

The CLINICIAN

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW YORK STATE SOCIETY FOR CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK

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LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES

LCSWs Are Now Included as Worker Comp Providers

Reforms also Put Teeth into Insurance Parity Law

By Marsha Wineburgh, DSW, LCSW-R, Legislative Chair

New York's Democratic Party-led State Legislature has been very active since its session began in January 2019. Three bills we have been working on for several sessions, if not years, have been passed by the legislature and signed in to law by Governor Cuomo.

Worker Compensation: Finally, after decades of work, clinical social workers, like psychologists and psychiatrists, have been included as worker compensation providers to assist injured employees. Regulations are expected to be drafted soon and an online application developed, as well as a fee schedule. A basic online training program related to billing, reporting and general worker compensation terminology is in the works. New developments will be covered in our *Friday E-news* as they occur.

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At the 2019 Annual MSW Job Fair in March at Columbia School of Social Work. Students and graduates chatted with NYSSCSW reps about the benefits of membership in general and our programs for newly-minted social workers, like the Mentorship Program.

PHOTO CREDIT: Dorothy Robinson, Columbia School of Social Work Communications Office.

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SAVE THE DATE!

NYSSCSW ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DATE: Saturday, October 26, 2019

TIME: 4:00–7:00 PM

PLACE: Westchester, NY

Please mark your calendar for the Society's 2019 Annual Membership Meeting on October 26.

We're planning a social gathering, open to all members, at a venue in Westchester.

The locale, still to be chosen, will be easily accessible by public transportation or car.

The proceedings will feature special recognition for members from every chapter.

Delicious food and drink will be served.

We hope you will join us! More details to come.

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2/3 Page	4 15/16" w x 10" h	\$325	\$295
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1/3 Page (1 Col.)	2 3/8" w x 10" h	\$175	\$160
1/3 Page (Square)	4 15/16" w x 4 7/8" h	\$175	\$160
1/4 Page	3 5/8" w x 4 7/8" h	\$140	\$125
1/6 Page (1/2 Col.)	2 3/8" w x 4 7/8" h	\$95	\$85

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our Gratitude to Chapter Presidents Who Are Stepping Down

By Shannon Boyle, LCSW

For just over 50 years, the Clinical Social Work Society and all its accomplishments have been made possible by the leadership and hard work of many volunteers. Through the decades, chapter and state leaders have come and gone, each one bringing unique experience and expertise to the table that has served our Society and membership well as we have faced challenges in our professional field and the world around us.



Shannon Boyle, LCSW

This spring, we are giving heartfelt thanks to several Chapter Presidents who have spent countless hours leading their chapters as well as representing their chapter needs at the state level. We celebrate their accomplishments, wish them the very best in their new endeavors, and welcome them as continuing members of our Society.

Our sincere gratitude to the following Chapter Presidents who are stepping down from their positions this spring:

- Rosemary Cohen, *Mid-Hudson Chapter President*
- Janice Gross, *Staten Island Chapter President*
- Karen Kaufman, *Metropolitan Chapter President*
- Joseph Reiher, *Nassau Chapter President*

The NYSSCSW thrives on volunteers who, like these individuals and those stepping into their vacated positions, give of their time and talents to advance and promote clinical social work in New York State. Our organization cannot exist without active volunteers to help move our mission forward.

"Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in." —Author Unknown

Please consider becoming an active member of our Society, either at the State or Chapter level. There are many ways to get involved and help shape your profession and the community at large.

Sincerely,

Shannon Boyle, LCSW, *President*



Chris Ann Farhood, LCSW

A Tribute to Helen Hinckley Krackow, Mentor of Mentors

Two of the many Society hats Helen Hinckley Krackow, LCSW, BCD has long worn are as Chair of both the State and Met Chapter Mentorship Committees. For as long as I can remember, she has been the premiere mentor of mentors. In fact, when I was nominated to the State Board in 2006 and attended my first meeting, listening to Helen's Mentorship report inspired me to become a mentor.

In the Met Chapter, Helen interviewed each new mentor, role-modeled the position and held regular meetings with all the mentors. She spoke personally with each prospective mentee before assigning the person to a mentorship group. For years, she presented a "Mini Mentorship Salon" at our Member Receptions.

On the State level, Helen assisted the Mentorship Chairs of all the chapters with their programs. For many years, she represented NYSSCSW at the annual MSW Job Fairs in New York City, recruiting soon-to-be graduates to the Society. For the last decade, I joined her at job fairs as she enthusiastically promoted Society membership and the Mentorship Program.

Helen has now accepted a higher level of leadership, as President of the Met Chapter. She will be "retiring" as Chair of both the State and Met Mentorship committees. I am grateful for the opportunity to succeed her in these roles, but I know I will have a hard time filling her shoes and wearing her hats. 🇺🇸

Graduation Boot Camp:

In February, 33 graduating MSW students attended the Graduation Boot Camp seeking a head start on their careers. Hafina Allen outlined the LMSW and LCSW licensing requirements, and Chris Ann Farhood (in photo) gave pointers on resume writing, job search skills and interview preparation.



Building a Larger and Stronger Membership

Taking on the Mantle of Richard Joelson, Chair Extraordinaire

Hello from your new Membership Committee Chair! I'd like to begin my first column by thanking Richard B. Joelson, DSW, LCSW for his many years of leadership as Membership Chair for both the Met Chapter (10 years) and the State (6 years) committees. Under Richard's leadership, our membership grew and was strengthened across all chapters.

I first met Richard in 2012, during my final semester as an MSW student. He and the entire Met Chapter Membership Committee were extremely welcoming, and, within a few months, I joined as a Committee member. Over the past seven years, I have worked closely with Richard and other committee members to attract students and new professionals to the Society. In January 2018, I also joined the State Board Executive Committee as a Member-at-Large. Since then, I've learned a lot about our chapters—how each one is unique and yet how they all face similar challenges. I look forward to putting my experience and knowledge to work to grow and strengthen our membership.

Graduation Boot Camp

On February 24, the Met Chapter Membership Committee hosted a statewide Graduation Boot Camp. Building on lessons learned from previous events, this time we aimed the program at graduating MSW students, those looking to get a head start on job searches or seeking licensing information. I gave a presentation on New York State LMSW and LCSW licensing requirements and how to apply for these licenses. My fellow Committee member, Chris Ann Farhood, LCSW presented on resume writing, job search skills and interview preparation.

Of the 33 students that attended, 15 (45%) became new Society members, joining one of four different chapters. We are grateful to the Wurzweiler School of Social Work at Yeshiva University for providing the location for the event. We look forward to working with the many other MSW programs throughout the state to provide similar events.

Student Reps

Since 2014, the Met Chapter has recruited Student Reps from MSW programs in our area. The current group includes 13 student reps at six schools, and they have been key to our success in bringing new students to our events.

The graduating Class of 2019 Student Reps, all soon-to-be new professionals, are Yuen Chan, Alivia Hall, Zachary Johnson, Victoria Lassen, Elena Locker-Torres, Susie Powers, Asiya Vickers, and Qian Zhang. We congratulate them on the completion of their MSW programs.

We also thank these new and continuing Student Reps: Cynthia Campos, Olivia Donini, Lee Feldman, Rosa Ruey, and Lydia Schinasi.

Our Student Reps are crucial to helping us communicate with aspiring social workers, keeping our constituency engaged and vibrant, and keeping the Society in touch with current concerns in the field. I look forward to help expand the Student Rep program to other chapters across the state.

The Coming Months

I plan to work with all our chapters in the coming months to support their outreach efforts. We will develop new membership recruitment materials and work to expand statewide those initiatives that have already had success in individual chapters.



