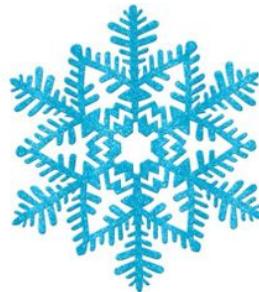
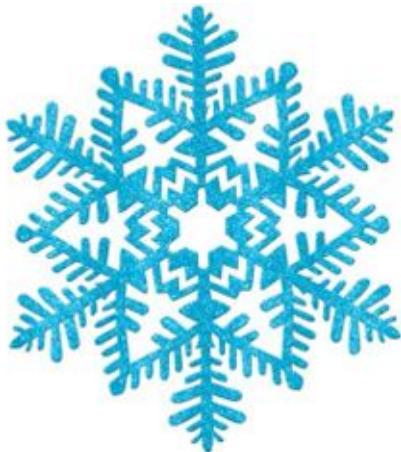
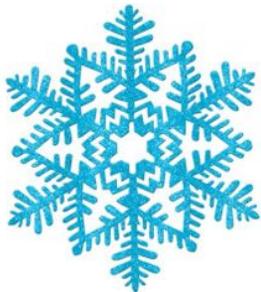


ARIZONA UPDATE

Arizona Association for Marriage and Family Therapy



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Vicki Loyer-Carlson PH.D, LMFT

Seasons.

It's all

about seasons. Each has its own unique feel, sound, and celebration. And it is about staying in the moment. Enjoying what each season brings, and lending a hand to those experiencing the season for the first time, and understanding the experience of those for whom that season has past.

Becoming President-Elect for AzAMFT was exciting. The

opportunity to attend leadership conferences, meet and associate with others who were leading their State organizations, understanding the process of AAMFT and the relationship between the national board and the state boards was a great learning experience. Taking time to watch others navigate their presidencies, allowing myself to be mentored by past presidents, and enjoying the opportunity to be in a learning role once again in my career. I realized that as much as I

like to be in private practice I enjoyed the structure and excitement that comes from working as a team. Of course, when you are working with the AzAMFT board there is much more to like than to be challenged by. For one, the group is fun, hardworking, creative, and dependable. I looked forward to each time I would have the chance to meet up with them.

In what seemed like a blink of the eye, I was stepping into the

Board Members

President:

Vicki Loyer-Carlson

President Elect:

Melissa Baker

Secretary:

Justin Smith

Treasurer:

Ryan Johnson

Directors:

Alan Asher,

Lisa Gold,

Keith A. Cross

Student/Associate

Representative:

Bonnie Mason

presidency and Melissa Baker was the president-elect. She is ambitious, smart, organized, and intuitive. It has been a blessing to work with Melissa. She always has your back. And she has great ideas. It has been fun developing our relationship, responding to the challenges of AAMFT national. We worked to establish a win-win lens that benefits the Arizona division while respecting National's solution for addressing the baby-boomer retirement dilemma.

So now I have the opportunity to move into the "lending a hand role." As past-president I join my mentors: Steve LeGendre, Carol Hollander, Alan Asher and others. I have great

memories and experiences that I would not want to trade for anything. I am fully ready to learn the nuances of my next role: past-president. I found that over the past years on the board and in leadership I have incorporated my learning from AAMFT into my occupation. The AzAMFT presidency is a very interesting post-doc of sorts. It requires reading, consulting, problem solving, negotiating, data collecting and reporting. I now have a new way of understanding the contrasting demands and resources between a local business and the parent corporation, and have had the opportunity to practice a variety of responses to those demands. In my earliest season of my career it was hard for me to understand the thinking of AzAMFT presidents when they would ask me to run for the position, adding that they didn't get paid in money, but it pays to be the president.

When you become the president it is an honor extended by your peers that they trust you to address their best interests. It feels good to be honored and trusted. Particularly for a group like the Arizona

marriage and family therapists. This group is more than a professional association. It is made up of people who make it their life's work to create calm out of chaos, to seek out the exception to the dilemma, to validate and support others in their efforts to accomplish tasks. The job of AzAMFT president, or board member, or chair of a committee, is rewarding because the members of the AzAMFT are a very special group of people. It has been an honor to be your president, and I deeply appreciate all of the opportunities you have provided to me. It does pay. And the payment is greater than you would expect.

Welcome, Melissa. Your season has begun.

The AzAMFT values and promotes lifelong learning, innovative professional practices and research. The mission statement is the strategic plan of AzAMFT. It is dynamic and adjusts to the Association's needs.

The Strategic Planning Committee maintains a current working version of the Mission Statement at all times.

-AZAMFT MISSION STATEMENT

Membership Updates

New Student Members

Shelly Ratmansky

Clinical Fellows

Aliza Cooper
Jeffrey Zeig, PhD
Sandra Hassel
Sheila Howe

INTEGRATING CHILDREN INTO FAMILY SESSIONS

Alexia Colman MAS-MFT

Determining when a minor should or should not be in a therapeutic session has become an apparent downfall for many therapists. Regrettably, often time's therapists do not include minors in therapy because either they do not think it is appropriate, they do not feel that especially young minors can be helpful, or they are simply not comfortable with the whole situation. In *Engaging Children in Family Therapy*, Catherine Sori explains that what goes unnoticed, is how creative children are and how they can offer a different view on the problems and solutions in their world.

