

LPANJ Bulletin

A publication by the Latino Psychological Association of New Jersey

Volume 8, Issue 1

Fall, 2009

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear LPANJ Members,

This year continues to be a productive year for LPANJ. Through collaborations between the New Jersey Psychological Association and the Society for Community Research and Action, LPANJ members were offered the opportunity to attend conferences at reduced member rates. We continue to be thankful to prominent leaders such as Dr. Lombardi from Stevens Institute and our own Past President, Dr. Milton Fuentes and President-Elect, Dr. Lorna Myers who dedicated themselves to present workshops for LPANJ on key issues in the field of mental health. We are thankful for Dr. Swerdlow's generosity in continuing his tradition of donating space at Hoboken University Community Mental Health Center so that many of these workshops can take place.

Our website has now been updated to include a Calendar of Events. We will be updating it to reflect our 10th Annual Conference at Montclair State University as well as with information on our upcoming 10th Anniversary Celebration. We are excited to not only reach our 10th year milestone but to also have been able to return to Montclair State University where many of our earlier conferences took place and where some of the founding members of LPANJ originated from. We are grateful for this year's conference to be cosponsored by the Latin American and Latino Studies Program at Montclair State University, the Northeast Regional Epilepsy Group and the Multicultural Family Institute.

Please save the date for our 10th Anniversary Celebration to take place at My Cuban Rose Restaurant on Thursday November 12, 2009 from 7pm to 11pm. Invites to current and former LPANJ members will be sent shortly. Please join us in celebrating LPANJ's milestone with great food, company and dancing!

As the year progresses, I encourage you all to spread the word about LPANJ and its mission. Please take advantage of quality workshops provided by recognized leaders in the community. I motivate you to submit articles for the newsletter, presentations for workshops and any other useful resource that other members may find beneficial. If you have the extra time, please feel free to join a committee or consider running for a position on the board.

Thank you all again! I hope to see you at future events!

Warm regards,
Sonia Wadhvani, MA
President - Latino Psychological Association of New Jersey

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Spotlights on our Membership
- 3 The Role Medical/ Psychological Education has in Latino Epilepsy.
Lorna Myers, PhD
- 5 LPANJ 2009 Conference: Keynote Panel Presentation on Latino Psychological Traumatology
- 6 Brief From The New Jersey Psychological Association
Phyllis Lakin, NJPA President
- 7 Advertisements
- 10 About the Bulletin

Founded in 1999, The Latino Psychological Association of New Jersey is dedicated to promoting the education of psychologists, mental health professionals, and mental health students for the advancement of psychological research, training, and treatment of Latinos in the State of New Jersey.

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Silvia L. Mazzula, PhD

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We welcome letters to the editor or other pieces about our membership, or just some buenas noticias! So please share them with us for future bulletins! Send them to the Editor at smazzula@jjay.cuny.edu

Spotlight on our Membership

*Angelica Monteverde earned her masters in Educational Psychology, with a concentration in Clinical Psychology for Spanish/English Bilinguals, from Montclair State University, May 2009. She is currently a doctoral student in Clinical Psychology at Argosy University, Tampa, FL.

*Milton A. Fuentes, PsyD, was selected as a NACADA Outstanding Advising Certificate of Merit recipient, in the *Faculty Academic Advising* category, as part of the 2009 Annual Awards Program for Academic Advising.

*Silvia L. Mazzula earned her PhD in Counseling Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, NY.

*Teresa Fuentes Lesky became a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in NJ.

*Jennifer Mullan Gonzalez was married, May 3, 2009.

Membership Publications and Presentations

*Carter, R. T., Yeh, C., & Mazzula, S. L. (2008). Intercultural values orientation and racial identity attitudes: A study of Latino college students' attitudes. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 30(1), 5-23.

*Fuentes, M. A., Jaegly, J, Bonilla, L., & Arrieta, S. (2009, April). Using motivational *interviewing to reduce domestic violence*. Paper presented at the National Child Advocacy Conference, Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ.

*Boyd-Franklin, N. & Fuentes, M. A. (2009, February). Pathways to practice. An invited presentation at the 26th Annual Teacher's College Winter Roundtable on Cultural Psychology and Education, New York City, NY.

*Mazzula, S. L. & Victoria, R. (November, 2008). *Hispanic/Latino race and ethnicity in Counseling Psychology research: A 15-year review*. (Paper Presentation). National Latino/a Psychological Association, Costa Mesa, CA

*Mazzula, S. L. (November, 2008). (Paper Presentation). *Behavioral acculturation and Latino life satisfaction*. National Latino/a Psychological Association, Costa Mesa, CA

The Role Medical/Psychological Education has in Latino Epilepsy

Lorna Myers, Ph.D.

