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## COMMISSION VII NEWSLETTER

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**This page was last updated 4/11/05.**



## From the Chair

As I write this, I am in the midst of last-minute preparations for the ACPA convention in Long Beach CA. Thinking back on last year's convention in Boston, I'm looking forward to surf and sand of California! Also in looking back, I am extremely happy at the status of our Commission. There is much to be proud of.

Within the past year, we have been extremely active in our support of our colleagues at the University of Florida and the University of Georgia. I personally would like to extend my sincerest thanks to Commission VII for their support of the Counseling and Testing Center at UGA. Commission VII has also made its mark in issuing a statement on the concerns for on-line counseling and therapy. The Commission's position regarding mycybershrink.com was unanimously endorsed by the Commission Chairs and published in the recent edition of *Developments*. While joining other professional organizations in their concerns for on-line counseling, Commission VII has led the way in expressing its position regarding on-line counseling services targeted to college and university students.

Nationally, Commission VII has gained visibility within other national professional organizations. We now have liaisons from Commission VII to APA Division 17 (Counseling Psychology) Executive Board, Division 17 Section on College Counseling Centers, and Division 17 Council on the Specialty of Counseling Psychology. In addition, we also have liaison representatives from APA Division 17, the Association of Counseling Center Training Agencies (ACCTA), and the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS). In the spirit of collaboration, I have invited Karen Lese, Ph.D., Chair-elect for Division 17 Section on College Counseling Centers, to join us during our open meeting on Sunday. It will be important for Commission VII to actively maintain these liaison relationships as well as to explore the possibilities of other relationships with other professional groups.

On a personal note, it has been my deepest honor to serve as Chair of Commission VII. My service to the Commission could not have been accomplished without the unwavering support of Heidi Levine as Past Chair and Sue Stock-Ward as Chair-elect. As well, I am most grateful for the outstanding work of all those who served as committee chairs in getting the work done for the Commission. I would also like to thank Jonathan Kandell for representing Commission VII on the Core Council for Professional Issues and David Rardin for successfully completing his term as Commission VII representative to the Professional Development Core Council. Thanks to both Jonathan and Dave for representing our Commission, our values, and our mission to the Association. And thanks to all Commission VII members for giving me the opportunity and honor to serve as Chair for the last three years. I can think of no better way to express my thanks to all of you than to be with you all soon in Long Beach. Let's tee it up!

## From the Editor

Welcome to the latest edition of the ACPA Commission VII Newsletter. I know this has been a very busy and challenging year at counseling centers across the country. Hopefully, the upcoming ACPA Conference in Long Beach, CA will serve as an opportunity to share our experiences and to learn from the work of our colleagues. This newsletter includes a listing of the presentations offered this year by Commission VII members, and the offerings look very promising.

Our feature article for this edition is *Creating Inclusion: Transgender Students On Campus* written by Mindy Michels, M.A. The article focuses on transgender students on college campuses. Ms. Michels is the Coordinator of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Ally Resource Center at American University. Her article sheds light on a minority population who face a myriad of challenges on our campuses and with whom many of us are only vaguely familiar. She has also included wonderful lists of relevant websites, organizations, resolutions and books through which we can educate ourselves and our clients.

Thank you to Toti Perez for submitting his final Chair's column, and of course thank you to Toti for his excellent service as Commission VII Chair. Thank you as always to Jonathan Kandell who formatted and uploaded this newsletter. Here's to a fun, informative and rejuvenating conference in Long Beach!

Matthew Torres, Ph.D.  
Coordinator of Clinical Services  
American University Counseling Center

## Creating Inclusion: Transgender Students on Campus

Mindy Michels, M.A.

Coordinator of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Ally Resource Center  
American University

Over the past 30 years many of our campuses learned that there are gay, lesbian, and bisexual students on campus and that we need to closely examine our campus services in order to ensure that heterosexism and homophobia do not exclude students on the basis of sexual orientation. Some of our campuses met this challenge more effectively than others, by opening resource centers, supporting student organizations, hiring openly gay, lesbian, and bisexual staff and faculty, and modifying previously exclusionary policies and practices to provide a more inclusive environment.

