Intervention and assessment in Couple & Family Psychology, embracing the total family system including individuals, couples, families, and the intergenerational system.
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About the American Academy of Couple and Family Psychology

The Academy is devoted to the advancement of the psychological specialty of Couple and Family Psychology in general and board certification (diplomate) in that specialty in particular. As professions become more specialized, board certification is becoming an increasingly important marker for expertise in a specialty area of psychology. Advanced standing as a Board Certified Couple and Family Psychologist reflects a higher standard of expertise over basic licensure and assures the public that their provider choice is among the select in the field to be nationally recognized for experience, expertise, and education as a Couple and Family Psychologist. The American Academy of Couple and Family Psychology is comprised of all psychologists who are board certified in Couple and Family Psychology by the American Board of Professional Psychology.

AACFP cordially invites you to become part of our incredible team!

For more information, please visit our website at www.familypsych.org

If you are retired, you are able to maintain your Academy status for only $15!

Student rate for a member of the Academy is the same as seniors, only $15

The Benefits of being a Member Versus Just Board Certified, include the following:

- The Fee is the SAME
- You receive Fellowship Status
- You have the opportunity to network with other Academy Members - It’s all about who you know!
- You receive the newsletter which keeps you updated on your colleagues and the latest information regarding Board Certification and The Academy
Greetings,

It is hard to believe we are transitioning into another Fall season already. I found the Denver convention this year as usual to have excellent workshops and presentations. It was great to spend time with colleagues and attend excellent presentations. I appreciated attending the convocation and seeing so many newly board certified psychologists in the various specialties. It is abundantly clear that it is critical for psychologists to pursue board certification as mandates of health care continue to evolve. I believe board certification will become the expectation in healthcare as we move forward. As you have been aware the Academy in collaboration with Division 43 and ABCFP have been working to increase board certification in couple and family psychology. There were many interactions and meetings both formally and informally in Denver to reach out to early career psychologists to begin mentoring relationships toward certification. This summer the Board approved several initiatives to support early career psychologists and academics in couple and family psychology. Currently there are several candidates moving towards certification. The goal is clearly to have certification in couple and family psychology as the gold standard that is recognized by fellow providers and the public in treating couples and families. As couple and family psychologists the focus is on treating individuals, couples and families in the context in which they live recognizing the many different levels of systemic interaction. The skill and training is complex and it requires that psychologists are identified having advanced training in treating couples and families: board certification identifies this advanced training.

The coming year emphasis will continue in developing the recognition of board certification as the standard of care for psychologists treating couples and families, recruiting early career psychologists and continuing the collaborative relationships and increasing rapport with systemic training programs in psychology. June 22-24 2017 there will be a conference in Evanston, IL “Crossroads of Couple and Family Psychology: A Foundation for Future Real World Practice.” The conference is sponsored by the Society for Couple and Family Psychology Division 43, The Academy of Couple and Family Psychology, the American Board of Couple and Family Psychology, the International Academy of Family Psychology and the Family Institute at Northwestern University. For more information, please visit www.family-institute.org/research/crossroads. I look forward to seeing you all there as we advance the recognition of board certification as the standard of care with couples and families.

Christopher P. Tobey, Ph.D., ABPP,
President, AACFP
A Message from the Editor

Welcome to the winter issue of the American Academy of Couple and Family Psychology Newsletter!

As your Editor-In-Chief, it is my goal to make every issue informative and entertaining. This issue is no exception as we highlight upcoming events, interviews with our members, and present exciting news about Board certification and our current members. We have also included information about the NEWLY APPROVED GRANTS from The American Board of Professional Psychology Foundation and The Academy of Couple and Family Psychology Board for eligible Early Career Psychologists (ECPs), doctoral students, and licensed psychologists!

The newsletter serves as your opportunity to engage with your colleagues by sharing your achievements, publications, and important announcements. Submissions are ALWAYS welcome!

