



WomanView

Spring, 2015

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

Table of Content

<u><i>Notes from SAW Chair</i></u> <i>Debra Mollen, Ph.D.</i>	1
<u><i>What Do You Want To Know?</i></u> <i>A Column for mentoring</i>	3
<u><i>Inquiring Mind</i></u>	4
<i>The Duty to Advocate</i> <i>Sara M. Aslan, M.A.</i>	
<u><i>Announcements</i></u>	6
<u><i>Enclosed:</i></u> <i>SAW Governing Board, Ex-Officio, and Committees</i>	7
<i>Membership Form</i>	

Notes from SAW Chair

Debra Mollen, Ph.D.



Social networks are more than just repositories for trivial, snap judgments; they are more than merely convenient outlets for mindless joy and outrage. They offer

more than the common ground and the solace we may find during culturally significant moments. Social networks also provide us with something of a flawed but necessary conscience, a constant reminder that commitment, compassion, and advocacy neither can nor ever should be finite—Roxane Gay, *Bad Feminist: Essays*

The theme for this edition of the SAW Newsletter is advocacy. Advocacy and activism run deep through my life, summoning and propelling me and time and again reconfirming my identity as a feminist activist counseling psychologist. Coupled with my

Jewish identity and conjuring *tikkun olam*—the obligation I feel to do my part to repair a flawed world—my identity as an advocate continues to shape who I am as a person and a professional.

One of the ways I've most enacted my advocate identity has been in the pro-choice movement. I have been a longtime supporter of ensuring our individual and collective access to reproductive healthcare and a fervent proponent of reproductive justice. Working with my local pro-choice organization (www.teafund.org), I've been a clinic escort, hosted a pro-choice fundraiser, and attended pro-choice marches and events. I teach my graduate program's course in human sexuality which has a strong emphasis on reproductive justice. Considering that low-income women and women of color are disproportionately disadvantaged from accessing safe, affordable, reproductive care, the intersection of gender, class, and ethnicity makes the pro-choice movement an ideal place to enact advocacy. A related concern I have had is how few graduate programs in Counseling Psychology cover issues related to reproductive health, particularly given how impactful they are in the lives of most girls and women.

Another focus of my advocacy, particularly as it relates to my work with SAW, is mentoring. Both research and our own experiences confirm the importance of accessing role models, learning from those who come before us, and sharing what we've learned with others. We're pleased to bring a second installment of our mentoring column, "What Do You Want to Know?" in this newsletter. We've included responses about advocacy from two feminist counseling psychologists. I hope you'll find them, as I did, inspirational and meaningful. Speaking of mentoring, I'd love to see many of you in Toronto this summer at convention, where SAW Membership Chair Laurel Watson and I will facilitate a roundtable event entitled "A Mentorship Event for Women Interested in Academia." Our plans include hosting several

mid- and seasoned career feminist counseling psychologists who will share their experiences and ideas with students and ECPs who attend. Be on the lookout for the time, date, and location to be announced.

At this writing, the revisions for the Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Girls and Women are under review with APA. Please look for the document to be distributed in the coming months and be sure to let us (Co-Chairs Lillian Comas-Diaz, Sharon Lamb, and me) know your thoughts. As with all of the APA Guidelines, they contribute to advocacy as they provide direction and guidance, grounded in current scholarship, to help psychologists in our varied roles with clients, supervisees, and students.

SAW continues to have a full agenda with lots happening. We had a robust response to our call for the SAW Dissertation/Thesis Award. Reviews are underway and we'll be announcing the winner later in April. I offer my heartfelt thanks to Ginny Maril for coordinating and overseeing the process and to Laurel Watson and Nadia Hasan for their service as reviewers. Speaking of reviews, the deadline for student posters for the Division 17 Social Hour is fast-approaching (March 23rd). Sarah Hastings is continuing her service as Student Poster Coordinator, assisted by Sonia Carrizales and Cassie Nichols—I'm so grateful for their dedication and contributions to SAW.

Jennifer Taylor, Jennifer Mootz, Lisa De La Rue, and Morgan Grotewiel continue their work on our SAW Herstory Project. At this writing, they are navigating the IRB review process and will begin collecting data this summer. We anticipate a final product in which they present the results of their findings and make suggestions for future directions for SAW in the summer of 2016.

Our roles as advocates allow us to take stands against injustice, put our privilege as educated counseling psychologists into action, and make

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meaningful differences in the lives of others, often and especially those who are marginalized. I hope you'll join me in my quest to do my small part to make things better by identifying problems and generating and working toward solutions.

Finally, 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!

-Debra Mollen, Chair

What Do You Want to Know?

~A Column for Mentoring

Question: How do you enact the advocate identity emblematic in Counseling Psychology and what do you suggest for emerging feminist counseling psychologists who are particularly interested in advocacy?

Answer: Fabulous question! My career has been heavily informed by my passion to serve the exploited and other marginalized populations. I prioritize teaching about advocacy and had the amazing opportunity to lead the development of the APA accredited doctoral program in Counseling Psychology at Carlow University in which the overarching framework is characterized by a focus on justice and feminism (http://carlow.edu/PsyD_Counseling_Psychology.aspx). Within that program I have designed a course in which the primary learning objective is to enhance understanding about the

ways in which oppression is institutionalized and how to actively interrupt oppressive cycles at the meso and macro levels of institutions. This is in contrast to the interpersonal or micro level in which psychologists are more commonly trained to intervene. In addition, I invite students to participate in local grassroots movements related to racism, sexism, and heterosexism. Most recently I participated with many students in the Pittsburgh Dr. Martin Luther King March for Equality. Finally, I have worked in the area of human trafficking for the past 11 years during which I began the Project to End Human Trafficking (www.endhumantrafficking.org). This group works nationally and internationally on this human rights abuse. As for suggestions for emerging feminist counseling psychologists interested in advocacy, I think it's important to contemplate the ways in which your justice oriented interests can intersect with your career. In my opinion it's important to find ways to merge a feminist/justice oriented identity with the work of one's career. Partner with others and remain a student in the world, regardless of the positions you hold.