But as campuses began to deal with issues of sexual orientation, issues of gender identity remained in the closets. Few campuses had out transgender faculty, staff, or students on campus and even fewer had any policies that would support transgender members of the campus community. In the past few years this has begun to change. Transgender members of our campus community are coming out of the closets and it is once again time for us to examine our policies and practices in order to ensure that gender identity is not a barrier for our colleagues and our students.

Counseling centers have a particularly important role to play as students may have both a legitimate skepticism of the counseling profession and a need for the services, support, and referrals available through counseling centers. Much clinical practice with transgendered individuals, and particularly with transgendered youth, has been undertaken from a model that pathologizes the young person or attempts to confine young people into rigid models of gender. At the same time, transgender individuals may be dealing with a wide range of social pressures and institutional barriers that may prevent them from being able to access needed services.

As Shannon Minter writes in "Social Services with Transgendered Youth", practitioners who take the time to listen to transgender youth and acknowledge the realities and complexities of their lives:

have identified a number of external stressors—from isolation and parental rejection to violence in communities and schools—that account for many of the social and emotional problems that clinicians have erroneously viewed as evidence of inherent psychopathology. As a result of that fundamental shift in perspective, these practitioners have developed interventions that are effective and empowering because they are grounded in a realistic understanding of the severe prejudice and hostility that most young transgendered people face, simply for being who they are (1999, xiv).

This article does not pretend to be a comprehensive discussion of all issues that transgender students face—either on campus or off. Instead, I will try to provide some basic definitions, a brief discussion on some campus concerns for transgender students, and some resources for further education.

Language is an important component of working appropriately with transgender students. While definitions are always fluid and contested, the following can serve as an entry point for understanding common terms. These definitions are taken from *Transgender Equality* (see bibliography).

**Gender Identity:** Refers to a person's internal, deeply felt sense of being either male or female, or something other or in between. Because gender identity is internal and personally defined, it is not visible to others. In contrast, a person's "gender expression" is external and socially perceived.

**Transgender:** Transgender has become an "umbrella term" that is used to describe a wide range of identities and experiences, including but not limited to: pre-operative, post-operative, and non-operative transsexual people; male and female cross-dressers (sometimes referred to as "transvestites", "drag queens" or "drag kings"); intersexed individuals; and men and women, regardless of sexual orientation, whose appearance of characteristics are perceived to be gender atypical.

**Transsexual:** Most people experience their gender identity as correlating to, or in line with, their physical sex. For a

transsexual person, however, there is a conflict between one's physical sex and one's gender identity as a man or a woman. Female-to-male transsexual (FTM) people are born with female bodies, but have a predominantly male gender identity. Male-to-female transsexual (MTF) people are born with male bodies, but have a female gender identity. Many, but not all, transsexual people undergo medical treatment to change their physical sex through hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgeries.

Another important aspect of language is the use of pronouns. In working with or talking to a transgender student or colleague, it is most appropriate to use the gender pronoun preferred by the individual. If you are not sure which pronoun someone prefers, the easiest way to find out is to ask the person in a polite and respectful manner.

On campus, students may face a number of challenges. First, most campuses do not include gender identity or expression in their non-discrimination policy, and most campuses are not in states or municipalities that have non-discrimination policies covering gender identity or expression. These leave transgender members of our campus communities without effective legal redress in cases of discrimination. Changing campus policies to explicitly include gender identity and expression is one powerful way to send a message of inclusion.

But transgender students also face challenges at a much more basic level. Think about the forms that you have at the front desk of your counseling center. Do they have a check box for "Male" or "Female"? If so, this sends a clear message to transgender students before they even go through their first intake. Think about changing your forms to include an option for "Transgender". Or, even better, leave a blank space after "Gender" and let students fill in the blank in the manner that they feel is most representative of their self identity. Transgender students face forms like these throughout campus and are constantly reminded that they do not really "fit" within societal—and campus— notions of gender norms.