Hafina Allen, LCSW

“I’ve learned a lot about our chapters—how each one is unique—and yet they all face similar challenges. I look forward to working with them in the coming months.”

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Health Insurance Parity Reforms: The NYSSCSW, along with our Parity and Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder Coalition partners, have shepherded the Behavioral Health Insurance Parity Reforms (BHIPR) bill into law, to take effect on January 1, 2020. The law covers all health insurance and health benefit plans offered in the state including individual, group and HMO plans. It puts teeth into Timothy's Law, the initial Parity Law enacted January 1, 2007. Self-insured plans are not covered but remain subject to Federal Parity laws and regulations. The key provisions of this reform legislation include:

- Coverage for all mental health conditions, substance use disorders and autism spectrum disorders, as defined in the most recent edition of the DSM or ICD.
- Prohibits preauthorization and concurrent review of substance use disorder services during the initial 28 days of inpatient or outpatient treatment.
- Prohibits preauthorization and concurrent review of inpatient psychiatric services for persons under 18 years of age for the first 14 days.
- Prohibits prior preauthorization of formulary forms of prescribed medications for the treatment of substance abuse disorders.
- Medical necessity criteria must be made available to insureds, perspective insureds, or in-network providers upon request.
- Prohibits taking any adverse action in retaliation against a provider for filing a complaint, making a report, or commenting to a government body regarding policies and practices that violate the statute.

- Requires insurers and health plans to post additional information regarding their in-network providers of mental health and substance use disorder services, including whether a provider is accepting new patients, as well as the provider's affiliations with participating facilities certified or authorized by OMH or OASES.
- Every two years, each insurance company must complete a Parity Compliance Report to the Department of Financial Services which will be made public by DFS. The report will include network adequacy data along with compliance with the BHIPR legislation. (New Jersey has also passed their version of a Parity Law, signed by Governor Phil Murphy on April 11, 2019.)

Also of Interest: As of January 1, 2020, New York State psychologists will be required to have 36 hours of continuing education, including ethics, every three years in order to reregister their licenses.

The Supervisor, and not the supervisee, is liable for malpractice. In *Blendowski vs. Wiese* (4th Dept. 2018), the Court dismissed as a defendant a resident who had been sued for his participation in an operation alleged to have been botched. The supervising surgeon was also sued and retained as a defendant. For supervisors and supervisees of psychotherapy treatments, this case suggests that the supervisor not the supervisee is primarily liable unless directions given by the supervisor are so far beyond accepted standards of care that even the supervisee should realize it. 📌

For example, to celebrate Social Work Month in March, we expanded the Two-for-One agency-based special membership offer. In addition to gains in the Met Chapter, the offer also helped the Staten Island and Mid-Hudson chapters recruit new agency-based members.

Overall, the Society is doing well in recruiting new members to all chapters. While the State and Chapter Membership Committees continue their work, each member can extend our outreach efforts. I would love to hear from anyone who has ideas about what might work, locally or statewide. Along those lines, please keep an eye out for the re-launch of the Member-Get-a-Member program, featuring our new NYSSCSW tote bags. 📌



Students at the Met Chapter's Happy Hour in March.

Federal Court Rules Against UBH

A good first step, but there are clear limits to this victory

In a 106-page decision released on March 5, 2019, Joseph C. Spero, the Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge of the United States District Court for the Northern District of California found that United Behavioral Health had failed to meet its required level of responsibility according to federal law.

In part of his decision, Judge Spero stated that UBH's guidelines were "unreasonable and abuse of discretion" in order to limit access to care to achieve financial incentives.

The emphasis for coverage became critical treatment, and patients reported that their level of care was denied as soon as they were determined to be stable. The judge's decision stated, "There is an excessive emphasis on addressing acute symptoms and stabilizing crises while ignoring the effective treatment for members' underlying conditions" and he dismissed much of the testimony by United Health's experts as "evasive—and even deceptive."

The company stated, in an emailed response to the ruling, "We look forward to demonstrating in the next phase of this case how our members received appropriate care." It went on to say, "We remain committed to providing our members with access to the right care for the treatment of mental health conditions and substance use disorders.

A *New York Times* article reported that Judge Spero is expected to "reach a final judgment in the next few months."

In an article in www.medium.com, the Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN) made the case that the decision is of great importance to us all, clinicians and patients, exactly because Judge Spero pointed to underlying conditions and not just the treatment of current symptoms, and also that "someone is watching."

Laura Groshong, Policy and Practice Director, CSWA issued a statement about the implications of this decision. In it she reminds us that this is part of the ongoing work with managed care companies.

"At the same time, there are clear limits to this big win: this is not the end of insurance denials and parity violations. UBH will surely be appealing the judgment, and other judges may or may not uphold the present ruling. Further, the insurance arena is complex. Each state has its own insurance regulations, and each type of plan (ERISA, Medicare, Medicaid, Exchange Plans, or private) has a different source/s of oversight. (CSWA has posted information to clarify the differences in the Clinical Practices section of our website.)

She also reminds us to be advocates for ourselves and our patients, to speak up when we think there has

been a parity violation or other violation of the regulations and to use the appeal process, especially through the state insurance appeal apparatus.

This is an ongoing story. The final decision has yet to be issued and, as was said, it's a state-by-state affair. Certainly this decision can be used a precedent for future decisions. This is a good step along the way. 

RESOURCES CITED FOR THIS ARTICLE:

New York Times, "Mental Health Treatment Denied to Customers by Giant Insurer's Policy, Judge Rules," by Reed Abelson

www.nytimes.com/2019/03/05/health/united-health-mental-health-parity.html

"Why the Recent Finding Against Mental Health Giant UBH is Bigger Than it Looks," Psychotherapy Action Network, April 5, 2019,

www.medium.com/@psian/why-the-recent-finding-against-mental-health-giant-ubh-is-bigger-than-it-looks-287a1920192

Implications of the UBH Decision for LCSWs, Groshong, Laura, Clinical Social Work Association, 04/17/2019, communication from CSWA by email

Karen Kaufman to Step Down as President Of the Ace Foundation and the Met Chapter

Karen Kaufman, Ph.D., LCSW-R is stepping down as President of the ACE Foundation and the Metropolitan Chapter in June 2019. As a founding member of ACE, “she has generously contributed her time and knowledge to building a strong, diversified selection of continuing education courses and accompanying policies to ensure quality programming for clinicians from many backgrounds,” said Marsha Wineburgh, DSW, LCSW-R, Treasurer of the ACE Foundation. “Karen is highly qualified to oversee advanced clinical programs. We hope she will continue to share her extensive clinical knowledge as a consultant and teacher in the ACE program.”

Dr. Kaufman has served as President of the Met Chapter for eight years. “During her presidency, the Met Chapter grew exponentially,” said Helen Hinckley Krackow, LCSW, BCD. “She handled leadership with grace and dignity.” In private practice in Westchester and Manhattan for over 30 years, Dr. Kaufman has been an adjunct faculty member at Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service, Westchester Division for 16 years. She has published in the



President Karen Kaufman (second from left) was honored at the Met Chapter's Year-end Celebration.

Clinical Social Work Journal and presented on treatment failure, transference and countertransference. She earned a doctorate in Clinical Social Work and Psychoanalysis and finished training at the Advanced Institute for Analytic Psychotherapy. 📖

New Member Service: The Community Bulletin Board Listserv

A tool for sharing non-clinical information with colleagues across the state

NYSSCSW has rolled out a new member benefit, the Community Bulletin Board Listserv, a communications tool for posting non-clinical items and information to share with colleagues statewide. Non-members who are mental health professionals may join the CBB Listserv for a free 30-day trial period.