I would like to thank Martha Ruiz-Shank, Psy.D., the co-editor of this newsletter, for her support and brilliant technological skills. I would also like to congratulate her on passing her licensing exam!

Please continue to send us your submissions! Thank you!

Happy reading!

Rachael Silverman, Psy.D.

Send submissions directly to: silverman.rachael@gmail.com and/or martharuiz26@gmail.com

A membership directory is available online on AABP website, www.abpp.org.

Please select Couple and Family Psychology as a specialty and enter the zip code for the area in which you would like to find a Couple and Family Psychologist Specialist.
INTERESTED IN BOARD CERTIFICATION?

Psychologists: If you are interested in board certification in Couple and Family Psychology, I would encourage you to go to [http://www.abpp.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3359](http://www.abpp.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3359) in order to download and review the ABCFP materials.

There are three pathways to demonstrate specialty education, training, and experience, including the Senior Track for individuals with over 15 years of experience who meet specified criteria. Our board is committed to creation of a positive and professional application and examination process. If you decide to pursue board certification, you may have a mentor assigned to assist you through the process, if you so desire.

Clinicians: Involved in educating and training psychology students in a predoctoral or postdoctoral venue that includes a Couple and Family Psychology emphasis, we invite you to consider ABCFP board certification.

Faculty members: In a doctoral program that includes a Couple and Family Psychology track, we encourage you to consider board certification as a demonstration of your competence in the specialty and as part of your modeling of postdoctoral certification. Finally, we encourage you to enlist your students in the ABPP Early Entry Program (see below).

Pre-licensure individuals: Students or recent graduate of a program that included a track or emphasis in Couple and Family Psychology, we encourage you to start the process of progression toward board certification through ABPP at a reduced fee. See information on the Early Entry Program at: [http://www.abpp.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=3299](http://www.abpp.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=3299) and start the process now.

We appreciate your interest in board certification in Couple and Family Psychology. Please contact any member of the ABCFP board if you have any questions or concerns about the process. We are happy to respond to your inquiries.

Christopher P. Tobey Ph.D., ABPP, President, AACFP

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**For more information on our Academy’s Board Certification Process, please visit our website at:**

AACFP AT APA IN DENVER!

The 69th ABPP Convocation

Congratulations
Dr. Rachael Silverman
for being the recipient of the Kaslow Family Fund Award!
AACFP OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Christopher P. Tobey, Ph.D., ABPP

Clinical and Forensic Psychology
606 Commercial Ave Ste. G
Anacortes, WA 98221-1700
360-293-11
cptobey@comcast.net

PRESIDENT ELECT: Christen A. Carson, Ph.D., ABPP

Clinical and Forensic Psychology
1117 Minor Avenue Suite 200
206-386-2280
drccarson@mac.com

PAST PRESIDENT: Bob Geffer, Ph.D., ABPP

Founding President of Alliant International University’s (AIU) Institute on Violence, Abuse, and Trauma
Distinguished Research Professor of Psychology at the California School of Professional Psychology
10065 Old Grove Rd. Suite 101
San Diego, CA 92131
858-527-1806 x4050
bgeffner@pacbell.net

SECRETARY: Karen J., Prager, Ph.D., ABPP

Professor of Psychology
Program Head in Gender Studies
School of Interdisciplinary Studies and School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences
The University of Texas at Dallas
P.O. Box 830688
Richardson, Texas 75083-0688
Telephone: 972-883-2353
kprager@utdallas.edu
MEMBER AT LARGE: Terrence SooHoo, Ph.D., ABPP

Terry Soo-Hoo, Ph.D., ABPP
Associate Professor
California State University East Bay
Clinical Director Strategic Family Therapy Clinic at MRI
terry.soohoo@csueastbay.edu

MEMBER AT LARGE: Corinne Datchi, Ph.D., ABPP

Assistant Professor & Clinical Coordinator
MFT Programs, PPFT Department
Seton Hall University
VP for Practice, Society for Family Psychology
Couple and Family Psychology Collection Editor, Momentum Press
corinne.datchi@shu.edu

CONSULTANT: Florence Kaslow, Ph.D., ABPP

Board Certified in Clinical Psychology, Family Psychology & Forensic Psychology
American Board of Professional Psychology
Chair, ABPP Foundation (2015-2016)
President, Kaslow Associates
128 Windward Drive
Palm Beach Gardens FL 33418
561.625.0288 (office)
561.625.0320 (fax)
drfkaslow@bellsouth.net

NEWSLETTER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND EARLY CAREER PSYCHOLOGIST BOARD MEMBER:
Rachael Silverman, Psy.D.