Mary C. Burke, Ph.D., Carlow University

Answer: This question is of special interest to me because our program at the University of Oklahoma is moving toward changing our training model from scientist-practitioner to scientist-practitioner-advocate. As pointed out by many counseling psychologists who truly live their commitment to advocacy, as a first step it is crucial to develop your own awareness and critical consciousness regarding privilege, institutional barriers, marginalized populations, and so on. As I read this question, however, my sense is that the questioner understands the need for awareness and self-reflection, knowledge, and skills but is perhaps wondering where to go next. It may be helpful to begin to define your own interests—are you

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interested in global advocacy or more local, community engagement? What advocacy area(s) particularly attracts you—environmental, issues of violence, human trafficking? There are so many directions in which to go and you can't do it all. I believe the next step is to get involved with the community of people involved in the issue. I think of that involvement as just that—*involvement*. Get to know people, be involved in any way, big or small, that help is needed. In an article I recently read in *Bitch* magazine, the documentarian Alanis Obomsawin (Canadian/Abenaki) stated, "Although you might have another thought that you think is more important, documentaries are about the voices of the people who are the story." I believe this is true about all approaches to advocacy--that we need to work to remove our own ego from the process. At some point in the process of involvement, you'll begin to see the talents and skills related to your training as a counseling psychologist that you bring to the issue—talents and skills that complement the talents and skills of others and that privilege the "voices of the people who are the story."

Lisa Frey, Ph.D., University of Oklahoma

Students and ECPs, please send questions you want to see answered in future newsletters to dmollen@mail.twu.edu

Inquiring Minds

The Duty to Advocate

Sara M. Aslan, M.A.



Advocacy refers to the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2015). Psychology is one field where advocacy plays a key role in the professional duties. In particular, Counseling

Psychology prides itself in adopting a social justice lens as it pertains to advocacy. We are taught from early on how important our roles as psychologists are in advocating for our clients as well as for the field itself. Advocacy can be accomplished in such ways as utilizing strength-based approaches and empowerment while in session with clients, consulting on important issues with other professionals and organizations, conducting specific types of research, or even in a broader sense by engaging in activities at the community level.

Personally, I view advocacy as being on a continuum and not on two opposing extremes, meaning that advocacy comes in all shapes and sizes, and that one does not have to dedicate exuberant amounts of time to be considered an advocate. This conceptualization helps me put into perspective what it means to be an advocate. For example, I consider myself an Ally for LGBTQIAA issues, and an advocate for gender equality. For me, this means speaking up in situations when I have the opportunity to do so, and educating those who

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may not be as aware of the issues that LGBTQIAA individuals and women face. Furthermore, I am lucky enough to be in a doctoral program that not only promotes social justice advocacy, but also discusses this concept in just about every class. Many of the people I interact with on a daily basis are very aware of the importance of advocacy and issues pertaining to social justice, yet there is still room to grow.

The importance of social justice advocacy within doctoral programs has been noted in several studies. For example, Mallinckrodt, Miles, and Levy (2014) argued that in addition to the widely utilized scientist-practitioner model, social justice advocacy should also be incorporated into psychology training programs in order to meet the demands of current graduate training. The scientist-practitioner-advocate (SPA) training model is a three-part model that takes into account the collaborations among the advocate role, the traditional researcher role, and the practitioner role (Mallinckrodt, Miles, & Levy, 2014). Moreover, Fassinger and O'Brien (2000), who pioneered the argument for SPA training drawing from both feminist and multicultural frameworks, urged counseling psychologists to diversify their roles to include social justice advocacy as part of their commitment to multicultural competence.

Moreover, early definitions of feminist therapy emphasized social activism as a part of its orientation. Additionally, feminist therapy was defined as being action-oriented and established on the examination of the oppressions of patriarchy, the corporate capitalist system, and political and social institutions (Kirk, 1983). Therefore, for those who are maintaining both identities of a Counseling Psychologist and feminist, it appears that the idea of social justice activism can come quite naturally. Yet, as a graduate student, the hours are long, the sleep is minimal, and the thought of adding something more to your plate can appear daunting.

However, something as simple as being aware of how we are supporting the issues we believe in can actually be rather effortless. For instance, due to my identity as an Ally, I will not support corporations that outwardly state that they are discriminatory. A particular restaurant that I have in mind has remained very vocal about their negative views of homosexuality, so as an advocate, I do not purchase their products. This simple act is me advocating for my clients and the equal treatment I believe they deserve.

As practicum students and clinicians, it is important to acknowledge that the presenting symptoms of many clients represent their reactions to oppression and economic injustice, and to address only their symptoms while overlooking the sociocultural context is to perpetuate the existing condition of discrimination and oppression (Fassinger & O'Brien, 2000). We are at the front line to witness the effects of injustice on oppressed individuals' mental health. It is our duty as those who represent the broad and diverse field of psychology to be at the forefront of advocating for change. After all, who are we as professionals if we don't accept and uphold the responsibility as an advocate?

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

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!

Announcements

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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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