The **CBB Listserv** is a place for Society members to share announcements of office space, summer rentals, books and other items for sale. It can be used to seek services or resources unrelated to social work practice (e.g., dentists, housekeepers). Study groups, workshops and conferences that do not confer continuing education credits may also be posted here.

The CBB Listserv was created to reduce OT (“Off Topic”) posts that currently appear on the Chapter Professional Listservs. The CBB Listserv is primarily for members but non-members may register to participate for a 30-day trial period, after which they must join the NYSSCSW to continue.

Please Note: Chapter Professional Listservs that members already belong to are now reserved for professional matters only, including clinical discussions, announcements of clinical meetings, and referrals.

Please visit our website to learn more: nysscsw.org/community-bulletin-board-listserv. If you have questions, please email the State Listserv Chair, Marsha Wineburgh, at mwineburgh@aol.com or call our office at 800-288-4279. 📞

50 Years of Generating Change

At the Society's 50th Anniversary Education Conference on April 27, 2019, we reflected upon our contributions to the clinical social work profession and to legislative change. Three esteemed speakers shared their research and knowledge with dynamic presentations on the challenges of the current opioid epidemic, the implications of legalizing marijuana, and social work education for the next generation. The latter presentation is reviewed here.

The Manualization of Everything and the Future of Clinical Social Work

Presentation by Jeffrey L. Longhofer, Ph.D., LCSW; Reviewed by Marsha Wineburgh, DSW, LCSW-R

Jeffrey Longhofer, Ph.D. certainly knows a lot about social work masters programs. He is an Associate Professor of Social Work at Rutgers University, Co-president of the American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work (AAPCSW), a clinical social worker, an applied anthropologist, a psychoanalyst and a researcher. In his comprehensive presentation, *The Manualization of Everything and the Future of Clinical Social Work*, he outlined the shrinking of teaching practice wisdom and the deterioration of the knowledge base long associated with social work.

We are living in a world that is quickly being influenced by discoveries and innovations in many fields: genome projects, crises in classifications, pharmacology and brain decoding, to name a few. Longhofer suggested that, at a time when knowledge is growing exponentially, the social work curriculum is becoming simplified, prescribed and essentially unserviceable for novice functioning in agencies. He highlighted five factors that account for the decline in course content:

- 70% of the teaching staff are non-tenured or adjuncts. They teach their classes and leave, having no time for staff meetings or meetings with student.
- The curriculum is being compressed: 3 classes in family treatment, 3 classes in group, 2 classes in psychopathology, and so forth. Students expecting to gain a level of expertise are getting only an introduction.
- The collapse of supervision.

- Increasingly, the faculty lacks practice experience, which means they cannot evaluate adjunct courses.
- Researchers have no practice experience. Practice is no longer informing “expert” knowledge.

I cannot help but add the use of online fieldwork and practice courses as a contributor to the decline of MSW education. My hope is that the state licensing boards will be apprised of the deterioration in education and require more before candidates may sit for any of the licensing levels. 📌



PRESENTERS AT THE 50TH ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE: (l. to r.) Jeffrey B. Rubin, Ph.D., Jeffrey L. Longhofer, Ph.D., LCSW, and (far r.) Stephen L. Dewey, Ph.D. with ACE Director of Professional Development Suzanne A. Klett, Ph.D., Psy.D., LCSW-R.

COMMITTEE REPORT

CREATIVITY & NEURO-PSYCHO-EDUCATION

COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

- March 23, 2019 – The Therapeutic Action of Working with Erotic Transference, Object Relations Institute, St. John's University, Manhattan Campus
- September 2019, date TBA – The River of Consciousness: The Embattled Spirit of Leonard Cohen Seen through the Lens of Creativity/Creative Process and Neurobiology, Queens Chapter
- On-going Webinars (3 hrs. twice a month) for the international community of mental health and medical professionals on Neurobiology, Psychoanalysis, Trauma, Creativity, and Attachment.

UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS

- May 22–24, 2019 – The Intersection of Psychology and History: The Contributions of Michael Eigen to Human Understanding, 42nd International Psychohistorical Association Conference, New York University, Silver School of Social Work

MUSEUM VISITS

- March 24, 2019 – Andy Warhol – From A to B and Back Again, Whitney Museum of American Art: This exhibition reveals new complexities about the Warhol we think we know and introduces a Warhol for the 21st century.

FUTURE MUSEUM VISITS

- June 16, 2019 (date subject to change) – Leonard Cohen, Jewish Museum

Your ideas and suggestions for events that enrich and deepen our clinical practice are welcome. This committee's agenda is based on member feedback. 

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Inna Rozentsvit, MD, Ph.D., Neuropsychoeeducation Chair,
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HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

This time of year is always very busy for the Society. We had the pleasure of working at the New Professionals Bootcamp in February and the MSW Job Fair at Columbia University in March. Both events were well attended, and the Society welcomed many new members. The biggest event of the season was the 50th Annual Education Conference: 50 Years of Generating Change on April 27.

Also in April, we launched the Community Bulletin Board Listserv. For details and sign-up information, go to: www.nysscsw.com/community-bulletin-board-listserv. If you haven't signed up yet, please email us at the office and we will take care of it.

TMS welcomed a new administrative assistant, Concetta Tedesco, in December. I am sure you will meet her over the phone when you call our office. As always, if you have any questions about your membership or your profile, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. Happy Spring!

Kristin

Kristin Kuenzel, Administrator
Jennifer Wilkes & Concetta Tedesco, Assistants
Sheila Guston, President, Total Management Solutions

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COMMITTEE REPORT

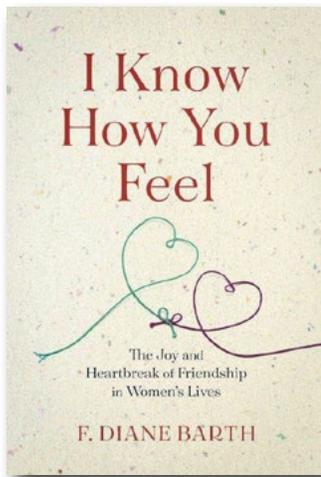
ETHICS & PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The Ethics and Professional Standards Committee's revision of the Code of Ethics has been accepted by the NYSSCSW State Board.

The Committee is now awaiting the revision of the New York State Education Department's Social Work Guidelines, which we will review for accord with our Code of Ethics.

New regulations for telehealth have finally been written by the State Department of Health. Our committee will review them and update the requirements for LCSWs as they occur. Keep an eye open for these updates in the *Friday E-News*. 

Martin Lowery, LCSW-R, Committee Chair; **Jay E. Korman, LCSW**;
Marsha Wineburgh, DSW, LCSW-R



I Know How You Feel: The Joy and Heartbreak of Friendship in Women's Lives

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, February 2018

Written by F. Diane Barth, LCSW

Reviewed by Debra Koppersmith, LCSW

Stephen Sondheim's musical, *Merrily We Roll Along*, charts the ways personal ambitions undermine longtime relationships. The characters ponder how to maintain the unique closeness they developed as young adults, asking "Who is to say, old friends, how an old friendship survives?"

With a focus on women, Diane Barth attempts to answer that question in *I Know How You Feel*. This book will be of value to any clinician treating women who bring their struggles with interpersonal relationships into the consulting room. It is accessible and very readable, and it can be used by patients and clinicians alike to navigate the emotional landscape that makes up women's friendships.