Licensed Psychologist - Private Practice
The Sanctuary Executive Offices
4400 North Federal Highway
Suite 210-10
Boca Raton, FL 33431
silverman.rachael@gmail.com
THE KASLOW FAMILY FUND

Interview with Florence W. Kaslow, Ph.D., ABPP

Interviewed by AACFP Editor In-Chief, Rachael Silverman, Psy.D.

**R:** What is the Kaslow Family Fund mission?

**F:** To encourage people to apply for their ABPP in Couple and Family Psychology, by providing funds to help defray some of the costs of the travel to the exam or for the application for process.

It is not a grant – it is a scholarship and an award. This is the first year it is being given so we do not have any data about its impact. It just began to be publicized in late summer of 2015.

**R:** What inspired you and Dr. Nadine Kaslow to start this award?

**F:** I’ve heard so many people say the process is expensive, especially those are just starting a family or who just graduated who could not afford to undertake the process to become board certified. This is our way of setting a precedent of helping with the financial part.

**R:** Tell me how you first became involved with the Kaslow Family Fund award.

**F:** The Award was setup in 2014 by Dr. Nadine Kaslow and me; hence the name Kaslow Family Fund Award. Initial funding came from the two of us …we had 3 very good applicants this year, but regret we could only fund two, so the selections were made by the award committee. The members of the Committee were Dr. Morgan Sammons, who is Vice Chair of the Foundation and Chair of the Awards Committee, Dr. Jennifer Kelly, and Dr. Nadine Kaslow.

**R:** What do you wish other people knew about the Kaslow Family Fund Award?

**F:** It is for ECPs as well as for mid-career and senior psychologists, who realize it’s important to be board certified to set an example for their colleagues and students. Board certification is also becoming an increasingly important credential to work in hospitals and medical offices, as part of integrated healthcare teams, teachers, those who do supervision, or to do family-centered home healthcare.

**R:** What are the selection criteria for the award?

**F:** The selection criteria include contributions already made to organizations, such as Society of Couple and Family Psychology, Division 43 APA, The Academy of Couple and Family Psychology, and/or being active in regulatory and/or state psychological associations in leadership roles, so it is clear one is already a contributor to the field.
They have passed the first stage of the board certification process, which is credentials review, before applying.

*R: What do you find most challenging about the award?*

F: Selecting from very capable applicants. With ECPs, many of them are so involved with their jobs that they aren’t ready to invest time for preparation for the exam. We have found that many active people believe they are too busy, but that tends not to change over time.

*R: What is your personal philosophy on what should be done to increase interest and participation in Board Certification?*

F: My personal philosophy is that all psychologists should be board certified. This should occur ASAP after graduation and passing state licensure. It measures ones growing competency in the foundational and functional areas established by APA and ABPP. Nadine is board certified in four specialties and a Past President of ABPP and APA. I am board certified in three specialties and Past President of Divisions 43 and 46 and the American Board of Couple and Family Psychology. We both have a high commitment to upholding the highest standards of the field and encouraging others to obtain this very important credential.

*R: If you could change one thing about the Kaslow Family Fund Award, what would it be?*

F: Finding a way to insure that contributions will grow so we can keep the award going and can give three a year.

*R: What would you tell someone who is thinking about donating?*

F: That we need more Board Certified psychologists who uphold the highest standards of research, practice, teaching and supervision of family and couple psychology.

