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## COMMISSION VII NEWSLETTER

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*This document is maintained by Jonathan Kandell at the Counseling Center of the University of Maryland. Comments, suggestions, feedback, etc., should be directed to [jkandell@umd.edu](mailto:jkandell@umd.edu)*

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## From the Chair

Writing my first column for our newsletter gives me a time to pause and reflect back on a number of things -- the rapidity at which time passes and memory fades, our identity as a Commission, and our present and future. More specifically, I'd like to take this opportunity to focus on those things that are at the forefront of our Commission and to concentrate on areas that are, what I believe, the strength of our organization. But before I start, I would like to take this time to recognize the support and encouragement I have received from our Past-Chair, Heidi Levine. She has been an all-around mentor to me as I have transitioned into my role as Chair and I value her insights and friendship. Thanks, Heidi!

First, I have always believed that the strength of our Commission has been in the diversity of our membership. We reflect a wide spectrum of interests, institutions, specialties, and personalities. Our diversity is what I have always valued about who we are as a Commission and that our commitment to that diversity has continued to be at the leading edge of our programming and our efforts in recruiting and retaining our members. To that end, I would like to take the opportunity to welcome the newly elected members of our Directorate (2001-2004) who will be joining us at our Directorate meeting in Boston. Congratulations to:

- Jan Altman, Virginia Commonwealth University
- Ellen Emerson, Georgia Southern University
- Bert Epstein, Oregon State University
- Keith Evashevski, Northwest Missouri State University
- Wayne Griffin, University of Florida
- Chuck Zanone, Georgia Southern University

Welcome also to our new Graduate Student Representatives, Melissa Bartsch (University Tennessee) and Julie Gersch (The University of Akron). And finally, my enthusiastic congratulations to Sue Stock-Ward (University of Akron) on her election as chair-elect for Commission VII. I am eagerly looking forward to working closely with her and our new Directorate members during this upcoming year.

Second, I believe that the overall health of our Commission is good; we continue to have the active participation of our membership and I feel lucky to have the tireless commitment from those who serve on our various committees. We are an active Commission that strives to both mentor our new professionals as well as to continue to involve our senior members. However, I also believe that it remains our challenge to find ways to meet the needs of our senior members in an attempt to retain the experience and wisdom that their membership brings to our Commission. I would seriously ask that we consider this item during our Directorate and Business meetings at the Convention.

Third, as many of you may or may not be aware, there have been discussions on a few listservs regarding the regretful overlap between our Convention and the National Counseling Psychology Convention. This unfortunate scheduling which was first noted last year prompted discussions between myself and the APA Division 17 (counseling psychology) leadership to find ways to link our two conventions. We looked at a number of different possibilities (e.g., satellite broadcasts, web-based interactions) that, unfortunately, were too costly or too unreliable to carry out. Since that time, I have also been involved with the Division 17 Executive Board in trying to facilitate ways to bridge and connect our two organizations. I have received enthusiastic and welcoming support from Division 17 for our two organizations



to work collaboratively in establishing stronger ties between us. Towards that goal, Division 17 extended an invitation to Commission VII to be represented on the Council of the Specialty of Counseling Psychology (CSCP). CSCP was developed out of a request by the APA Council of Specialties to facilitate more collaboration and communication within counseling psychology. As Commission Chair, I have accepted this invitation and join with the representatives from Division 17, Student Affiliate Group of Division 17, AUCCCD, ACCTA, the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs, the Specialty Board of the American Board of Professional Psychology, and the Academy of Counseling Psychology. I have also continued to work with Division 17's VP for Practice, Mary O'Leary Wiley, to talk about ways in which Commission VII and Division 17 can begin to bridge the efforts of our two organizations. I hope that these efforts will aid in setting a course for our Commission in the future. I believe that these collaborative efforts between Commission VII and Division 17 also opens new possibilities for connections with other professional organizations (e.g., social work, counseling) that reflect the interests of our group. I would like to also explore these options at our meetings in Boston.