Although not a book about psychotherapy per se, it nicely integrates psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic concepts. Full of interviews compiled by the author, the book can serve both as a reference work and a self-help guide that is a compendium for clarity and reality testing. When one is struggling interpersonally, one can peruse the contents for thoughts on how to handle particular issues. In chapters such as Disillusionment, Betrayal and Rejection, Should Friends Give Advice to Friends, and Why Do Women Friends hold Grudges Forever, the author deconstructs the various factors that contribute to the emotional ups and downs and confusion that are inherent in these interpersonal relationships, and tries to address some of the underlying reasons that women struggle with these attachments. Through anecdotes and interviews with women of all ages, interspersed with psychological theory and concepts, *I Know How you Feel* examines, in ways

that are refreshingly nuanced and intricate, the deeper thought processes that contribute to the complexities in friendship.

The book focuses mainly on women in comfortable socioeconomic circumstances and that stratum of society may be its most likely audience. It would be interesting to explore how some of the material that Barth writes about—including loss, competition and sexual tension—are addressed by women who lack the free time and financial resources that facilitate the interactions of the women featured in this book. Nonetheless, much is universal about the book, and, regardless of their individual circumstances, readers are likely to gain insight about the nuances of relationships that are central to their identities and sense of well-being. 📖

F. Diane Barth is a psychotherapist and psychoanalyst in private practice in New York City. She has a master's degree from Columbia University School of Social Work and analytic certification from the Psychoanalytic Institute of the Postgraduate Center. She has been on the faculty and supervisory staff and a training analyst at Postgraduate, NIP and ICP in NYC. Currently, she teaches private study groups and often runs workshops. Her articles have been published in the *Clinical Social Work Journal*, *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, and other professional journals, and as chapters in several books.

Debra Koppersmith is a psychoanalyst, clinical social worker and educator. She is on the board of the AAPCSW and co-editor of their on-line monograph, on the editorial board of *The Psychoanalytic Review*, and a training and supervising psychoanalyst at NPAP. She has written and presented papers on early childhood parental loss and trauma, among other topics, at national and international conferences. She has a private practice in New York City and Dobbs Ferry.

Metropolitan Chapter

Karen Kaufman Ph.D., LCSW, President

Changes in Leadership: Many changes are taking place this year on the Met Chapter Board. After eight years as President, I will be stepping down in June and Helen Hinckley Krackow, LCSW was elected to serve as our next President. She is well known to the membership, having served for many years in various capacities on both the chapter and state levels. Michael Crocker, DSW, LCSW will serve in the role of Vice President.

This year the Board welcomed Hafina Allen, LCSW as Membership Chair and Joe Zagame, LCSW as Group Practice Co-Chair. In September, Harvey Weissman, LCSW will take over as chapter Secretary and Nina Sandy, LCSW, the current Secretary, and I will serve as Nominating Committee Co-chairs. Liz Ojakian, LCSW, CASAC, CEAP, our long time Treasurer, will take over the Addictions Committee, bringing much expertise in this area. Her plan is to begin with a summer study group.

Programs & Events: A wide range of exciting and stimulating programs have taken place or are in the planning stages for this year, some offering CE contact hours. The Committee on Gender and Sexuality will host quarterly workshops and a summer program focusing on increasing dialogue among genders, inspired by the work of Carol Gilligan. The Mentorship Committee hosts groups providing support and guidance to students and new graduates to assist them in launching their careers. The Education Committee continues to host its popular brunch series, and the Aging Client and Aging Clinician Committee hosted a program on Aging Issues and Money, and Family Practice offered a program on the topic of adoption.

A recent addition, the Riverdale Clinicians Salons, is an informal but regularly scheduled gathering, hosting meetings on interdisciplinary topics with case presentations, speakers and discussion. Open to all Society members and non-member guests, these salons are an exciting example of clinicians creating successful, ongoing peer groups that will encourage other clinicians to organize in locations convenient to their work and homes, increasing interest in Society activities throughout the region.

Our popular holiday party, member receptions and happy hours continue to be well-attended events and the Membership Committee also hosted a Boot Camp to prepare students for their future careers with information on licensure, resume writing and organizing a job search. Students, recent graduates and new professionals are the future of the Society and we are pleased to report a big

increase in student memberships. The Group Practice Committee continues to host a lunchtime series alternating demonstration and experiential groups for members interested in launching new groups and increasing their skills.

“During my years as President, it has been a pleasure working with the chapter and state boards and having the opportunity to get to know many members of our community who are more than peers and colleagues; they have become valued friends. I look forward to seeing you at future events.” —Karen Kaufman

Mid-Hudson Chapter

Rosemary Cohen, LCSW, President

We wish to acknowledge the local institutions that support the work and goals of NYSSCSW and our Chapter. We appreciate all they have done for us.

In addition to the five-county area [Dutchess, Ulster, Sullivan, Orange and Putnam] of the Mid-Hudson region, the Chapter listserv includes NYSSCSW members living and working in upstate New York, in areas such as Albany, Rochester, Syracuse, Buffalo and environs.

Each of our four annual 3-hour CE-approved workshops are held in inner city Poughkeepsie, in the technologically up-to-date conference room generously provided us by Mental Health America of Dutchess County [MHADC].

Cynthia Muenz, LCSW, Chair of the Education Committee, has recently visited the offices of the Adelphi University Graduate School of Social Work and Nursing, Hudson Valley Chapter, resuming our longtime affiliation as co-sponsors of clinical training programs and mentoring sessions for students and new graduates of the MSW program. Our Board member, Dr. Carolyn Bersak, will continue her involvement as Chapter liaison to the Adelphi program.

On Saturday, May 11, Mary Anne Cohen, LCSW, BCD will present a workshop, Treating the Eating Disorder Self: When Trusting Food is Safer than Trusting People.

Changes in Leadership: We are pleased to announce that Linda Hill, LCSW, Chapter Vice President, was unanimously elected to be President on April 6. For the past 12 years, she has been the facilitator of the Chapter's monthly, year-round Peer Consultation Group.

“As I prepare to leave office on June 1, I wish to thank the many people who have supported my work and commitment to NYSSCSW and the MH Chapter: the MH Board, the State Board and its Presidents Committee; the ACE Foundation, the TMS office staff, and my social work mentor of many years, Dr. Jacinta Marschke. It has been a rich experience in learning, leadership and continuing engagement with new generations of social workers. Thank you!” —Rosemary Cohen

Nassau Chapter

Joseph Reiher, LCSW, BCD, President

Changes in Leadership: This will be my last report, as I will be retiring as President the end of June. I’ll be 82 this September, I have a long bucket list and want to get started on it. It has been a pleasure and privilege to serve the Chapter and Society.

Programs & Events: Last year, we held our second Spring Fling and, while enjoyable, it was not as well attended as the previous one. A discussion at a Chapter meeting revealed that the membership is less interested in activities like this and more interested in continuing education and earning CEs.

In October, the Nassau and Queens Chapters co-sponsored, with Molloy College School of Social Work, Fordham Graduate School of Social Work, the National Association of Social Workers, and the Nassau Association of Black Social Workers, a full-day conference on Racial Tension, Racial Trauma: Issues, Impact and Influence, with Dr. Kenneth Hardy. This was a wonderful experience, during which I related my personal experience with racism and how it has affected my life.

