



# WomanView

Fall, 2015

*The Newsletter of the Section for the Advancement of Women  
Society of Counseling Psychology (Div 17)  
American Psychological Association  
Yu-ting Su, Editor*

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## Notes from SAW Chair

*Debra Mollen, Ph.D.*



Another academic year is upon us and autumn is a great time to review the accomplishments of the summer and plan for the coming months.

SAW had a wonderful presence in Toronto at convention and we enjoyed the opportunity to visit with many of our long-time supporters as well as meet an incredible group of students across all stages of their training who brought enthusiasm, positive energy, and their innovative ideas to our section-sponsored events. We had an excellent turnout at our SAW roundtable on mentoring, which occurred as part of Division 17 programming. Ten students met with five eminent counseling psychologists to discuss planning for and managing an academic career. Dr. Laurel Watson, SAW Chair-Elect, and I offer our special thanks to Drs. Sharon Bowman, Amber Hewitt, Tania Israel, Julia Philips, and Sue Whiston for sharing themselves and their guidance so generously with us.

Three students—Brittany Goter from Texas Woman’s University, Rae Anne M. Frey from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Lauren Patrillo from Seton Hall University—presented their research findings at the Division 17 Social Hour on Thursday evening. Their posters complemented and supported SAW’s mission and ranged, respectively, from women’s body image in the context of their romantic relationships to women survivors of military sexual trauma and attitudes toward mate selection among female psychology and counseling graduate students.

We enjoyed getting to know many students and faculty members at the annual SAW Champagne Breakfast and Business Meeting where we kicked off our fundraising campaign and gathered ideas from students for our newsletter. Accordingly, we hope you’ll enjoy this special issue written primarily by and for our students. We also received an update from our 2015 SAW Student Research Award winner, Janelle Maloch, who shared initial findings from her dissertation, “Women’s Perspectives and Experiences in Passionate Friendships” with us as well as an update from the hardworking members of our SAW Herstory Taskforce, who—at this writing—have received IRB approval from their respective institutions and are collecting some pilot study data that will help inform the next phase of data collection which will begin shortly. A highlight of convention was celebrating our 2014 SAW Woman of the Year award winner, Dr. Bianca Bernstein, who delivered an inspiring talk covering her prolific career to date, all with her gracious flexibility given our limited technology.

Speaking of our fundraising campaign, I’m delighted to report we raised \$460 that we’ll earmark for SAW student-related endeavors, such as our 2016 Student Research Award. Thanks so much to everyone who contributed to our call for funds and to our treasurer (and 2015 SAW Woman of the Year winner), Dr. Meghan

Davidson, for helping collect and track the contributions we received.

Work on the revisions for the APA Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Girls and Women, a project I am spearheading with my illustrious co-chairs, Drs. Sharon Lamb and Lillian Comas-Diaz, continues in earnest. We received the initial reviews from APA and we are incorporating the feedback we were supplied. With support from Division 35, Sharon, Lillian, and I met earlier in November in Washington, D.C. to continue our efforts and spent a marathon day editing, writing, and streamlining our first draft. We remain grateful for all the support and assistance of the dozens of students and professionals who have already contributed—and those who continue to contribute—to this arduous and meaningful project.

We hope that many of you are planning to join us in Denver for the 2016 APA convention. Here are a couple of important deadlines to note:

- CE Workshops: Monday, November 9, 2015.
- Division Submissions: Tuesday, December 1, 2015.

Submit your proposals here

<http://www.apa.org/convention/proposals.aspx>

If you haven’t yet liked us on Facebook, be sure to stop by

(<https://www.facebook.com/SawDiv17APA>) and give us an electronic thumbs-up!