Northeast Regional Epilepsy Group

Few medical conditions have appeared as persistently in human lore and literature, have been as fascinating to the general public, and have been as misunderstood as epilepsy. Historical review shows that centuries before Christ (BC), epilepsy was understood in many ways, including, a curse from the Gods, the result of demons attacking the person's spirit, insanity, or on a more positive note, an ability to prophesize. In 400BC, Hippocrates wrote a treatise on epilepsy and asserted that it was not the result of a punishment from the gods, but rather a medical condition. Despite this ancient clarification, myths about the disorder persisted throughout history up until our present times. With regards to this, amazingly, in the United States in the 1900's epileptic patients were still placed in mental institutions (separate from the other inmates for fear of contagion). Until the 1970's, in some states, epileptics could be refused access to restaurants or public spaces and could be subjected to compulsory sterilization if they decided to get married. Other states flat out denied epileptics the right to marry at all.

Over the centuries, some of these ancient theories of epilepsy have waxed and waned. Even today, these misconceptions continue to color the way epileptics are perceived and sometimes even perceive themselves.

The current state of science has definitively concluded that epilepsy is not a curse from God, a demonic possession, a weakness of spirit, nor does it involve an ability to foresee the future. It is also clearly not contagious. Rather, it is produced by abnormal electrical discharges in the brain and is a neurological disorder. However, concrete proof of this was only attained in the 1920's with the application of the first EEG

(electroencephalogram) that allowed scientists to observe brain waves. Moreover, it is well known that only a small percentage of patients will have such a tenacious form of epilepsy as to suffer mental retardation, while most will not. Lastly, although a significant number of epilepsy patients may develop mood or anxiety disorders, "insanity" and dangerous violent tendencies are not typically part of epilepsy.

As could be expected, just as these erroneous beliefs persist in the mainstream culture, so they persist in the Latino culture. In 2005, a national survey of 760 persons of Hispanic origin in seven large US cities, conducted by the Epilepsy Foundation obtained some interesting results. A large portion of the group admitted to fearing contagion or feeling that epileptics were "dangerous" (31%), and that it was caused by spiritual causes or through weakness of character (e.g. substance abuse). Intense anger or "pena and sufrimiento" (sadness and suffering) are also sometimes reported as suspected causes. One third of the respondents admitted to thinking that herbal remedies were an effective way of treating epilepsy while 6% thought that Santeria was useful.

Why is the persistence of these beliefs significant?

These biases have the potential to affect the epilepsy patient's life in multiple arenas as well as in diverse human relations that will be formed through a lifetime. When a diagnosis of epilepsy is made in childhood, the misconceptions held by the parents, teachers and other influential adult figures may color their perception of their child as well as his/her future potential. As such, these conceptions can become self-fulfilling prophecies that affect the child's school and social performance. Similarly, adults with epilepsy that are considered defective, "weak in character," dangerous, or contagious will suffer equally devastating effects. Adult relationships may be difficult to establish and some may fear having children with that person.

Why is it important to address this within the Latino population?

Seizures are almost twice as common among

Hispanics as in non-Hispanics. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that the incidence rate for epilepsy is positively associated with various measures of social and economic disadvantage. Many Latino immigrants fall in the category of financial disadvantage and as such are more vulnerable to birth trauma (due to limited prenatal care), head trauma (due to involvement in physically dangerous occupations), stroke (due to limited preventive care and diet rich in fat), as well as neurocysticercosis (a rare infectious disease caused by the presence and accumulation of the larval cysts of a tapeworm in the brain, and which is more common in some countries of South America). Lastly, it is not uncommon for patients coming from Latin America to have received inadequate medical care in their country of origin and therefore have suffered much more devastating effects from the seizures

What Plan of Action should be implemented?

The World Health Organization, International League Against Epilepsy, and the International Bureau for Epilepsy have been leading a very comprehensive project of “Bringing Epilepsy out of the Shadows” in underdeveloped countries through conferences, discussions with health ministers, media exposure, and translation of reading material and posters.

With regards to US medicine, Joseph Sirven of the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and colleagues (2005) have stated unequivocally that “More time needs to be devoted to education and counseling during clinical visits with Latinos to debunk the myriad of myths associated with the condition... One must be prepared to bridge the cultural and language barriers that typify this patient encounter.”