In November, we had the pleasure of hearing Joel Kanter, LCSW lecture on *Selma Fraiberg’s Magic Years: Clinician, Researcher, Writer*. The presentation was enhanced by Fraiberg, an amazing therapist, in action. In January, Roger Keizerstein, LCSW presented, *Post-Traumatic Stress and Accumulated Stress Injury: and Emotional, Behavioral and Neurological Perspective*. In February, Roger presented, *The Trauma and Stress Endured by Three Iconic American Authors: J.D. Salinger (Catcher in The Rye), Truman Capote (In Cold Blood), and Maya Angelou (Why the Caged Bird Sings)*. The presentation included film clips of Angelou when she performed as a Calypso singer.

On May 9, 2019, Janice Gross, LCSW will present, *Extra-Marital Affairs: Understanding Effective Ways to Navigate Difficulties*. Also on that day, the Nassau Chapter will present the first Sheila Peck Scholarship to a

deserving Molloy College School of Social Work student. Patricia Traynor, LCSW and Eleanor Perlman, LCSW with the Molloy faculty in developing the program, and I cannot thank them and the Molloy faculty enough for their efforts and dedication. It is anticipated that this program will continue in the coming years. I encourage our members to attend this important event.

“It has been my pleasure to work with the course presenters and with the ACE Director of Professional Development, Suzanne Klett, Ph.D., LCSW in obtaining CEU approval for these courses. It has been my privilege to play a role in this outstanding organization, a joy working on the local level and with the State Board. I hope to remain active with the Chapter and I know that you will throw your full support behind our next President.” —Joseph Reiher

Queens Chapter

Lynne O’Donnell, LCSW-R, ACSW, President

The Queens Chapter this spring has been experiencing many wonderful beginnings, most importantly, moving to our new location at Queens College. Its classrooms afford us comfortable space with access to state-of-the-art AV equipment and a fine caterer, providing us with delicious breakfasts. We have gotten excellent feedback from members who have attended the two seminars already held in the new space—about the location and the quality of the presentations.

In fact, the feedback was so positive about Michael Crocker’s presentation that we asked him to return next year to present Shame in Treatment. We are very excited to have Irene Siegel, Ph.D., LCSW, presenting in May on EMDR Therapy from Trauma to Spiritual Awakening: A Mindful Approach. We are also planning for our Annual Spring Brunch to take place on June 9.

Three presentations are already scheduled for the fall. The first, in September, will be The River of Consciousness: An Embattled Spirit of Leonard Cohen Seen through the Lens of Creativity/Creative Process and Neurobiology.

Changes in Leadership: We have undergone some changes in our Board, and an election for President will take place. Rebecca Gruia, LMSW has stepped down from Membership to make time for her baby who is due in May. Congratulations to Rebecca. A new member, Cherie Gonzalez, LMSW has graciously agreed to join the Board and assist with Membership and Mentorship. She is a delightful addition. A reminder: all members are invited to Board meetings. Your input is vital to maintaining a vibrant chapter. We hope to see you at all our coming events.

Staten Island Chapter

Janice Gross, LCSW, President

The Staten Island Chapter began the new year with a Networking Dinner, where members mingled, shared their private practice interests, and enjoyed a delicious meal.

We heard from two special guests that evening. Adam Smith, Ph.D. of the Psychiatric Practice of Richmond Behavioral Associates, discussed the clinical drug trials they are conducting to improve the lives for those with bipolar disorder, treatment resistant depression and autism. They also provide an array of psychiatric services to adolescents and adults.

The second guest was Ashley Santangelo, LMSW, Team Leader and Staten Island Program Manager for the New York State Council on Problem Gambling. She talked about their efforts to address problem gambling in view of the increased access to gambling online. She invited clinicians to consider joining her referral list.

On April 6, we hosted Michael Crocker, Ph.D., LCSW, for an ACE program on Out of Control Sexual Behavior. The 48 mental health professionals in attendance were an appreciative and engaged audience.

We are looking forward to our last event of the season, a late Spring Brunch, hosted by Vice President Dennis Guttsman, LCSW, in his lovely garden. Michael DiSimone, Ph.D., LCSW will present on Working with Teenagers from a Clinical Perspective.

To make events more convenient, we are varying the dates and times for them. We hope this will encourage more members and others in the mental health community to attend.

Westchester Chapter

Andrea Kocsis, LCSW, President

Susan Jocelyn, Ph.D., Leadership Chair

Our chapter continues to grow in membership and in vibrancy as our committees and practice groups flourish. We hold meetings on the first Saturday of each month at the Mental Health Association of Westchester County in White Plains. Usually, our day starts at 9:00 a.m. with meetings of the clinical interest groups, including Peer Consultation, Group Therapy Practice, Mentorship/Private Practice /Career Building, and Integrating Mindfulness, Applied Neuroscience and Psychotherapy Practice. Next on the day's agenda is networking and a brief business meeting, followed by a 2-hour CEU presentation and discussion. Several times a year, 3-hour presentations are offered.

Programs & Events: In 2018, the Chapter was pleased to host many dynamic presentations, all offering CEUs, including: *Story and Narrative in Psychotherapy: Theory and Techniques*; *Technology and Social Media: A Clinician's Guide to Digital Age Adolescents*; *Expose The Code: Exploring Racial Dog Whistles in the Therapy Room*; *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy in a Changing World: Understanding and Practicing Mindfulness With Our Clients and Ourselves*; *Thinking About Attachment and Trauma Through the Eyes of a Child*; *Work with the "#Me Too" and Other Abuse Survivors: Acknowledging and Clearing Vicarious Trauma*; *Depressed, Borderline or Bipolar?; Family Therapy With a Focus on Children*; and, *Extra Marital Affairs: Understanding Effective Ways to Navigate the Difficulties*.

In fact, in 2018, the Westchester Chapter brought in more money from CEU presentations than any other chapter in the state.

In January 2019, we continued our annual film showing and discussion with *Three Identical Strangers*, a well-received film that stimulated a lively discussion about ethics in adoption. Our February presentation was *The Empathy Wars: Understanding Empathy Across the Disciplines*.

In April, *The Integration of Harm Reduction Therapy in the Treatment of Substance Abuse Disorders* was presented. We look forward to more excellent presentations in the coming months.

Our Leadership Committee meets at a bi-monthly luncheon. We have several other very active committees, including: Education, Hospitality, Newsletter, Legislative, and Website. Our Membership and Program Registration Committee engages newer members, students and graduates from local schools of social work to provide them professional support as they enter the field. At year's end, the Membership Committee sponsored several raffles to encourage members to renew their memberships on time. Three lucky members won \$50 gift cards.

Clinical presentations at our monthly meetings attract dozens of members who seek continuing education units. Many more, members and non-members alike, are drawn to the Chapter's meetings for the warm collegiality and professional support they enjoy and have come to expect.