If you haven’t yet renewed your membership for the year, please contact Dr. Nadia Hasan, our new Membership Chair, at

[Nadia.hasan@tamuk.edu](mailto:Nadia.hasan@tamuk.edu). You’ll find our membership form here

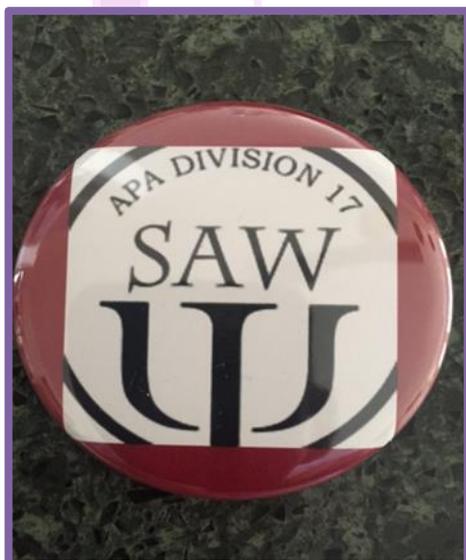
(<https://sites.google.com/site/div17saw/membership>). Remember that our maximum dues are just \$15 annually and are lower for those on reduced incomes.

Lastly, as I start the final year of my role as Chair, I want to express my warmest

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appreciation to all those who continue to support the work SAW does. From our board members to our legacy of foremothers to the students just joining us and the members who remain invested in advancing women's lives, thanks so much for your continued advocacy, activism, investment, and encouragement. Your contributions help sustain us and inspire our growth as an organization.

-Debra Mollen, Chair



I rushed from one “can’t-miss” event to another, sat on floors of over-crowded symposia, and sweated my way through my own poster presentation. Among the crowds, I frequently spotted names of

professors and researchers I admired and studied, and occasionally, I even had the chance to introduce myself (note to self: must come up with a better introduction than, “I cite you all the time!”).

In short, the conference as a whole was exhilarating and informative. As I enter my second year of graduate school, I consider such expeditions as this to be among the first, and most important steps, toward becoming a full-fledged member of this profession. I was reminded, however, of advice I have received in other crowded or overwhelming environments: to find a small school within a big school; a niche within a major organization; and a home within your field.

Meeting with the leaders of the Section for the Advancement of Women proved to be one such niche, and an experience that led me to hope that SAW will prove to be my home within this field in the future. Over mimosas and breakfast treats (delayed, but that much more delicious for the wait), I sat in on a warm and informative SAW meeting. I learned about the section’s past achievements, annual goals, and their ongoing effort to include students and young psychologists in the advancement of the section’s mission. Much of the discussion centered on promoting ties between less and more experienced feminist psychologists and utilizing principles of feminist mentorship for our mutual benefit. As a young woman starting

## Inquiring Minds

### *Pockets of Feminist Mentorship: A First-Time Attendee’s Experience of Toronto*

*Natalie Raymond, B.A.*

Attending my first professional conference was bound to be overwhelming. That it was APA, and that it just so happened to be not only international but in Canada’s largest city, was merely the icing on an already chaotic cake.

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off in this field, such support from those above and more established than myself is invaluable. I felt welcomed, I felt heard, and out of all the much-vaunted opportunities for networking present throughout the conference, I finally felt that I had made a connection with other women who might actually remember my name, regardless of my utter lack of citations. In fact, I know they did, since they contacted me following the conference. Given that I had no business cards to distribute, I particularly appreciate the effort they exerted to contact and include me (note to self: must get business cards).

What might have proved a dazzling but ultimately disheartening experience was made meaningful by the pockets of feminist fellowship I found scattered throughout the convention center. Taking part in SAW's annual breakfast left me excited to work with the section throughout the year, and eagerly awaiting the continuation of these connections next year in Denver and beyond.

## ***The (Bumpy) Road to Becoming a Feminist Counseling Psychologist***

***Sara M. Aslan, M.A.***



Graduate school is a unique experience, particularly if you are on the path to becoming a feminist counseling psychologist. Classrooms are primarily comprised of students who are women who are very aware of the

imbalance of power in among genders. We discuss issues of equality, social justice, privilege, and recognizing that individual and social change are mutually dependent (Evans, Kincade, Marbley, & Seem, 2005), all the wonderful things that play into feminist counseling approaches. As psychologists in training, it is a requirement that we also complete clinical hours. University counseling centers appear to understand, recognize, and support feminism and feminist counseling. Yet the difficulty lies in other environments, those that encompass a different model and a different clientele, such as Veterans Administrations (VA).