Finally, I am excited about the present and future of our Commission. I believe that we are poised to be able to strengthen the needs of our members in our continued efforts at providing quality sponsored and co-sponsored programs as well as continuing our half-day workshop during the Convention. I am particularly excited at this year's workshop with Linda Hartling, PhD from the Jean Baker Miller Training Institute at the Stone Center at Wellesley College. I would encourage all of you to attend this engaging and insightful program beginning Sunday afternoon. I am also encouraged about the future of our Commission in the possibilities for expanding our professional connections with other professional organizations and groups that reflect the diversity of our professional identity. I believe that developing these relationships is a crucial step in the growth and advancement of our Commission for, in the end, I believe that we benefit more by connecting with others than we do by not forging alliances with others. I hope to continue these dialogues with all of you at our meetings in Boston. I look forward to seeing you there!

Toti Perez

## From The Editor

Welcome to this pre-convention edition of the Commission VII newsletter. This edition represents a transition for the newsletter, as Todd Sevig hands over the reigns to me. On behalf of Commission VII, I thank Todd for serving as the editor of the newsletter for the past few years, and I thank him for showing me the ropes. As is now tradition, this edition is focused on helping us prepare for the upcoming ACPA National Convention to be held this year in Boston, March 3rd -7th. Thanks to Laura Lyn and Mark Krautheim, this newsletter includes a listing of programs that have qualified for CE credits for psychologists. This year's list has a wealth of interesting programs. As always, this edition contains a column from the Commission VII Chair. In his column, Toti Perez provides his thoughts on Commission VII today and in the future. He also includes information about the results of this year's Commission VII election and a description of this year's half-day workshop.

The feature article of this edition of the newsletter was provided by David Jobes, Ph.D. of the Catholic University of America. Dr. Jobes has extensive experience studying college student suicide, and he shares his thoughts on this very important topic.

Like many of you, I look forward to the convention as a chance to get away from campus and explore a different city. In this case I'm returning to the city where I did my pre-doctoral internship. I also look forward to seeing old friends and developing new friendships, to exchanging ideas and war stories, and to learning from colleagues at other colleges and universities. I look forward to seeing all of you there!

Matt Torres, Ph.D.  
Coordinator of Clinical Services  
Center for Psychological and Learning Services  
American University





## Suicidal Clients in Counseling Centers

By David Jobes Ph.D.

Since 1987 I have spent a good portion of my professional career studying suicidal college students. Over these years I have been fortunate to have opportunities to empirically study various aspects of college student suicide at the Catholic University Counseling Center, the John Hopkins University Counseling Center, and more recently at the George Washington University Counseling Center. Given the inherent challenges of studying this topic, I am deeply appreciative to these centers, their directors, staff, and clients who have helped make our work possible. It is my sense that in these years we have learned a great deal of valuable information about college student suicide. The goal of this article is to review and highlight some of what we know from work in this important area of counseling practice.

First, some basic data about suicidality among college students are important to note. For example, suicide ranks as the second leading cause of death on campus, second only to accidental deaths. However, when compared to cohorts who are not in higher education, college students are actually less at risk for completed suicide. We are not exactly sure what may be potentially "protective" about being a college student, but many of us believe that a strong student life program and appropriate counseling center services can be a major factor. In the settings we have studied, approximately 10-18% of all counseling center clients have reported some degree of current suicidal thoughts. In some survey samples of undergraduate college students rather startling percentages claim to have considered suicide-upwards of 40%. Clearly, this is an issue of some concern for those of us who work in campus environments.

The research we have pursued has primarily centered on the development and use of an assessment form called the Suicide Status Form (SSF), and administrative procedures related to using this assessment. My goal in this article is not to sing the praises of the SSF or campaign for its wide adoption, rather I hope to share some of what we have learned from its use about college student suicidality and issues pertaining to risk assessment and treatment. For example, one of the things we have consistently found is that suicidal college students can be remarkably responsive to standard counseling center care. Indeed, in a four-year study of suicidal college students at CUA well over half who presented with suicidal ideation resolved their suicidal crisis in about six sessions. Unfortunately this means that about half did not have obvious quick outcomes. In this study, about 20% dropped out of care, about 10% were acutely hospitalized, and about 20% remained chronically preoccupied with suicidal thoughts. Interestingly, of those who remained in counseling center treatment-so called "acute resolvers" and "chronic non-resolvers"-both showed statistically significant pre/post treatment improvement in terms of decreasing overall symptom distress.