We are pleased to announce that the Westchester Chapter will host the NYSSCSW 2019 Annual Membership Meeting in Westchester next October, date and details to be announced. We look forward to celebrating this Society event with you all. 🍷

NEW MEMBERS OF NYSSCSW*

NAME/CHAPTER		NAME/CHAPTER		NAME/CHAPTER	
Abernathy, Alyssa	MET	Handler, Jen, LCSW	MET	Pomeroy, Lois, LCSW	MID
Aguilar, Alexandra	MET	Hinton, Tameika, LCSW-R	MID	Ponticello, James	MET
Alan, Leslie, LMSW	MET	Horesh, Nashwa	MET	Pooley, Jean	MET
Arzt, Andrea, LCSW-R	MET	Horne, Rachel	MET	Postelnek, Brianna	SI
Bachman, Nancy	ROC	Ivy, Shabieko	MET	Powers, Susie	MET
Beck, Allison	WES	Johnson, Zachary	MET	Powers, Christine	SUF
Beck, Bonnie	MET	Ka, Haruka	MET	Prorokovic, Christina	MET
Bellinger, Hannah	MET	Kanter, Andrea, LCSW	MET	Rascovar, Alexander, LCSW	MET
Bowman, Chris	MET	Kassover, Kathi, LCSW-R	NAS	Reifer, Susan, LCSW	MET
Briggs-Bolling, Izetta, LCSW	MID	Katz, Michelle, LMSW	MET	Reisel, Libby, LCSW-R	ROC
Burgh-Harris, Vicky, LCSW	MID	Kluge, Sara, LMSW	MET	Remsen, Nicole, LCSW	MET
Candela, Jennifer, LCSW	MID	Kohn, Nataleigh	MET	Rosen, Laurie, LCSW	NAS
Carpio, Jessica	MET	Kramer, Raymond, LMSW	MET	Rosensweet, Madeline, LMSW	MET
Ceballos, Carmen, LCSW-R	MET	Krasts, Mikel	ROC	Rossi, Mary Joanne	MET
Collins, Mary Ann	MET	LeBow, Eliot, LCSW	MET	Ruey, Rosa	MET
Collins, Rigdzin	MET	LeGrant, Roberta	MET	Santana, Blanca, LCSW-R	MET
Cushing-Savvi, Amy, LCSW	MET	Lemus, Carmen	NAS	Satkin, Richard, LCSW-R	MET
Cyrus, Ryan	MET	Levy, Marlene, LCSW-R	NAS	Sicora, Mali	MET
Davis, Nora	MET	Linick, Libera	ROC	Siegmann-Beiner, Penny, LCSW-R	NAS
DePinto, Deborah	QUE	Lipton, Leslie	SUF	Smith, Latasha, LCSW	MID
Donini, Olivia	MET	Loerke, Elizabeth	MET	Spada, Barbara, LCSW-R	MID
Ehrlich Foley, Nina	NAS	Majors, Bert	MID	Stein, Samantha, LMSW	NAS
Eletz, Abby, LMSW	MET	Martini, Christina, LCSW	MET	Stiefel, Scott	MET
Elias, Heidi, LCSW-R	MET	Matera, MJ	MET	Sukenick, Maggie	MET
Ennis, John, LMSW	MET	McNally, Cathy	MET	Swiller, Zev, LCSW	MID
Fanciullo, Joelle	MET	Melamed, Jacqueline	MET	Taveras, Alexa	MET
Fontana, Anastasia, LCSW	NAS	Menna, Christine	MET	Tesoro, Christina	MET
Frederick, Shauna	MET	Moore, Kelly	MID	Thaveesaengsiri, Supavadee, LCSW-R	MET
Freedman, Ellyn, LCSW	MET	Moran, Eileen, LCSW	NAS	Utzig, Steve	MET
Freund, Barbara, LCSW-R	MET	Nelson, Jan, LCSW-R	MET	Vickers, Asiya	MET
Friedberg, Beth, LCSW	ROC	Notarangelo, Victoria	MET	Walker, Melissa, LCSW-R	MET
Geller, Hannah	MET	Olson, Richard, LCSW-R	MET	Ward, Sarah, LCSW	MET
Gerstein, Rebecca, LCSW	MET	Pan, Felicia	MET	Watson, Shelton	MET
Gilbert, Alanna	MET	Peguero Mezarina, Carmen	MET	Werner, Deborah, LCSW	MET
Goodwin, Luke	MET	Pendleton, Dessiree	MET	Wertentheil, Rachel	MET
Gorelick, Jessica, LCSW	QUE	Philip, Jane	WES	Wong, Evangeline	MET
Grossman, Jennifer, LCSW	SI	Pollet, Jeremy, LCSW	MET		

CHAPTER KEY: MET—Metropolitan, MID—Mid-Hudson, NAS—Nassau County, QUE—Queens County, ROC—Rockland County, SI—Staten Island, SUF—Suffolk County, WES—Westchester County. *These new members joined between October 1, 2018 and April 30, 2019.

Retirement: The Prequel

— or —

Dead Therapist Walking

BY CHRISTINE MACDONALD, LCSW



This piece was presented at a brunch hosted by the NYSSCSW's Met Chapter on April 7, 2019. Chris-tine MacDonald is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist in private practice in New York City with a concentration in treating trauma. She also holds an MFA in creative writing and a BFA in theatre.

The Body

I am getting to the office later and later. I cross the street at Columbus Circle. If it's early enough in the day, I will meet a horse turning the corner, heading to Central Park on his way to work. If I'm lucky, I will be in the crosswalk just as the horse is turning onto 8th Avenue from 58th Street and I can loudly croon Good morning, Gorgeous! to his long and lovely face. But the numbers have started to count down on the crosswalk sign: 17,16,15 . . . They are speeding up, faster every second. My reverie with the carriage horse is interrupted by my panic that I will not get across in time. On this same crosswalk 30 years ago, when I had just moved to New York City, the fancy backpack I had scored at a sample sale in the garment district came undone at the top and fell upside down, spilling its contents onto the middle of the street. It was a bright, spring, Sunday morning; traffic was light. As I stopped mid-crosswalk and stooped to pick up my things, the light turned green. Then red again. The cars, all the cars, not just the ones being blocked, patiently waited for this young woman to gather her belongings, hurriedly, nervously, embarrassed, fumbling, while the world stopped and gave her the time she needed.

It was morning on a Saturday. I was in my forties and I was in no hurry to get anywhere. A feeling that seems irretrievable to me now. The light in the bathroom at that time of the morning, at that time of the year, streamed in and bounced off the black and white subway tiles in my little Harlem apartment. I was putting on my make-up in the mirror, applying my lip liner, stretching my lips out

into a half-smile when I noticed my liner gliding over a series of vertical lines emanating from the borders of my mouth. I stretched into a wide smile and they evened out. I pursed my lips and they became deeply creviced. I stood there for a while, letting the knowledge that I was going to age sink in and that this was the beginning of something I was not ready to grasp.

I wish I could say that I surrendered to that knowledge, bowed to it, took its hand and readied my-self for the long series of bodily changes I would experience in the next two and a half decades, but instead, I did not go gently into that good night. I raged. I ran, literally, every day, rain, sleet or snow for three to five miles. I ran in races, keeping a very low New York Road Runners membership number active for many years past my runner's expiration date. Little did I know or even care that my slowing down, my hobbling across 8th Avenue today, with my knees screaming in pain, had had a lot to do with my age-defying running habit. The best laid plans of mice and women . . . Maybe genetics is to blame for my hands not working anymore, my iPhone not recognizing the grooves on my fingertips because they are worn so thin, my fingers aching to hold the pen to write my notes. Or maybe it's just age.

I don't need my knees, my hands, my fingertips to keep working. I sit and I listen. I still have my hearing. My memory is challenged, but I take those painful notes and I remember feelings more sharply than words. I have to get up out of my chair to buzz a patient in and my getting up is slower, as is my shutting the door to begin a session. But should that keep me from continuing doing work that I still love?

How Do You Know You're Ready?

Anne Power writes in her inspiring book about retirement, "In summer, when the windows are open, our cat has the pleasure of choosing when he comes and goes, but the route by which he makes his exit is audacious. As the house has a basement, the ground floor windows open onto a deep drop and the cat needs to jump across

the area and pass through railings before landing safely on the pavement. He must gauge his trajectory to a very precise angle. The clearance between the railings is very slight and to miss would mean a fearful fall down the sheer cliff of the basement wall. Even for a cat, this undertaking requires special concentration and he seems to prefer to jump when no one is around. He is 12 years old. As each summer comes and the windows are left open, I wonder if he will again make use of this route, and a small part of me worries about him attempting the jump and having a horrible accident. How will my cat know when he can no longer risk this leap? When his body is less agile, his eye less sure and his coordination less reliable, will he then have the sense to wait for us to open the front door? Another part of me trusts that it will be easy for him to give up this dangerous jumping because he does not have an ego to manage or a sense of loss or sacrifice. So he will not face the dilemma that many psychotherapists report in relation to retirement.”