This year I began my first practicum experience at a VA. Coming from an extensive background of clinical work with mostly female clients, many with eating disorders, I wasn't sure what to expect. It is safe to say that this is a very different atmosphere, one that is dominated by men, and encompasses highly conservative views. Furthermore, the very few women veterans whom I have seen and worked with at the VA also happened to be ethnic minorities, and therefore have multiple minority statuses and are also dealing with such ailments as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Military Sexual Trauma (MST). I began to think about all the disparities in this environment and how there aren't enough services specifically designed for veterans who are women.

Then I realized, what the heck am I doing? This is not what a feminist counseling psychologist would do, why I am overlooking all the veterans who are men and discounting their experiences? These men are in groups talking about experiences with MST and combat trauma, and stating how weak they feel due to societal norms. When it comes to feminism, what hasn't received the most attention is the way men are treated in society. I am beginning to notice a reoccurring theme at my practicum site about men being told from a young age that showing emotion is weak, which is then reinforced by the military. This message has been tormenting

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these clients for decades. As women, yes we have less freedom and power than men, but we do have the space to be emotional. Although this can also be used as a derogatory term when it comes to women's self-expression, I never stopped to think about what it would be like to have to hold everything I was feeling inside for fear of being judged and labeled and internalizing these messages to become part of the core of who I am.

Little research exists on how to be a feminist counseling psychologist with clients who are men. Feminist therapy is highly concerned with social action and with the implementation of changes in institutional sexism and in our sexist society (Cammaert & Larsen, 1988). It expects the examination of gender roles and the changing of traditional sexist and restrictive role options in women's lives (Mejía, 2005), and it suggests that nonhierarchical egalitarian relationships should exist in human relations and in institutional settings (Brown, 1986). Feminist theory rejects patriarchy and gender role assignments (Mejía, 2005), values consensual decision making, equal access to power, and open gender role selections (Brown, 1990). Feminist theory also notes that knowledge has been controlled by a male hierarchy and has transpired in accordance with male criteria of achievement and performance, without regard for the ultimate effects on the quality of life or the nature of reality (Enns, 1993). Paradoxically, this superseding view has also greatly limited and harmed men (Mejía, 2005).

I am beginning to notice more and more how society treats men and how my own upbringing may have shaped my beliefs. I grew up in a Latino(a) community with an old-fashioned Middle Eastern father; I believe it is safe to say that I may have been influenced by traditional gender stereotypes. Now, where does this leave me? I am stuck wondering how to challenge my own beliefs and to best serve this population. Spence and Helmreich (1980) suggested that counselors need to be aware of how the context

influences a client's gender identity, and also how we as counselors understand the concept of gender identity, based on what we have learned in society. Furthermore, Mejía (2005) suggested that counselors who identify as women need to assess their lifetime experiences with men because that is part of what shapes their idea of masculinity, and counselors who identify as men should also evaluate their experiences with women because those experiences shape their idea of femininity. I am beginning to do just that; I need to really start to look at my own experiences and how my views were shaped. As with anything else in one's development, just when you think you've got it, you are thrown a curve ball and you realize that you still have a great deal to learn. Yet, I feel that even though I am on a bumpy road, I am one step closer to becoming a feminist counseling psychologist.

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competent professional. I recall one semester in which, after gentle challenges from my supervisors and peers, I found myself frequently contemplating my resistance to being vulnerable. Through engagement in multicultural coursework and processing in supervision the way this resistance presented in my clinical practice and personal relationships, I realized that, in short, I wanted to appear tough in order to compensate for my expectation that others would perceive me as weak due to my gender. It is difficult to put into words the experience of having had such a profound realization like this. I liken it to the sense of wonder I experienced as a child seeing something special and perhaps magical for the first time. I cannot count the number of these, "A-ha!" moments I have experienced over the course of my training.