The implications of these data are important to consider. First, most of these clients were of relatively low risk; the samples in our settings were consistently skewed in the direction of relatively low lethality ideators. Second, standard counseling center treatment appears to be effective in terms of decreasing overall symptom distress and for many this care appears to help them to no longer be suicidal. What is more troubling, however, is that too many suicidal students in our studies have actually sought services and subsequently dropped out of treatment after one or two sessions. While our dropout data are comparable to other studies, we remain concerned about this sub-sample of students who seek services but then fail to return (not responding to either phone calls or letters). Bottom line, I think we should take heart that if suicidal student clients are identified, assessed, and appropriately treated, they can receive significant help in a counseling center setting. Indeed, in over the thirteen years of studying suicidal college students I am aware



of only one completed suicide of a client across the centers we have studied. This should not give anyone a false sense of confidence, but I would say that overall that college students who become suicidal are typically not at extremely high risk and can clearly respond to traditional counseling center care.

In a different vein we have also studied considerations for suicidal students as to what makes them want to live vs. what makes them want to die. It is perhaps not surprising to note that students in our samples have distinct reasons for wanting to live that center on their family/friends and future plans and goals. Juxtaposed against these considerations are reasons for dying that tend to emphasize distinct themes of escape-from pain, self, others, and responsibilities. Our current work continues to explore both quantitative and qualitative data that is helping explain the unique phenomenology of the college student's suicidal mind. It is our hope that this research will help to establish clinically useful typologies and potentially enable us to better predict suicide risk and treatment outcomes.

In closing, let me impart a few key points concerning the suicidal college student. Given the pervasiveness of suicidal ideation in this population, it is important to routinely assess for the presence of suicidal thoughts in counseling center clients. If suicide is identified, it is important to thoroughly assess the risk and the unique idiosyncratic nature of that client's suicidal thoughts. It is important to watch closely for the potential dropout from treatment and do what ever is possible to keep them in care. Treatment itself should follow tried and true counseling center based interventions with an eye to focusing on what makes life worth living and what can be done about decreasing reasons for dying. If one practices conscientiously and responsibly and deals with suicidality head on, our experience says that such work can make a meaningful difference in that client's life, in fact it may even help save it.

*Dr. Jobes is an Associate Professor of psychology at The Catholic University of America (CUA) in Washington DC. Prior to joining the faculty full time at CUA, Dr. Jobes held a joint appointment for eight years between the University's Counseling Center and Department of Psychology. During this period he served in various rolls including staff psychologist, group coordinator, director of clinical training, and ultimately associate director. With over 35 publications in suicidology, Dr. Jobes has studied suicidal college students for the past thirteen years.*



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## **Pre-Conference Programs (2)**

This program information is tentative and subject to change;  
be sure to check out the convention program and Commission VII publicity for final program confirmation.

### **Assessing Multicultural Competence: A Courageous Suggestion for a Complex Issue**

Dennis Sheridan, Ed.D., Paula Sheridan, Ph.D., and Betty Anderson, M.Div.

### **Creating a Supportive Environment for Student Athletes**

Mary Howard-Hamilton, Ph.D., Sherry Watt, Ph.D., Kelly Norton, Elizabeth Broughton, Ph.D., and Kathy Hill

## **Other Commission Cosponsored Programs (7)**

### **Reframing Manhood: Disability and the Social Construction of Masculinity**

Jason Laker

### **The Men's Program: How to Lower Men's Likelihood of Raping**

John D. Foubert, Ph.D., Brian Kraft, Bradford Perry, and Benjamin Jamieson

### **Feel Better Fast: Helping Depression, Stress, Insomnia - A Campus Workshop**

Bert H. Epstein, Psy.D.

### **How Has the "War on Boys" Influenced College Men?**

Tracy Davis and Dan Calhoun

### **Fostering Men's Responsibility for Sexual Assault: An Integrative Model**

Alan D. Berkowitz, Ph.D.

### **The Social Norms Approach: Implementation Difficulties and New Applications**

Alan D. Berkowitz, Ph.D.

### **What's Your Story? Exploring Post-Modernism and Narrative in Career Counseling**

Lisa Severy, Ed.S.