What obstacles exist?

Physicians are increasingly finding that the time they can spend with a patient is reduced as managed care pressures rise. Therefore, there is often little time left for exploring social and psychological issues with the patient. The

language barrier is also a major obstacle since most physicians do not speak Spanish. Cultural barriers can also impact the establishment of a trusting relationship with the doctor.

Alternative Pathways:

Given the limited number of Spanish speaking providers that exist, the most effective pathway to patients is through the exposure of large numbers of patients and caretakers to the few Spanish-speaking providers that are available. These patient/caretaker conferences need to be free and open to all who have an interest in epilepsy where they can be exposed to updated scientific information about the illness as well as having access to providers to ask necessary questions. Patients known to the practice can be reached through fliers and by being informed by the secretarial and medical staff of the upcoming event when they come in for appointments. Persons who are not known to the epilepsy practice can be contacted through advertisements in Spanish newspapers (preferably one with high readership—often freely distributed) and by sending fliers to neighborhood general neurologists who are Spanish speaking. Spanish speaking secretarial staff is required for when interested parties call to RSVP. Follow up is needed prior to the conference by making sure that fliers are sent out 2-3 weeks prior to the event and reminder phone calls are made.

On the day of the conference, talks should typically focus on: pharmacological treatment of epilepsy, myths and misconceptions about epilepsy, alternative treatments for epilepsy (surgery and the ketogenic diet), common cognitive and psychological problems (how to diagnose) in epilepsy and treatments, and available social services. Patients have time at the end of the conference to meet with the doctors, epilepsy foundation staff and caseworkers to ask questions more privately. Attendees are asked to fill out a questionnaire on myths and misconceptions of epilepsy prior to the start of the conference; each one of these points is later covered in one of the talks.

Results from the conference:

Informal post conference discussions typically reveal

that the patients have gained important information on available services, safety and first aid topics, and medical options available to them.

Additional evidence of the impact of the conference is seen in that in the following weeks, the caseworker receives multiple contacts from patients and caretakers. Requests are for: help obtaining health insurance, help obtaining Social Security Benefits, asking our center to provide an educational specialist to train school staff at a child's school on first aid, making appointments for medical visits, and a request for a support group in Spanish, among others.

Conclusion:

It is our expectation that through repeated provision of free annual conferences, the education on epilepsy of the New York Latino population can continue. This objective must be pursued actively since the more the patient is aware of updated scientific information about the illness and how it affects his/her life and that of others, the more control that person has over it. With knowledge, the doctor-patient relationship improves, treatment compliance improves, as does the medical condition and the psychological factors associated to the physical condition.

LPANJ NEWS AND PARTNERSHIPS

LPANJ Annual Conference

Was held October 9, 2009

Keynote Panel Presentation: Latino Psychological Traumatology

The keynote panel was composed of three experts:

- * Susan Esquilin, Ph.D., ABPP
- * Silvana Gomez, Ph.D.
- * Ricardo Martinez, M.A.

The experts addressed the following topics with regards to Latino population:

- * Trauma associated to Child Abuse *
- * Trauma in the Community *
- * PTSD in Latino veterans *

Dr. Susan Esquilin is a licensed psychologist in New Jersey, with a diplomate in clinical psychology from the American Board of Professional Psychology. She has held faculty positions at Rutgers, and at the New Jersey Medical School of UMDNJ, where she was Director of Psychology Training and Clinical Administrator for Children's Services at University Behavioral HealthCare in Newark. Dr. Esquilin's area of expertise is child abuse; she is a past-president of the NJ Chapter of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children and has been the primary investigator on several service grants related to child abuse. She is currently a professor in the Child Advocacy Program at Montclair State University and is in private practice.

Ms. Silvana Gomez is currently the Director of Emergency Screening at Jersey City Medical Center. She remains active to areas impacting adolescents. She presently is the coordinator of the Traumatic Loss Coalition for Youth in Hudson County.

Mr. Ricardo Martinez is currently working at the Newark Vet Center, providing individual, family, and group therapy to combat veterans struggling with readjustment difficulties including PTSD. Since 1991, Mr. Martinez has provided services to mostly minority children, adolescents, adult survivors and perpetrators of various forms of interpersonal violence. Mr. Martinez holds a MA in Psychology with a concentration in Latino Mental Health from Montclair State University, and is near completion of his PhD in Clinical/Forensic Psychology from Fordham University.