Systemically, it is necessary to look at the whole system. That being said, when a family comes into therapy, children are a vital part in solution whether they are seen as the "source" of the problem or not.

When working with children in different developmental stages, it is important to understand how to interact with each. The use of play is a particularly significant factor when working with younger children who cannot express themselves verbally. When playing it is necessary to be observant of young children's facial expressions, energy level, and tone of voice, as this is their most prominent form of expression. Sori talks about how children ages 5-8 think very concretely and should be spoken to in short sentences along with incorporating drawing or puppets to describe an event or situation. It is recommended that the therapist be playful and silly with these children to help them feel comfortable.

Likewise, the 8-12 age group developmentally prefers side-by-side interactions like board games or other playful activities to keep from making eye contacts as Sori explains is one very easy way to make the child uncomfortable. The most effective way to gather information and connect with this age group is to simply ask about their complaints because they typically love gossiping about others. Finally, teenagers in the therapeutic setting may automatically feel like they have lost their freedom as they have been "dragged" to therapy. A great way to connect with this age group is to preface the conversation with the idea that they do not necessarily need to contribute. This allows the teen to feel like they have a choice and the freedom to share if and when desired during the family session. Sori shares that in order for this age group to feel understood, it would be advantageous to have an individual session to gather their perspective and recognize their uniqueness and struggles for independence.

While interacting with children can be scary and awkward for some, knowledge of how each age group most effectively interacts while gaining experience, can ease the anxiety of a clinician tremendously. If a family comes into therapy with children aged 4, 8, and 15, each child will interact very differently from each other. Joining with a 4 year old would look very playful and silly. The therapist could sit on the floor with the child and play with puppets or draw while asking the child who each puppet was or about the story behind the picture they were drawing, etc. The therapist might also ask the 8 year old to sit on the floor next to him/her and draw a picture of what it is like at dinnertime. Sitting next to the therapist and the 4 year old will help the 8-year-old feel blended in and more likely to share about others. Before the session the therapist should suggest the 15-year-old have the choice of contributing to the conversation but also set up an individual session to get to know them and gather their perspective. When the teen feels like they are going to be listened to, they are more likely to open up.

GENOGRAM: ASSESSMENT & INTERVENTION

Lindsey Goodwin MAS-MFT

An assessment strategy included in the Bowenian Theory is the Genogram. This tool allows therapists to work with their clients in order to create a visual diagram of the clients' family, including multiple generations. The visual layout consists of a genetic tree pattern, showing the family's interconnected relationships. Genograms allow for an easier visual to the family and therapist of the family generational relationships in terms of recurring behavior patterns. This can include family culture and roles.

Specifically, what therapists may want to explore in the genogram is the family's multi-generational boundaries. Boundaries include rigid, enmeshed, or diffuse structure. By asking the family questions surrounding each relationship on the genogram, we can begin to see what each relationship in the family looks like. Therapists will want to ask questions to find out if the family has high individuality and distant relationships, if there are no boundaries and lots of sharing in the family, or if there are clear expectations in the roles of the family.

By going over the kinds of boundaries in the family, as therapists we can explore differentiation and fusion patterns. Discovering if family members are highly differentiated, does this mean they have cut themselves off from the family, and what is this due to? This is an opportunity to explore any distant family members. On the other end of the spectrum, family members may have high emotional fusion, and have similar beliefs and decisions to the rest of their family with low individuality. In terms of these relational qualities, genograms help therapists and clients see how patterns have been passed down generationally. If there is a specific issue with enmeshment, and family members being too closely involved in each other's lives, a genogram can help to show multigenerational patterns of enmeshment. Family patterns can be passed down in a multigenerational transmission process. This can include expectations that are passed down to each generation. If there has been a standard set of how to keep emotions to yourself in rigid boundaries, then this can continue on in each generation causing other issues. Fortunately, the genogram is a great tool to show these continuing cycles.

Another area to explore with genograms are family triangles. When a dyad, or two family members, are in conflict, one or both of them may go to an outside source in order to avoid addressing the issue between the dyad. The third part of the triangle, the outside source may be a person that they are discussing the issues with, or a distraction of some sort such as the going to the gym in order to avoid confronting the other member of the dyad. Genograms can show for instance if a husband and wife are distant, but the wife and her mother are highly enmeshed, there may be a possibility that the wife is triangulating her mother into her and her husband's distance and personal problems that need to be addressed between the two.

Genograms can be used for many purposes. Having a visual diagram of multigenerational patterns can help clients and therapists see patterns that they may have otherwise not been aware of. There is uniqueness in this assessment tool in having clients literally look at their presented problems, as opposed to talking about them, and possibly avoiding certain issues or the root of these issues.

GET PUBLISHED!

We welcome article contributions from AzAMFT members & supporters. Share your knowledge and experience with articles about an area of clinical practice or practical management, book reviews and news items of interest to our members. Please submit your query or manuscript electronically to: eab99030@marymount.edu & dmoor@asu.edu

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Full page	\$567.00



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Letter from the Editors

Happy 2017! First off, we'd like to thank Casey & Justin for their amazing job as editors of the newsletter for the past two years. We have some big shoes to fill! During this editorial transition please feel free to contact us with any questions and suggestions regarding future newsletters. We are looking forward to working with everyone on the new year!

Emily Beck & Deanna Moor
eab99030@marymount.edu & dmoor@asu.edu

Visit

www.azamft.com

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