## **Commission VII Sponsored Programs (7)**

### **Innovations in College Counseling 2000-2001**

Thomas Magoon, Ph.D., Tamara L. Baker, Ph.D., Stewart Cooper, Ph.D., Spencer Deakin, Ph.D., Shannon Hodges, Ph.D., Phyllis Mogielski-Watson, Ph.D., Reginald Nettles, Ph.D., Fred Newton, Ph.D., Richard Peagler, Ph.D., and Lyle Stack, Ph.D.

### **Group Counseling in College Counseling Centers: More Exchange of Ideas**

Emily F. Carter, Ph.D., Sharon Mitchell, Ph.D., Jason Parcover, Ph.D., and Kurt Gehlert, Ph.D.

### **International Student Concerns: Educational and Psychological Implications**

Kevin F. Gaw, Ph.D.

### **Cross-Cultural Interventions and Ethical Practice: Counseling and Beyond**

Carloyn Bershad, M.A. and Kevin F. Gaw, Ph.D.

### **The Celluloid Couch: Movies, Psychology, and Implications for Student Affairs Personnel**

Brian Kassar, Psy.D.

### **Disability Services and Counseling Services: Building a Cooperative Effort**

Kathleen B. Uzes, Ed.D. and Daley Connelly, M.Ed.

### **Addressing the Psychological Factors in Career Counseling Using Social Cognitive Theory**

Kimberly A. Hays, Ph.D.

## **Commission VII Special Sunday Afternoon Program (1)**

### **Shame and Humiliation: From Isolation to Relational Transformation**

Linda Hartling, Ph.D.

## **General Programs (9)**

### **Are Our Students Getting Tangled in the Web?**

Jane Morgan Bost, Ph.D.



**The Changing College Student Population - Challenges for Counseling Centers**

Sharon Mitchell, Ph.D. and Mary Anne M. Lacour, Ph.D.

**When Someone Has Died**

John D. Powell, Ph.D.

**Long-Term Impact of Language Brokering on College Students**

Angela Londono-McConnell, Ph.D. and Adriana DiPasquale

**Can We All Just Get Along: Using Experiential Exercises for Diversity Training**

Stacey Pearson, Ph.D.

**Using Focus Groups to Assess Campus Needs**

Jill Barber, Ph.D. and Steve Brown, Ph.D.

**Autophotography in Counseling: A New Insight Into Identity**

Cynthia A. Cook, Ph.D., Andrea K. Greenwood, M.A., and Betty L. Brown, M.Ed.

**Depth-Oriented Values Extraction (DOVE): A Reflection Process for College Deciders**

Edward A. Colozzi, Ph.D.

**Gay Men's Friendships On Campus: Implications on Self- Esteem and Identity Disclosure**

Michael M. Kocet

## Commission VII Invited Workshop

### Workshop by Dr. Richard Keeling

Sunday afternoon, 1-4 p.m.

On Sunday afternoon, Commission VII is pleased to host a workshop given by Dr. Richard Keeling on issues related to college student health (for location, please check schedule at the conference). Dr. Richard P. Keeling is Executive Editor of the Journal of American College Health and is Past-President of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality, the American College Health Association, the Foundation for Health in Higher Education, and the International Society for AIDS Education. After 7 years as the Director of University Health Services at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dr. Keeling founded The College Health Hub, an Internet-based health resource for both students and health and counseling professionals on campus.

As a leader in the field of college health (and as one of the first physicians in the United States to respond to the needs of people with HIV/AIDS), Dr. Keeling developed a deep understanding of the critical connections between individual health and the life and values of communities. For more than a decade, Dr. Keeling has been a popular, inspiring speaker and provocative, effective consultant about the major health concerns of young people in America -- binge drinking, drug and tobacco abuse, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted disease, sexual assault and relationship violence, unwanted pregnancy, and disordered eating.

Realizing that "health" means something far greater than fitness, wellness, and medical parameters and that it always happens in context Dr. Keeling challenges us to think about health, learning, and communities ecologically. He encourages us to think beyond traditional models of prevention - beyond information and self-defense -- to focus on relationships, investments, community, and meaning. He sees a future in which we all have a stake a future built by small acts of leadership.