Ashton, a local activist who organized the first Brides Walk that took place in 2000, when Josie walked 1,000 miles in her own wedding dress to commemorate the life of Gladys Ricart who was killed by an abusive ex-boyfriend on her wedding day in 1999. With permission of the Ricart family, Josie walked from the home of Gladys Ricart in New Jersey to Miami, Florida; staying in 14 domestic violence shelters and traveling through 22 cities along the way. Her walk, a decade ago, inspired 300 college students wearing wedding gowns and tuxedos to march 7.5 miles

NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2011

in the first College Bride's Walk on February 11, 2011. Students and local community members walked from Barry University in Miami Shores to Florida International University's Biscayne Bay Campus and back to raise awareness of this critical issue.

On February 10, 2012 college students and community members will be uniting once again and participating in Second Annual College Brides Walk. Members of the Miami-Dade Chapter of Marriage and Family Therapy are strongly encouraged to participate and please feel free to contact Alison or visit the official website of the College Brides Walk (www.collegebrideswalk.com) to learn more about its organization and ways to be involved.



THE THERAPY IN THE MOMENT

By Michael J. Alicea, MS, MSW, (Ed.D. Candidate)

I become aware that I have been on automatic pilot. I feel a twinge of embarrassment and quickly refocus on what my client is saying and look for an interpretation or at least a comment to prove to both of us that I am being attentive. But maybe I have just missed an opportunity. After all, I was alert at the beginning of the hour and what my client was saying seems important. So why am I feeling dull and lifeless? Is it because my client is

describing real problems with emotion appropriate to reading from a phone book? What if I commented by saying, “I’m struck by the seriousness of what you’re saying...but I’m not feeling very much as I listen to your words. I’m wondering if you’re having a similar experience as you say them.” As I think about it, this client rarely shows much feeling about anything. Might my observation bring life back to the therapy and put us on a more productive path?

The therapy hour is filled with such opportunities, many of which slip past us as we do what is familiar, tried and true. When I experience a small wave of apprehension, a welling up of sadness or joy, or a sort of twinge of regret as I sit with a client, perhaps my body is reading subtle cues. If I pay attention, I may learn a great deal about this person and our relationship. And if I occasionally share those observations with my client, it could enliven the therapy in new and quietly powerful ways. Whatever your theoretical orientation, your work as a therapist is influenced and shaped by the relationship between you and your client. From the moment someone sees your ad or is given a recommendation, the client begins to develop a set of expectations about who you are and what they want from you. You in turn experience each client differently and respond both emotionally and therapeutically to fit that perception.

Being attuned to these inner responses can help you attune to the inner life of the complex individual in front of you, including the attachment patterns he brings to therapy from his daily life. Am I, the therapist, feeling frustration? Sadness? Do I want to push a needy client out the door or hug him to me? Might I comment, “When you linger at the door, I feel as though you are asking for something?” Sometimes such an observation opens up unexpressed feelings, memories, and hopes. It models for the client a relationship that can be talked about in safety. Increasing our use of this rich resource can add value, depth, effectiveness, and a practice refreshing liveliness to our daily work as therapists.

NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2011

Book Review

BOOK REVIEW



The Positive Power of Negative Thinking: Using Defensive Pessimism to Harness Anxiety and Perform at Your Peak (by Julie K. Norem)

Book Review by Michael J. Alicea, MS, MSW, (Ed.D. Candidate)

I recently had the opportunity in-between completing my doctoral studies to read a book on the positive power of negative thinking by Julie K. Norem. Of course, it was the enticing title of this book that got my attention.

The author, Julie K. Norem, does an excellent job of describing the approach to managing anxiety she labels Defensive Pessimism. She points out that those of us who are inclined toward negative thinking often utilize this technique by imagining all the worse possibilities that could occur and devising ways to either avoid them or cope with them and she argues that thereby the anxiety is reduced and the goal accomplished satisfactorily. In other words, Defensive Pessimism is quite effective. Many years ago, when I was complaining to a close friend about having to cope with my husband's worst possible- scenario thinking, she wisely observed that he just needed to get his anxiety out of the way ahead of time. That was the moment I really "got it" and could stop taking his checking personally.