Our three learned keynote speakers presented on vital topics of psychotraumatology within the Latino-American population. Disorders that result due to trauma are unlike any other psychological condition because the trigger is tangible. The effects of trauma can become chronic and have devastating effects on the patient's life as well as on others that come in contact with the patient. Timely provision of treatment has the potential to produce major positive changes in the course of the disorders. Presentations by our keynote speakers covered the lifespan, from childhood abuse, trauma in war veterans, and trauma within everyday social settings of "el barrio." These discussions provided essential knowledge on the diverse areas in this issue.

... For more information about our 10th Annual Conference please visit the Latino Psychological Association of New Jersey website at www.lpanj.org

Brief From The New Jersey Psychological Association

Phyllis Lakin, President, NJPA
Lorryn Wahler, Executive Director, NJPA

The New Jersey Psychological Association is honored and delighted to be collaborating with LPANJ on issues and concerns relevant to all psychologists in NJ. Let me give you a little history how this has come about. Under the leadership of past and current presidents and board members, the New Jersey Psychological Association shifted from individual efforts to promote diversity to building organizational structures in appreciation of multicultural issues both as an organization and as psychologists. In order to achieve that goal, a diversity committee of the NJPA Executive Board was formed to guide the association in infusing diversity throughout its operations.

In 2008, the NJPA mission statement was amended to include a statement on diversity, which now reads, "The mission of the New Jersey Psychological Association is the advancement of psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting health and human welfare *in an atmosphere that supports the diversity of its members and the society at large.*" The Board added the following statement of commitment, affirming that "The New Jersey Psychological Association declares its intention to raise the consciousness of its members about issues of diversity. These issues include, but are not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, age, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion, disability, country of origin, and marital status. The Association is committed to addressing these issues and concerns in its programs and publications."

In 2008-2009, we have taken many steps to actualize our mission statement in the area of diversity. Most importantly, we are pleased that both LPANJ and the Association of Black Psychologists-NJ Chapter have accepted our invitation to sit on the NJPA Executive Board as non-voting guest members,

and have welcomed Mihaela Dranoff as LPANJ's representative. We have found her input and participation at these meetings quite meaningful. We have recently introduced a *Diversity Corner* column in our quarterly publication, are discussing a mechanism for diversity representation in our governance elections, are exploring mechanisms to improve outreach to recruit more diverse members, and have a diversity committee member on each committee of the board. All presentations at our conference must address diversity within the topic, and multi-cultural competence is being emphasized for all our members. We are planning and implementing joint projects with your association, and have invited LPANJ members to attend our conferences at the NJPA member rate. NJPA was also pleased to make a contribution to LPANJ in support of your tenth conference year.

We are pleased to have launched these initiatives and activities, and look forward to our continued collaboration in the coming years. We must all join together as strong advocates and partners in order to protect and expand the profession of psychology in NJ.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Professional Services

Centro de Educación para las Familias

Un grupo de apoyo para los padres de los/as niño/as que fueron abusados sexualmente

Uno de los factores más importante para el bienestar de un/a niño/a que fue abusado es el apoyo de su familia.

Le proveeremos información sobre el abuso sexual, técnicas de manejo de estrés, Nuevos modos de fortalecer sus destrezas para ayudar a sus hijo/as y mucho más.

¡Este programa es totalmente gratis!

Favor de llamarnos al 973-926-6940 o al 973-926-4311

Aileen Torres, PhD & Martha Garcia, MA
Centro de Educación para las Familias (FLEC por sus siglas en ingles)
Children's Hospital of New Jersey
Newark Beth Israel Medical Center
201 Lyons Ave (J-3)
Newark, NJ 07112



Amanecer

Fairleigh Dickinson University's Center for Psychological Services announces *Amanecer*, or "dawn" in Spanish, a new psychotherapy group for Spanish-speaking women survivors of child sexual abuse. The group will be led by bilingual doctoral students in clinical psychology under the supervision of licensed psychologists on the faculty of FDU's School of Psychology.

"The group will give Spanish-speaking women a safe place to share their experiences of child sexual abuse," said Rachel Reed, founder of the group. "The experience of sharing among other survivors provides each member an invaluable opportunity to feel supported and to know that she is not alone."

"Amanecer," the first group of its kind in Bergen County, will meet once a week for 90 minutes and run for 14-16 weeks. Free and confidential, the group will run at the Center for Psychological Services, 131 Temple Avenue, Hackensack, NJ.

For further information on "Amanecer," call Rachel (Raquel) Reed at (201) 692-2645, extension 224.