The same is true when a student tries to use the restroom. What is your campus policy on restroom use for transgender students? Can they use the restroom that most reflects their gender identity? Does your campus have single stall restrooms where they do not have to worry about the potentially harmful reactions of other restroom users? Having access to safe and dignified bathroom facilities is an important aspect of ensuring that transgender members of the campus community are able to work and study in an inclusive environment.

Housing is also a key area where universities need to think about the needs of transgender students. Each university has different types of housing available, and so the range of options for transgender students will be different at each university. In many cases, solving housing concerns is best accomplished on a case-by-case basis, examining each student's needs and the available housing options.

The list of areas where a university needs to think about how current policies and procedures differently impact transgender students goes on and on....we can talk about ID cards, or locker rooms, or health care, or name changes, or classroom concerns... For the counseling center, perhaps one of the most important areas to examine is how well the counseling center is prepared to assist students—whether they are just beginning to struggle with their own gender identity or whether they are out and proud and just trying to negotiate administrative and social hurdles.

So here are a few (and by no means comprehensive) suggestions to try and make your counseling center more transgender inclusive:

- Make sure that you and your colleagues are educated and trained on transgender issues.
- Make sure that your intake forms provide room for transgender individuals to self identify.
- Use appropriate and respectful language with transgender students, staff, and faculty.
- Do not assume that a student struggling with gender issues is gay, lesbian, or bisexual.
- Know your local resources—what local mental health and medical practices provide supportive services to transgender students.
- Be aware of local and/or campus support groups.
- Know what the laws are in your area—are people on campus protected under state, local, or campus non-discrimination policies?
- Work with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender campus or local groups to do outreach and education about transgender issues on campus.

- Be supportive of campus efforts to provide more trans inclusive facilities and polices. Even better, initiate efforts to make your campus more trans inclusive.

Educating yourself and others is always easier with resources. So the following list provides some organizations and books that provide a starting point to learn more about transgender issues.

### **Organizations/Websites:**

*American Boyz*: <http://www.amboyz.org/> The American Boyz (AmBoyz) is an organization which aims to support people who were labeled female at birth but who feel that is not an accurate or complete description of who they are (FTMs) and their significant others, friends, families and allies (SOFFAs).

*FTM International*: <http://www.ftm-intl.org/> This site is the internet contact point for the largest, longest-running educational organization serving FTM transgendered people and transsexual men.

*Gender Education and Advocacy*: <http://www.gender.org/> Gender Education and Advocacy (GEA) is a national organization focused on the needs, issues and concerns of gender variant people in human society.

*GenderPAC*: <http://www.genderpac.org> The Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GenderPAC) is a national organization working to end discrimination and violence caused by gender stereotypes.

*International Foundation for Gender Education*: <http://www.ifge.org> (IFGE), founded in 1987, is a leading advocate and educational organization for promoting the self-definition and free expression of individual gender identity.

*Intersex Society of North America*: <http://www.isna.org> Intersex Society of North America is devoted to systemic change to end shame, secrecy and unwanted genital surgeries for people born with atypical reproductive anatomies.

*The National Transgender Advocacy Organization*: <http://www.ntac.org> NTAC works for the advancement of understanding and the attainment of full civil rights for all transgendered, intersexed and gender variant people in every aspect of society and actively opposes discriminatory acts by all means legally available.

*Transsexual Women's Resources*: <http://www.annelawrence.com/twr> This web site is designed to empower transsexual women by providing factual information, informed opinion, and personal narrative.

### **Resolutions:**

American Public Health Association. 1999. "9933: The Need for Acknowledging Transgendered Individuals within Research and Clinical Practice." <http://www.apha.org/legislative/policy/policypdf1.pdf>

The National Association of Social Workers. 1999. "Transgender and Gender Identity Issues" Published in the fifth edition of *Social Work Speaks*.