Norem contrasts Defensive Pessimism with Strategic Optimism which she also characterizes as an anxiety coping mechanism. Strategic Optimists deal with anxiety by studiously ignoring it as they plan for an upcoming event and focusing instead on holding the image of a positive outcome and depending on self-confidence to achieve their goals. If something goes wrong, they tend to blame external circumstances whereas, if it goes well, they credit themselves.

Defensive Pessimists have a tendency to do the opposite. Both approaches have drawbacks but both function. Most interestingly, studies conducted by her in which the Defensive Pessimists were unable to employ their regular strategies for prepping before an upcoming challenge and were instead pumped up with optimism revealed that the anxiety overwhelmed them at the last minute and their performance suffered. By the same token, Strategic Optimists who were encouraged to imagine and plan for possible worst case scenarios before a challenge, also became overwhelmed by anxiety and performed below their usual level. So "just be more optimistic like me" is not really helpful.

NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2011

The book explores these strategies and other far less effective ways we deal with anxiety and was really a great clarifier both for myself, my marriage, and for my practice. Because we are marriage and family therapists, even when working with individuals, we are also always working with the relationships in their lives, including the one with ourselves. Learning to understand, accept, and utilize the differences of those with whom our clients are in relationship is one of the greatest skills we can help them develop. I found this book to be a stimulating and unique look at defensive ways we may develop to cope with anxiety. Furthermore, as often is the case when extremes are examined, it also reminds us that there is no limit to our creativity when dealing with a powerful emotion like anxiety.



TRADE SECRETS: The Wounded Healer

By Michael J. Alicea, MS, MSW, (Ed.D. Candidate)

The words “Wounded Healer” came to mind some time ago when I was first introduced to the field of Marriage and Family Therapy. It was at a AAFMT Conference when I first heard the term. I was so curious and intrigued about what a Wounded Healer was. Many years later, I learned about Jungian archetypes and images; and the term “Wounded Healer” had become much more popular and used within a variety of therapeutic contexts. If you Google the term, a multiple sites that come up that cover everything from astrological signs that connote the Wounded Healer to individual people who identify themselves as a Wounded Healer and want to hear from you. The term “Wounded Healer” sometimes conjures up religious meaning; and there are also the more psychotherapeutic views of using archetypes as a way of working with counter transference issues. For some therapist (especially Jungian therapist), the concept of the “Wounded Healer” often evokes rich and meaningful experiences.

For those of you not familiar with Jungian psychology concepts, archetypes are a way of describing an ancient, universal, and recurring level of unconscious material that manifests itself in mythological motifs and images. These motifs and images are often seen in dreams, religions, legends, fairy tales, etc. Some familiar archetypes might include birth, death, harvest, fertility. Certainly, healers are a universal, archetypal figure. Shamans, witch doctors, or medicine man are some of the names we have given to these healers throughout time and cultures. It might seem illogical to blend the word ‘wounded’ with the word ‘healer’ to make the name of this archetype. Actually, those words seem opposite! But there is some wisdom here to discover. Some of the foundation of any healing process exists in the concept of ‘like is cured by like’. Psychotherapy was developed from the idea that talking about something traumatic helped make it possible to integrate that trauma. Another concept about healing that has become part of the Wounded Healer is that the person, who is ill or wounded, often wants to transfer that illness to someone or something else. One story and or myth about healing is that in ancient times, bandages were hung from trees that were placed in healing temples, so that diseases could be transferred to the trees and away from the patient. If the doctor (instead of bandages or trees) could be the one whom the disease is transferred to (and therefore, becomes like a patient), then could it be possible that some of the internal doctor be transferred

NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2011

to the patient? Could the patient develop an internal doctor with healing capabilities of their own? Wouldn't the patient's healing be enhanced? Wouldn't the doctor also gain some healing in the process? (These concepts may be hard to understand and to summarize them in this article is difficult! I refer to them often as "thick". There is much to think about, break into manageable pieces and integrate. Hundreds of therapists and theorists have written, often very "thickly", about these concepts.)

Every archetype, including the "Wounded Healer", carries a great deal of power, positive and negative. For instance, to have too much power as a healer can prevent the patient and or client from claiming their own power, from finding their own internal doctor. I have been and continue to be intrigued with this combination of being a healer and of being wounded. I am writing this article in the hope that some of you are so intrigued with archetypes or other kinds of images that give us insight and wisdom to enrich our work.