About the Center:

The Center's services are confidential, and fees are based on a sliding scale. Psychological assessment, consultation, and treatment for children, adolescents and adults are available. There are a full range of outpatient services including individual, couples, family and group therapy, psychoeducational and psychodiagnostic testing, as well as a number of specialized programs including Veterans' PTSD and readjustment counseling and social skills training for children. Services are available to the community-at-large, regardless of residence, and are provided by licensed psychologists and doctoral psychology students.

Externship Opportunities

El Puente

El Puente is offering an externship opportunity for MA/MSW level graduate students for the upcoming academic year. El Puente is a home based counseling program that is designed to work specifically with Latino families who are currently involved with the Division of Youth and Family Services. The externship is a great opportunity to develop clinical skills that are culturally sensitive while addressing the diverse needs of each family. Students (preferably Bilingual) who are interested in learning more about this externship opportunity, please feel free to Sonia Wadhvani at 201-736-7895 to arrange a meeting. Resumes may also be emailed to Swadhvani@hobokenumc.com

Metropolitan Regional Child Abuse Diagnostic and Treatment Center (RDTC) at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center

The Metropolitan Regional Child Abuse Diagnostic and Treatment Center (RDTC) at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center is one of four RDTCs in New Jersey which conducts medical and psychosocial evaluations for the diagnosis and treatment of suspected victims of child abuse and neglect. Additionally, clinicians at the RDTC conduct psychological screenings of children recently placed in foster care as part of the Comprehensive Health Evaluation for Children (CHEC) Program. The mission of the RDTC is to provide a sensitive and caring setting for children and their families in which they can receive professional and compassionate therapeutic interventions. The RDTC offers graduate students training opportunities in the three following tracks: a general child abuse assessment and treatment externship track, a bilingual externship track, and a group therapy track. Clinical faculty provide training and supervision from a variety of theoretical orientations including cognitive behavioral (CBT), psychodynamic, interpersonal, family systems, and integrative. All three tracks provide training in the provision of culturally congruent services.

General Externship Track

Assessment

Psychosocial Abuse Evaluations
CHEC (foster care) Evaluations

Treatment

3-4 individual therapy case load
Opportunity to co-lead groups

Supervision

Weekly Individual supervision
Weekly Group supervision

Training

Training in Trauma-Focused CBT
Didactic presentations

For more information please contact and forward CV to:

Alison Strasser Winston, Ph.D.
RDTC Supervising Psychologist
(973) 926-5592
AWINSTON@SBHCS.COM

Bilingual Externship Track

Assessment

Psychosocial Abuse Evaluations
Spanish Parent Group Pre/Post Evaluations

Treatment

2-3 individual therapy case load
Co-lead group therapy
for Spanish speaking non-offending parents

Supervision

Weekly Individual supervision
Weekly Group supervision

Training/Research

Training in Trauma-Focused CBT
Didactic presentations
Involvement with a clinical outcome study measuring the efficacy of a parent group

For more information please contact and forward CV to:

Aileen Torres, Ph.D.
RDTC Clinician
(973) 926-6940
AITORRES@SBHCS.COM

Group Externship Track

Assessment

Group Pre/Post Evaluations
CHEC (foster care) Evaluations
Psychosocial Abuse Evaluations

Treatment

2-3 group case load
Co-lead caretaker groups
2-3 individual therapy case load

Supervision

Weekly Individual supervision
Weekly Group supervision

Training/Research

Training in GB-CBT for Groups
Training in Trauma-Focused CBT
Didactic presentations
Involvement with a clinical outcome study assessing the efficacy of GB-CBT groups

For more information please contact and forward CV to:

Craig Springer, Ph.D.
RDTC Psychologist
973-926-6574
CSPRINGER@SBHCS.COM

SAVE THE DATE

**Latino Psychological Association
of New Jersey
10th Year Anniversary Celebration**

**Will be held on Thursday, November 12, 2009
At My Cuban Rose Restaurant
Kenilworth, New Jersey
7pm to 11pm**

**Celebration will include dinner, dancing, and
wine!**

Invitation to follow by mail.

**Join us to celebrate LPANJ's milestone with
great food, music & recognition of past
presidents.**

ABOUT THE LPANJ BULLETIN...

The LPANJ Bulletin is published two times per year to provide information to members of LPANJ. Opinions expressed in the LPANJ Bulletin are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect official positions taken by LPANJ.

SUBMISSIONS TO THE LPANJ BULLETIN:

Articles, columns, features, letters to editor, and announcements should be submitted via email to the Editor at smazzula@jjay.cuny.edu