### **Books:**

Boenke, Mary, ed. *Transforming Families: Real Stories About Transgendered Loved Ones*. Imperial Beach, CA: Walter Trook Publishing, 1999.

Bornstein, Kate. *Gender Outlaw—On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Chase, Cheryl. "Hermaphrodites With Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Activism." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. 4(2):189-211. 1998.

Currah, Paisley & Minter, Shannon. *Transgender Equality: A Handbook for Activists and Policymakers*. The Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force & the National Center for Lesbian Rights. 2000.

Devor, H. *FTM: Female to Male Transsexuals in Society*. IN: Indiana University Press, 1997.

Ettner, R., & Brown, G.R. *Gender Loving Care: A Guide to Counseling Gender-Variant Clients*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999.

Feinberg, Leslie. *Transliberation: Beyond Pink or Blue*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998.

Israel, Gianna E. and Tarvel, Donald E. *Transgender Care: Recommended Guidelines, Practical Information and Personal Accounts*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997.

Mallon, Gerald P. *Social Services with Transgendered Youth*. New York: Harrington Park Press, 1999.



## COMMISSION VII (OR RELATED) PROGRAMS AT ACPA 2002 CONFERENCE

TIME	PROGRAM	PRESENTERS	LOCATION	CE CREDITS?
<b>Saturday 3/16</b>				
8:30-4:30p	<u>Workshop</u> : Integrating & Expanding Your Counseling & Psychotherapy Skills	Jeff Brooks-Harris	Westin - Barcelona	<b>YES</b>
9:00-12:00p	<u>Workshop</u> : Life Medicine: Wisdom for Extraordinary Living — A Course/Workshop	Nancy Spence	Westin - Palos Verdes	<b>YES</b>
4:00-5:00p	Job Search Strategies for Counseling Center Psychologists and Counselors	John Bradac	Conv Cntr 102C	No
5:00-7:30p	Directorate Meeting (only for those elected to the C7 Directorate)		Westin - Shoreline	No
<b>Sunday 3/17</b>				
8:30-11:30a	IACS University & College Counseling Center (UCCC) Board of Accreditation Mtg	Edward Hattauer	Hyatt Regency F	No
8:30-12:00p	Commission VII Open Meeting		Renaissance - Renaissance V	No
1:00-5:00p	IACS Board of Directors Meeting	Vivian Boyd	Westin - Cerritos Boardroom	No
1:30-4:30p	<u>Commission VII Open Workshop</u> : Developing and implementing crisis response teams on campus	Wayne Griffin	Renaissance - Renaissance V	No
8:00p-11:00p	Opening Gala		Queen Mary	
<b>Monday 3/18</b>				
8:00-8:30a	Chronic Illness, Meditation and Writing: A Workshop in Self Discovery	Arnold Medvene	Conv Cntr 103B	No
9:00-10:00a	Commission VII Special Interest Group: Issues in Practicum Training	Jan Altman (Coordinator)	Hyatt - Seaview B	No
9:00-10:15a	Attending to Multiculturalism in Group Therapy: An Exchange of Ideas	Kurt Gehlert	Renaissance - Capri	<b>YES</b>
9:00-10:15a	Accommodating College Students with Psychiatric Disabilities: Current Trends and Issues	Amy Quillin	Renaissance - Renaissance I	<b>YES</b>
9:00-10:15a	Maximizing Single-Session Alcohol Counseling	Richard Reams	Westin - Odessa	<b>YES</b>
9:00-10:15a	Parker Palmer's Guide to Inner Wisdom: Implications for Practice	Ruth Harper	Conv Cntr 201A	No
9:00-10:30a	Issues of Accreditation for University and College	Vivian Boyd	Hyatt - Regency	No