There are several other archetypes that relate to our work as psychotherapists. Some of these are the Sage, the Mentor, the Artist, and the Teacher. Some of these might speak to you more clearly or powerfully than the "Wounded Healer". I think a common developmental task for therapists is to find some context, some meaning to our work. My experience tells me that an important part of why many of us became therapists is that we "wanted to make a difference," we want to do some work that matters. Exploring our inner images, archetypes and stories is a very helpful way to bring to light what matters to us, and how to manifest it in our professional and personal world.

Intern Support

Miami-Dade Chapter Sponsored / Peer Led

All interns and students are welcome.

Our goal in creating an Intern Support Group is to facilitate the Registered Intern in their journey toward eventual licensure. Do you have questions about interning, counting hours, or the MFT licensing exams? Would you like to connect with other Interns and licensed Marriage and Family Therapist?

Or are you just interested in supporting this worthwhile endeavor?

We're here to help you find answers to your questions. We also plan to create an online group through our Blog and Twitter accounts.

The Intern Support Group is open to all pre-licensed trainees and interns. The content is open to whatever those who attend would like it to be. It would be an informal conversation where we can provide mutual support, information, resources, networking, referrals, job hunting resources, and licensing exam tips to each other as needed. The group would be a safe place to reflect and share with each other about our challenges in the field of Marriage and Family Therapy. The group would be free of charge and attendance is on a drop-in basis with no commitment or obligations to attend other meetings.

Please let us know how the Miami Dade Chapter can be of help. What would you like to see happen this year for our group of Interns? Is there interest in a support group forming? A consultation group? A study



NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2011

group? Please call or email and let us know what suggestions you may have. It is our hope that we can support each other. Your ideas, comments and suggestions are very much welcomed, and needed!

Please check out and connect with other interns, share concerns, ask questions or just to see what is going on in the field of Marriage and Family Therapy.

As a benefit to our interns and student members of AAMFT, this bulletin board is provided to let others know that you are seeking study partners, supervisors, and internships. If you are interested in help starting this committee, please contact us at miamidadechapter@hotmail.com



COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The mission of the Community Outreach Committee would be to educate the community about the benefits of consulting with a Marriage and Family Therapist on relationship issues. The very concept for this committee would be to formulate and communicate specific topics of interest that inform and promote the various specialties we as Marriage and Family

Therapist make available to the public.

The committee would be responsible for providing valuable and practical information to the community at-large on Marriage and Family Therapy. In this way we can put our best representatives in front of the community that we serve.

If you are interested in help starting this committee, please contact us at miamidadechapter@hotmail.com



MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Please take some time as you fill up your busy lives, to reflect on what the Miami-Dade Chapter can do for you.

What are your goals, your dreams, your vision, your purpose, your mission? How can we help make that a reality for you? We see ourselves working together with you, as a team, for the better of all. Amazing power and energy can be generated when we work together. Ask for help. Offer help. Reflect on ways we as a group, as a profession, and as an organization on how we can nurture each other's growth. Membership benefits include:

1. Networking at our monthly meetings

NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2011

2. Incorporating a member-to-member e-mail service to facilitate access to colleagues for announcements, job openings and referrals, etc.
3. Communication through our developing monthly newsletter.
4. Volunteer opportunities and a voice in the future of our profession.



MONTHLY WORKSHOPS SCHEDULE:

September 16th – Premysl Ulman – Narrative Therapy
October 21st – Walt Liebman – Parent Coordination
November 18th – Michael J. Alicea – Therapy with Hispanic Clients
December 16th – Social Function/Holiday Party
(TIME AND PLACE TO BE ANNOUNCED)

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

“The Florida Association for Marriage and Family Therapy – Miami-Dade Chapter and its professionally trained therapists are committed to providing continuing education, networking, and support services, in order to better serve the community where we practice and live in.”