*R: How does the Foundation use contributions/donations?*

F: The Foundation sees contributions to a designated fund, like this one, as specified for this Fund only. Our other designated funds also can only be used for their earmarked purpose.

*R: What are your long-term goals for the award?*

F: To keep it going as long as we can contribute to the fund, but we also need others to contribute and the recipients to fulfill their goal of certification as quickly as they can.
Are Your Colleagues and Psychologist Friends Board Certified in Couple and Family Psychology?

If Not, Why Not?

Florence W. Kaslow, Ph.D., ABPP
Past President of the Society of Couple and Family Psychology
Past Division 43 Council Representative
Chair, ABPP Foundation
Consultant, AACFP

The increasingly important next step in one’s professional career, after the post-doctoral degree and post licensure, is becoming Board Certified. This demonstrates to other professionals in psychology, medicine, nursing, law, education, etc., that a person has demonstrated the requisite functional and foundational competencies in their chosen area(s) of specialization before a committee, comprised of three Board Certified ABPPs, in both their written materials and in an oral examination, whether they are a clinician, researcher, academician, supervisor or consultant. This marker of distinction reflects a high level of accomplishment. In the current era of integrated health care, family centered medical homes, and hospital privileges for psychologists, courts reviewing credentials of those who testify (as in child custody and family violence cases), Board Certification can be an essential credential for professional advancement and easier mobility. So try to persuade colleagues to consider applying to ABPP as soon as they are eligible – post licensure. For more information have them go to:


To help defray the costs for several individuals each year in CFP, we have established the Kaslow Family Fund under the aegis of the ABPP Foundation. In 2016 we awarded two $750 scholarships for this purpose and for Directors of Doctoral Programs in CFP. The 2016 recipients were Heather Pederson, Ph.D., editor of the Family Psychologist, and Rachael Silverman, Psy.D., editor of the American Academy of Couple and Family Psychology Newsletter. For information and application contact Alessandra Kostolitz, Psy.D., Administrator, ABPP Foundation at alessandrakostolitz.abppf@gmail.com. Applications are due by March 1, 2017. Awards will be presented at the ABPP Foundation Reception in Washington DC in August 2017.

The American Academy of Couple and Family Psychology has also appropriated funds for awards for this purpose. Contact Dr. Chris Tobey, Chair, for more information at cptobey@comcast.net.

Whether someone is an ECP, a mid-career or a senior psychologist, the benefits to them of becoming an ABPP, as well as to our profession as our numbers increase, are manifold.
Lily ruminates about her failed marriage, beating herself up for mistakes she’s made and opportunities she’s missed.

Tom, a recovering alcoholic, obsesses about the years he lost to booze and castigates himself for the people he hurt and the relationships he damaged.

For Lily and Tom self-acceptance is a challenge, but isn’t it a challenge for all of us?

**On the road with yourself**

In fact, self-acceptance is one of the most important journeys we’re challenged with in this life. It is about being willing to embrace who we are, blemishes and all.

Here’s how I think about it: Imagine a container holding a variety of fruit, a perfect apple, a great piece of pineapple, blueberries that are just okay and a banana that is rotten, among a host of other fruits, some excellent, others less so.

Is the container good or bad? Good? What about that rotten banana? Bad? What about that perfect apple?

Get it? You are the container and those fruits represent your behaviors. The container can’t be rated, that would be simplistic, but the fruits (your behavior) certainly can and should be rated. The problem with Lily and Tom, and most of the rest of us, is that we stubbornly rate the container—our total Self.

**You are so weird!**

In contrast, take my friend Bob. When he told me about a strange medical procedure he invented to treat a rash and avoid going to a dermatologist, I told him affectionately, “You are so friggin' weird!” He replied without defense, “Yes, I really like that about myself!”

A couple of weeks later he complained about glare when he drove at night. When I suggested it might have to do with aging, he confessed it was the result of corrective eye surgery. “Wait,” I said, “you wouldn’t go to a dermatologist for a rash, but you let someone put a knife in your eye?” “I have contradictions,” he stated with a soft smile.