It was easy for me. My husband has been retired for a few years now. Forced retirement. He was in upper management in a tech industry and they could higher three young people for his salary, so off with his head. Happens a lot. Can't prove a thing. Eerily, it happened to my own father at the very same age. He's been patient, my husband. He gradually adjusted, allowing the stress to leave his body and his soul. He has done well at enjoying himself. He actually found more meaningful work in training to and taking care of Alzheimer patients. I've never seen him so relaxed and fulfilled. But he misses me. We'll be moving this July.

Denial

I had told my final patient of my retirement in a year. I felt relieved.

Of course, I then set about redecorating my office. I had only been there for 18 years. I went to Ikea and bought four down-filled decorative pillows, two bright gold in color and two cream with gold dots. The gold picked up the colors in the Cezanne print. I moved the couch so it was centered under it. I bought an area rug, gold tones with red and green accents and a sweet, little lamp with a crinkled paper shade and a pull chain. I took two cream pillows from my own home stash to fortify the therapist's chair and to brighten the black depths of its presence. After an extensive search in the neighborhood, since it was Spring and all the dried flowers had been replaced with living blooms, I found some eucalyptus in its natural, muted blue-green and in a dyed dark red and some long, brown, curly twig-like branches to replace the silk flowers in their vase. I swapped the plastic bouquet picture with

a large framed print of Matisse's oranges in a bowl that hung in the waiting room. It hung long on the narrow wall opposite me, on 30-lb. hooks I got at the hardware store.

It all looked so warm and welcoming. (Sigh.)

Wounded Healers

If we are lucky, open, malleable, we come to grips with our past through our own analysis. We for-give, understand, place ourselves in the context of the trauma of our own families of origin.

“You kids are like a millstone around my neck.” Said with tortured grief. My mother could have been a con-tender. She hated being a mother. Babies, toddlers, young children. Teens. Young adults. Problems with which she could not cope. Let alone the sex she had to have to conceive of them. You wouldn't know it, though, with all the flirting she did with every man who wasn't my father. The piano tuner, the milkman, the butcher. She was young and beautiful, so they were flattered and responded. The milkman's truck would be parked outside of our house a bit longer than any other house. I would come upstairs and find them sitting at the kitchen table having coffee together. Maybe that's all it was. Maybe she was lonely.

I came to understand that my mother's behavior was as a result of her own violent and incestuous home. Her older sister, her only protector, escaped to the convent at the age of 16, leaving my mother, then six, to fend off her drunken brothers and father by herself. Her mother, a fellow victim in her own right, did not or could not protect her.

We come to this profession as “wounded healers.” It was my job to navigate my mother's mood swings. To protect, if I could, my siblings in their fear and confusion. To “mother” them in her absence as a mother.

3/04/18 Journal

I don't mind staying in now. We currently live on the top floor of a Brooklyn brownstone. It's four flights up if you count the steep front stairs to the front door. It's become a challenge to get up-stairs. It's become a challenge to get downstairs. So I don't mind staying in now. I hope I will be better about going out when the harbor is a five-minute walk from our 1,700 square foot coop on the ground floor of an 1800s church in Gloucester, Massachusetts. No stairs. The beach is a ten-minute bike ride. My husband says that my acceptance is making me feel better about this move. I think partly, maybe, but if trying not to judge myself for who and where I am is acceptance, then I agree with him. It must be grace because it's not me

thinking that I look ok or that looking old is ok and that I'm not as invisible as I feel these days in this city. I'm fat now. Once I don't have to work, I will go swimming every day. The Y has an Olympic size pool and the last time I visited, I shared it with one other woman. It's one block away. I'd like to go paddle boarding in the ocean, once I've regained my confidence in my physical self. Karen, a college friend there, is in a rowing club. Maybe I could join that. It would feel so good to be in shape again and for no reason other than health and happiness.

Fears: The Future

I'm frightened of the future. I don't know how people do much of what they do. Leave home, create families, let them go, work, grow old. Riding a horse is easier. I guess once I could say I don't know how people get married. Maybe other people say they don't know how anyone could ride a horse. And yet I got to do both. Getting older, I hope, is just a phase. I hope I get to do a lot more. We got married so late in life, we still have lots of fun like newlyweds. On a good day.

Intimacy

However, one of my fears is spending more time with my husband. Yes, we have fun, but both of us have been workaholics. The time we spend/have spent together has been in short bursts, week-ends, vacations, hours before and after work. We have known each other as middle-aged people and beyond. Both of us have had full lives independent of one another. When I'm afraid, I think a lot, do a lot of "what ifs" to prepare myself for disasters. When he is afraid, he gets controlling, bossy, pushy even. It clashes with my disaster survival planning. We tried planning to have our new place painted before we moved up. My husband announced that we needed to decide the colors and buy the paint within a week. He gave me a week and couldn't understand why that was unreasonable.

My process was/is to research and research more. Visit Benjamin Moore around the corner and shop, talk to the salespeople, get many brochures of paint colors and textures and then research what colors go with them. One way I relax is to peruse every catalogue that comes in the mail. Well, maybe not the Harry & David or the Florida oranges one, except right before the holidays. Or not the stationery ones. How often does one have to invest in stationery or be in tune with what's fashionable or trendy in envelopes and print types? Not for me, anyway. I keep my eyes on the clothing catalogues and definitely on Pottery

Barn, Room & Board, Restoration Hardware, CB2. I'm looking for a comfortable sleep sofa for our new guest bedroom, a new couch that is built a bit higher for those with bad knees. Catproof upholstery for our two boys. I laugh out loud when I imagine them careening down the long hallway connecting the front of the house to the back. Ha, ha.

The latest wall colors are white. Good. We have had our fun with caliente red walls and an herb garden green kitchen. The deeper research begins. The internet provides many details to consider: will the white walls be in a west or south facing room with access to sun? If so, the white may appear blue or pink and must be complimented accordingly. I could go on. I did in my research. I didn't with him. The conversation went:

Husband: So you can get those colors to me in a week?

Me: No.

Husband: What's the problem? You said we were going with white. How hard can it be? It's white.

Me: (Sigh! Gasp!) I don't think you will ever understand. I don't know if I can even live with you.

That is all I gave him because the chasm between us and how we do, see, feel, know things was so wide in that moment.

Loss

"Grief is in two parts. The first is loss. The second is the remaking of life." —ANNE ROIPHE

My Patients

I told Carolina. She kept a brave face. She deflected. "Oh, you know what I told my old psychiatrist when he retired, 'You can't do that to me!'" Then, in a howl, "You're too young to retire!"

It felt wrong, pretending we would be ok. She threatened to leave immediately, find someone new right away.

I was so sad. I will miss her so much. I will no longer be witness to her struggles, her triumphs. Her rages. Her fragile, I'm ok, whatever(s). I love her like I would have loved a daughter.

It was my first hit like this. She asked me how many patients I have. I kept it vague. Asked her why she was asking. She said she wondered how many times I would have to go through this conversation. Or, my fantasy, how many hearts am I going to break? How will this change who we are going forward? Through a year of the termination process. She wanted me to meet her dog, warning that the dog may not like me since it was so attached to her. Carolina.