	Counseling Centers		E	
10:00-11:00a	Commission VII Special Interest Group: Professional Issues	Laura Lyn (Coordinator)	Hyatt - Seaview	No
10:45-12:00	P.A.S.S.: A Counseling-Based Academic Retention Program	Heidi Levine & Crystal Caldwell	Conv Cntr 102B	<b>YES</b>
11:00-12:00	Commission VII Special Interest Group: Clinical Issues	Carol Holland (Coordinator)	Hyatt - Seaview	No
12:00-1:00p	Job Search Strategies for Counseling Center Psychologists and Counselors	John Bradac	Conv Cntr 103A	No
1:00-2:00p	Commission VII Special Interest Group: Small College Counseling Center Issues	Lynn Bruner (Coordinator)	Hyatt - Seaview	No
1:00-2:15p	Integrating Counseling and Spirituality: Between Freud and a Hard Place	Geraldine Rockett	Westin - Vancouver	<b>YES</b>
1:00-2:15p	A Cognitive Group Therapy Program for College Women with Depression	Joann Sumner	Westin - Palos Verdes	<b>YES</b>
1:00-2:15p	Helping College Students Experiencing Rejection And Loss	Carol M. Napierkowski	Westin - San Pedro	<b>YES</b>
1:15-3:45p	IACS Field Visitor Training Workshop	Edward Hattauer	Hyatt - Regency E	No
2:45-4:00p	Meeting Students' Psychological Needs Beyond The Classroom: Teaching First-Year Students	Traci Callandrillo	Conv Cntr 102B	<b>YES</b>
4:30-5:30p	Commission VII Special Interest Group: Issues in Outreach Programming	Bert Epstein (Coordinator)	Westin - Shoreline	No
6:00-8:00p	ACPA Carnival		Westin	
<b>Tuesday 3/19</b>				
8:00-8:30a	Eating Disorders Awareness Week Programs Across Space and Time	Elizabeth (Beth) Mansfield	Conv Cntr 102B	No
8:00-8:30a	Practicing Inclusion Using On-Line Study Skills Workshops	Sherry Lynch	Conv Cntr 201A	No
8:00-9:00a	Commission VII Special Interest Group: Technology and On-line Counseling	Jonathan Kandell (Coordinator)	Hyatt - Seaview	No
9:00-10:00a	Commission VII Special Interest Group: Merged Counseling/Health Centers	Heidi Levine (Coordinator)	Hyatt - Seaview	No
9:00-10:15a	Culture, Treatment, Child Sexual Abuse: Strategies with Latina/Asian Women	Rosa Moreno-Alcaraz	Renaissance - Renaissance II	<b>YES</b>
10:45-12:00	Innovations in College Counseling	Thomas Magoon	Conv Cntr 101A	<b>YES</b>
1:00-2:15p	Creating a Multicultural Counseling Center: Challenges and Strategies	Amy L. Reynolds	Conv Cntr 101B	<b>YES</b>
1:00-2:15p	GI Joe to GQ: Men, Body Image, and Eating Disorders	Brian Kassar	Westin - Tokyo	<b>YES</b>
1:00-2:15p	Skill-Based Psychotherapy Integration: A Microskills Training Method for Counselors	Jeff Brooks-Harris	Conv Cntr 203B	<b>YES</b>
	Voices of Wisdom: Responding to Eating Disorders			

1:00-2:15p	on Campus	Stacey Pearson	Conv Cntr 202B	<b>YES</b>
2:45-4:00p	Saying Goodbye: Institutional Response to Loss through Rituals of Remembering	Wayne Griffin	Conv Cntr 103A	<b>YES</b>
3:00-5:30p	Commission VII Business Meeting (Open to All)		Hyatt - Seaview C	No
5:00-6:30p	AIDS Memorial			
6:00-8:00p	Commission VII Social (Open to All)		Renaissance-Renaissance III	No
8:00-12:00	A Night on the Town		City of Long Beach	
<b>Wednesday 3/20</b>				
9:00-10:15a	Surfing for Love: College Trends, Clinical Implications, Programming Ideas	Cherisse Flanagan	Westin - Naples	<b>YES</b>