Now there’s a guy who is comfortable with himself, who has embraced his “weirdness” his contradictions, his limitations and fallibility.
He is not into the fake concept of self-esteem; consequently, he doesn’t need to play out the typical self-esteem tactic of softening or excusing mistakes or shortcomings. He doesn’t have to spin his shortcomings in an effort to preserve his view of himself. Instead, he accepts himself, blemishes and all. Self Esteem is conditional—do good, feel good about yourself, do poorly, feel bad about yourself. Acceptance is not conditional, you may feel good or bad, but you don’t generalize it to your entire being!

**Self-compassion anyone?**

Would you like to make that full embrace while you can? Here are a few things to consider:

1. **Agree in principle with all criticisms of yourself.** If someone says you are being selfish in a particular situation, don’t argue. Reply with something like, “You are right, sometimes I am selfish.” And that’s true! Everyone is selfish (and a lot more) at times. You are practicing the uncommon “art” of accepting yourself with imperfections, rather than all too common “un-smart” defensive behavior.

2. **Cut the small talk short and discuss the issue of self-acceptance with your friends.** Ask how they forgive themselves for mistakes and shortcomings. Ask about their personal “compassion philosophy.” Yes, we all have a personal philosophy that guides the inner conversations we have with ourselves about ourselves. Unfortunately it is often not compassionate.

3. **Debate with yourself whenever you lose perspective about the fallibility of all human beings, including yourself.** Remind yourself that perfection is not for human beings. It is about doing your best, not being the best. If you hold a perfection standard you are setting yourself up for torment.

4. **About those rotten bananas in your container, don’t rate the whole container—that’s poor thinking that will only create more rottenness.** Remember, obsessing doesn’t change anything, and, as Jung said a century ago, what you resist persists. The irony is, accepting yourself, rotten banana and all, is more likely to lead to change.
The Case for Funding Research on Marriage and Interpersonal Process

The quality and stability of committed, intimate relationships have profound impacts on overall physical health, mental health, economic security, and child health and wellbeing. Unfortunately, recent statistics suggest that fewer people in the United States are married today than ever before, 42% of children are born to unmarried parents, and roughly half of marriages in the U.S. end in divorce. Moreover, relationship distress is the leading reason for seeking mental health counseling. Despite these demonstrated needs, no federal entity currently has the responsibility and authority for funding science to advance either a deeper understanding of intimate relationships or the development of new and/or improved interventions to strengthen their quality and longevity. While such research has historically been funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), institutes of NIH have changed their priorities, effectively excluding opportunities for new research on relationships and related programs and interventions. Additionally, the Administration for Children and Families and the National Science Foundation do not support research on the development or testing of relationship interventions.

Thus, we propose that Congress and the President encourage institutes to prioritize the science of intimate relationships, marriage, and interpersonal processes and related interventions to improve relationship outcomes.

The High Cost of Relationship Dysfunction and Dissolution

The mission of the NIH is to “seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce the burdens of illness and disability.” Relationship dysfunction is a public health issue that is directly related to this mission. Specifically, relationship dysfunction and dissolution are robustly associated with:

- Mortality1
- Depression, suicide, and other mood disorders2, 3.
- Alcoholism and substance abuse2
- Domestic violence4
- Obesity, elevated blood pressure5, and diminished immune system functioning6

Parental relationship conflict, instability, and dissolution are also associated with negative outcomes for children:

- Child abuse and maltreatment7, 8
- Growing up in poverty9
- Poorer academic achievement10
- Poorer physical and mental health11, 12

The consequences of intimate relationship distress are enormous. Taking into account only the effects of family breakdown on poverty rates, the United States is estimated to spend $112 billion dollars per year on the costs of family breakdown13. A mere one percent reduction in rates of family fragmentation would save taxpayers $1.12 billion annually in expenditures related to poverty.
The Present Funding Crisis for Research on Marriage and Intimate Relationships