MIAMI-DADE CHAPTER EXECUTIVE BOARD



Michael J. Alicea - President
Walt Liebman - President-Elect
Alison Morris - Secretary
Premyls Ulman - Treasurer
Althea Sanyers - Student Representative

NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2011

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Web Site: <http://miamidadechapter.vpweb.com/>
Blog: <http://famft-miami-dade-chapter.blogspot.com/>
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SPEAKERS SERIES PRESENTATION: NARRATIVE THERAPY: AN INTRODUCTION

DATE: FRIDAY – SEPTEMBER 16, 2011
TIME: 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
PLACE: CONFERENCE ROOM – 3RD FLOOR – 1550 MADRUGA AVENUE, CORAL GABLES, FL
CE CREDIT: 1.0 HOUR



Premysl Ulman, LMFT
Miami-Dade Chapter

Narrative therapy is a respectful and collaborative approach to counseling and community work. It focuses on the stories of people's lives and is based on the idea that problems are manufactured in social, cultural and political contexts. Each person produces the meaning of their life from the stories that are available in these contexts. A wider meaning of narrative therapy relates significantly to a relatively recent way of thinking about the nature of human life and knowledge which has come to be known as 'postmodernism' – which believes there is no one objective 'truth' and that there are many multiple possible interpretations of any event. Thus within a narrative approach, our lives are seen as multi-storied vs. single-storied.

Stories in a 'narrative' context are made up of events, linked by a theme, occurring over time and according to a plot. A story emerges as certain events are privileged and selected out over other events as more important or true. As the story takes shape, it invites the teller to further select only certain information while ignoring other events so that the same story is continually told. David Epston sees these stories as both describing and shaping people's perspectives on their lives, histories and futures. These stories may be inspiring or oppressive.

NEXT MEETING

Friday – October 21st, 2011

7:30 am - 8:00 am – Executive Board Meeting

8:00 am – 9:00 am – Presentation/ Walt Liebman – Parent Coordination

Kendar Building

(Across the street from Publix Supermarket)

Conference Room - 3rd Floor

1550 Madruga Avenue

Coral Gables, Florida 33146

NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2011



GIVE AN HOUR

Therapists who wish to donate counseling services to a veteran may do so by accessing the following web site: www.giveanhour.org. Veterans receive services provided "pro-bono" by therapist and in exchange the Veteran chooses from a list of community agencies where they may volunteer their time.



CLASSIFIED ADS

JAN F. GUTHRIE, M.S., L.M.F.T.

“Qualified Supervisor”

FL License # MT2328

Coconut Grove, Florida

Telephone: 305.801.6690

jfguthrie@me.com

PRIVATE AND GROUP MFT SUPERVISION STARTING AUGUST 2011

“As your supervisor, I nurture your strengths and guide you through your cases while incorporating MFT/MH foundation, ethics, DSM and HIPAA regulation. Feel free to contact me with your questions and for information on the steps for obtaining a Board qualified supervisor.”

FLORIDA MFT LICENSING EXAM – PRIVATE AND GROUP TUTORING

I offer individually designed tutoring for those persons interested in taking the MFT exam. I cover all areas of MFT or only the areas that you feel you need. You will receive handouts and quizzes to complement your learning. You decide on your tutoring schedule, and the number and length of the sessions. Each session may last from 1 ½ to 3 hours, depending on what works best for you.

MEMBERSHIP

American Association of Marriage & Family Therapy

Florida Association of Marriage & Family Therapy

American Horticulture Therapy Association

International Expressive Arts Therapy Association

NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2011

PROFESSIONAL OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE

Hillary Wiseheart, LMFT

One office (furnished or unfurnished) for rent in the 7600 Bldg., 7600 Red Road., South Miami. Immediate occupancy. For additional information, contact Hillary Wiseheart, LMFT, at 305.663.1288

Walt Liebman, LMFT

One state of the art office in a suite of three with a glass brick waiting room will become available the end of June. The office is large, 16'x12.6' with forest green plush carpeting. It has recessed lighting and a window with hurricane reinforced glass and fronts Red Road. There is free parking in front of the building and also a free large parking lot in the rear of the building with high intensity lighting. For additional information, please contact Walt Liebman, LMFT, at 305.665.4177 or dub7600@aol.com.

Gilza Fort Martinez, LMFT

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www.resolutioncounselingctr.com

“I have some office space available, daily after 3 pm”

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