Elizabeth Kubler Ross wrote: “The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not ‘get over’ the loss of a loved one; you will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again, but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same nor would you want to.”

To whom is this referring? This works for both of us, me as her therapist. She as my patient. We are both suffering the loss. As we both did our work together. We co-created this experience.

I know her dog. I know her sister. Her best friend. I knew her mother and grieved with Carolina when she died. I have known her boyfriends and secretly I am rooting for the one she has now who seems to treat her with love, respect and kindness. Kudos to her. At last. I am losing all those who I know and have known are part of her. Her life. And I am losing the part of me that is part of her life. The part of my life that is her.

“I am less and will be less because I have lost this person,” Sandra Beuchler writes. She writes about bearing witness to the everyday losses of our patients’ lives. “This . . . awareness . . . is not only a burden. It can also be a tremendous inducement to savor every waking moment . . . It can enhance appreciation of the smaller and bigger miracles of life, the ordinary pleasures so easily taken for granted . . . Sadness is an emotion that potentially binds us together.” I need to hold onto that right now. To understand that “[t]he sadness is doing its essential job, of binding me more firmly to life.”

I keep singing break-up songs. I keep playing Kenny Rankin’s version of *Where Do You Start?* over and over. Alexa obliges without protest. I don’t have to run over to my turntable and reset the needle, risking a scratch, causing a phrase to repeat and repeat until I push the needle through the glitch. This is what I used to do when I was in college, playing break-up songs. And, mind you, it’s not only the patient who regresses during/after termination; it’s happening to me too. I’m reviewing everything, every choice that I’ve made, from choosing this profession, to my training, to my interventions, to my own analysis and to who am I and what did I think I was doing stumbling along with these people and helping them to know themselves and to know the experiences of work and love? Was I too crazy? Were my boundaries too loose? Too rigid? Has it been too wrong of me to care so much? Did I get enough supervision? Or the right kind?

My patient, Charlotte, planned to go shopping for her wedding dress. She planned to go alone. Without friends. Without her mother. Definitely without her mother. I offered to go with her. She was so happy. We made plans to meet at Kleinfeld’s on Saturday, early afternoon. My group supervision was on Friday, the day before. I told the group of my plan as I began to feel uncomfortable

with it. My colleagues showed their best poker faces but, as we are all skilled at sensing the unsaid, I knew what was coming. And it came. *You can’t do this. It is too outside the frame. Get a grip, woman. What do you think you’re doing?* This is how I remember it. I’m sure it was addressed in gentle, clinical terms meant to lead me back to my senses and to avoid doing harm to my patient and to our relationship.

I didn’t go. I called her and told her I had made a mistake in making the offer and that I had come to believe that it was not a good idea. She accepted my apology and sent me selfies in each wedding dress that she tried on. It took us years to process. We learned a lot.

I don’t have children of my own. And as I stand at this brink of my new life, reviewing my old one, there’s a part of me that wishes I had gone that day.

I go back to Kenny Rankin. I’m not going to sing to you. I know I’m not good at that! The song begins:

Where do you start? How do you separate the present from the past?

How do you deal with all the things you thought would last? That didn’t last . . .

As I write this, just weeks before I will be presenting it and a few weeks more before I will be ending my practice, I have something I must do. Charlotte is overwhelmed with our ending. She wants me to visit her and her family on Long Island to see their new home. She is sending me daily pictures of her son who I have known since his birth, when I made home visits to his mother who was paralyzed with postpartum. She wants to visit me in my new town. She cries often during our last sessions.

I remember when my therapist would take the summer off and say, “Yes, it’s time for me to take care of my own life for a bit.” I wondered if I had exhausted her with mine. The seed she planted has grown into an old tree. I understand now what she meant. It is time for me to take care of my life. And somehow, I must convey to Charlotte that I must go take care of myself now. That she has the tools to take care of herself, too. That the “good” mother I have been for her she must be – as I’ve watched her be to her own son—for herself. I must believe that she will survive and thrive. It is a manifestation of my own healing to believe that. It will be ok. And maybe even good. And may-be even great.

BUT I DON’T WANT TO DO THIS! WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME IF I LET HER GO? WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HER? WILL I MEAN ANYTHING AT ALL WITHOUT BEING NEEDED?

I asked my best friend, Oneida, how she did it. She has been retired for a few years now. She is not a psychotherapist. She was a college professor. I asked her if she feels

she has “gone stupid?” “Oh, yes,” she said, “you will miss your colleagues and the lively discussions that fueled your intellect. Yes, you will miss that very much. Haven’t you noticed? When we talk now, I talk about my garden and my dogs and my home improvement projects. It’ll be all right. You’ve worked hard and we still love each other and are still the best of friends.”

I look out at you all today. It is a lonely profession. We work in isolation. When I still have to re-mind my husband why I cannot return his texts, or call him back in a timely manner, about what I want for dinner, I say in my best robotic voice: “I am locked in a room, for nine hours a day, unable to text, email, or phone, using my free minutes to eat some nuts and/or go to the bathroom, sometimes both simultaneously.”

We have to work at staying connected. I will miss you all. I cannot say what, if anything, will re-place you. I will hold onto my friend’s words. We have worked hard and we still value each other and remain the best of colleagues. I hope we will know each other still.

Grief

“You will lose someone you can’t live without, and your heart will be badly broken, and the bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn’t seal back up. And you come through. It’s like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly—that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp.” —ANNE LAMOTT

Meaning

Ask a man to tell you about himself and he will say, Well, I’m a doctor, lawyer, postman, dog walker, actor . . . He will identify himself by his profession, his career, his work.

Ask a woman who she is and she will say, Well, I’m married, I’m a mother, I have two children, I come from a big family. She will identify herself by the relationships she keeps.

“Who am I?” I ask at this juncture. At this transition. This ending. This beginning. Whatever this is—this painful, overwhelming, breathless, exhilarating time. Who am I? Yes, the feminine in me identifies with the relationships I keep, have kept (I’m losing all sense of time and tense). And yet I identify with my work, which is all about connection and the dyad of the therapeutic relationship. How will I keep in touch with the world? Delight in the lingo, the slang, the movements of the young people who came to me for my “wisdom”?

Kenny Rankin sings some more:

Where do you start? Do you allow yourself a little time to cry?

Or do you close your eyes and kiss it all goodbye?

I guess you try . . .

Leaving New York

I talked about my morning ritual of greeting the horses on my way to the office. It started my day with a deep breath and a moment of joy and peace. At 4:00 I would hear the clip clop of their steps returning to their stables after their day’s work. I would hear it from my office, high on the 16th floor. Their route home would be one block away on 55th Street. If I happened to be free, or waiting for a patient’s arrival, I would dash to the window to catch them fleeting by. Some tired from their work. Some prancing, head held high, excited to go home. They would cross Broadway in a flash, pulling their carriages, making it across before the light turned. Occasionally, if I had an hour free, I would go up to the carriage line on 59th Street where the horses would wait for their fares. Most would have their two front feet planted on the curb, trained that way to distribute their weight while waiting. I would ask a driver if I could pet his horse. Always, he was delighted, saying, Yes! Sure! I would stroke the horse’s face and place my hand on his long thick neck, absorbing his strength and aliveness.

Today, the horses are no longer allowed to wait on 59th Street. They have to wait inside the park. Eventually they will be stabled in the park. No longer trotting home through the neighborhood. It seems they are lost to me as well. I miss them already. 🐾



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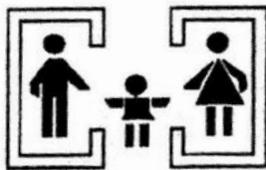
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