## ***Becoming a Feminist Counseling Psychologist***

***Dena Abbott, M.A.***



I chase experiences that leave me feeling like an evolved person. There have been no other experiences in my life that have resulted in greater personal growth than my education and, in particular, my graduate studies

in counseling psychology. I can think of no other discipline that requires such deep, personal reflection and self-awareness in order to master the skills necessary to become a

While invigorating, growth is also incredibly challenging. As a person with a number of privileged identities, it was at times difficult to acknowledge that, as a woman, I was marginalized. I felt guilty expressing challenges I faced given the many unearned advantages I was offered as a White, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied person. Additionally, acknowledging and examining my biases was, and is, not pleasant. I experienced the unsettling dissonance that often arises from harboring biases that do not align with my sense of myself as a person and clinician who values and prioritizes multiculturalism. In my training as a future counseling psychologist, I have been encouraged to own both my privileged and marginalized identities and to have compassion for myself when I unearth a bias of which I am not particularly proud, both of which have resulted in greater feelings of confidence and authenticity.

Although I felt invigorated by the acceptance of my marginalized identities and became more passionate and outspoken in my opposition to the systems that perpetuated my, and others', marginalization, friends and family were not always on board. In fact, I may have seemed a

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stranger to them in some ways. In a feminist, multicultural training program such as mine, it was easy to forget that, outside the safe, progressive bubble in which I spent most of my time, the world was often less supportive than the setting to which I had become accustomed. One suggestion I would offer future trainees is to approach your friends and family with the knowledge that they may not have received exposure to diversity topics, like privilege, to the degree that is typical for you, are not immersed in multicultural literature, and, frankly, are sometimes far less interested – and that is okay. It may be important to communicate to the most important people in your life, especially your partner(s), if any, that you are experiencing a tremendous amount of personal growth and want to share the experience with them. One helpful conversation I had with my partner allowed me to express my fear that we would drift apart if I ventured into this self-exploration alone and asked him to engage in his own journey of self. I strongly believe his willingness to be self-reflective and the opportunity to share our discoveries with each other strengthened our relationship and helped us to navigate successfully the challenging and stressful years of my graduate training.

Despite these challenges, I am grateful for every lesson learned and attribute a great deal of the person I have become, a person I am very proud to be, to my graduate training in counseling psychology. Just as I would encourage a client to venture to a place of discomfort in order to experience growth, I encourage current and future trainees to allow themselves to be vulnerable, embrace the uncomfortable, relish in the unique opportunity to be surrounded by others taking the same risks, and celebrate your achievements.

## Announcements

Visit the SAW Facebook page for a great way to meet many like-minded individuals seeking to address issues related to gender, sexuality, diversity, and social justice. This page will keep you up to date on the most current SAW



information. It also provides non-members with a quick and easy way to join SAW. Like us on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/SawDiv17APA>



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SAW Governing Board, Ex-Officio, & Committees

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## SAW Membership Application/Renewal

The Section for the Advancement of Women (SAW) is seeking new members. Please pass along this membership form to a friend or colleague who may be interested in joining SAW. This form may also be used to renew your membership in SAW or update your information. Renewals are due in September of each year. If you have not renewed for 2014-2015, now is the time to do so.

There are three categories of membership:

**Member:** Any Associate, Member, or Fellow of Division 17 who has an interest in the goals of the section (see explanation below) may apply for SAW membership.

**Professional Affiliate:** Professional affiliates of Division 17, or Fellows or Members of APA who are not members of the Division but have an interest in the goals of SAW may apply for affiliate status.

**Student Affiliate:** Any student belonging to either Division 17 Student Affiliate Group or APAGS who has an interest in the goals of SAW may apply for student affiliate status.

## Annual Dues

Annual dues are based on income:

\$15 ~ Over \$30,000/year      \$10 ~ Under \$30,000/year      \$5 ~ Student Affiliate

Make check payable to: *Division 17 Section for the Advancement of Women*

Complete the form below and mail with check to: **Laurel Watson, Ph.D., Counseling & Educational Psychology, UMKC School of Education, 615 E. 52nd Street, Kansas City, MO 64110**

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