Funding for research in this area has eroded within the NIH over the past 15 years. Around 2000, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) reoriented its priorities and explicitly discontinued support for research focused on improving couples’ outcomes. In more recent years, the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) has also reoriented its priorities and has explicitly abandoned the intention to fund research designed to inform effective interventions for couples unless the outcomes are focused on immediate outcomes for children. As a result, there is no federal funding for research targeted on understanding and improving intimate relationship dysfunction – even though it has been demonstrated to be a critically important risk factor for many of the physical and mental health problems targeted by the broader mission of the NIH. Additionally, marital distress has an enormous impact on global life satisfaction – larger than most of the physical and mental health problems targeted by NIH.

To put the funding picture into perspective, according to the NIH’s RePORTER search tool, the federal government will have spent $150,572,217 in FY 2012-2013 on projects with “depression” in the title and only $2,981,495 on projects with “marriage” in the title. Strikingly, 6.7% of the population is depressed during a 12-month period while 31% of those who are currently married report clinical levels of marital distress. Thus, on a per capita basis, NIH allocates $0.03 for each maritally-distressed person but $7.15 for each depressed person. If currently divorced or unmarried individuals were included in these calculations, the per-capita funding would be even more disparate.

Relevance to Health Disparities Concerns

The evidence is clear that the issues described above impact racial/ethnic minority populations and those with low income levels most dramatically.

- The unmarried birth rate varies greatly by race/ethnicity as well as by income and education level. For example, 72% of African-American children are born to unmarried parents versus 36% of White children.
- Among pregnant minority couples with low-income levels, only 44% will be together by the child’s 1st birthday.
- Most models of intervention or education for couples are based on middle-class, mostly White samples. New research commissioned by the Administration for Children and Families suggests that these interventions may not work as well for disadvantaged populations, but no funding is available to develop or test new models.
- Although many believe that the divorce rate is falling, new evidence suggests that the divorce rate has actually been increasing in recent decades. Further, researchers have known for some time that divorce is much more common among the least educated and among those who are racial/ethnic minorities.

Conclusion

Intimate relationship health is at the center of all of our lives. When our relationships are healthy, we are more likely to be well and resilient and so are our children. When our relationships are unhealthy, other aspects of our lives tend to suffer. Relationship science has made great strides in the last 40 years; however, there is still considerable work needed to sustain and improve the health of the nation’s marriages and intimate relationships. It is our hope that Congress and the President will give due consideration to our proposal to encourage institutes to prioritize the science of intimate relationships, marriage, and interpersonal processes and interventions to improve relationship and marriage outcomes.
Contributors

Galena Rhoades, Ph.D., University of Denver: grhoades@du.edu; Kristina Gordon, Ph.D., University of Tennessee Knoxville: kgordon1@utk.edu; James Córdova, Ph.D., Clark University: jcordova@clarku.edu; Brian Doss, Ph.D., University of Miami: bdoss@miami.edu; Scott Stanley, Ph.D., University of Denver: sstanley@du.edu; David Atkins, Ph.D., University of Washington: datkins@u.washington.edu

References

GRANTS FOR ECPs, PSYCHOLOGISTS, AND STUDENTS

The American Board of Professional Psychology Foundation and the Academy of Couple and Family Psychology are pleased to announce new incentives for psychologists and students to become board certified in Couple and Family Psychology.

SIX grants will fund up to $500 to two people in each of the categories below …

- $500 each for two early career psychologists
- $500 each for two academics
- $400 each for two doctoral students who are completing dissertations about couple and family assessment/treatment

The 2017 award application deadline date is December 1, 2016. Applicants will be notified about the status of their applications by January 15th.

Applicants should submit the following:

• A current CV
• A brief statement (500 words or less) describing their interest in ABPP board certification in Couple and Family Psychology and how it might enhance their current work.
• Two letters of reference from psychologists or related professionals familiar with the applicant’s professional activities addressing why the applicant should be granted the award.

If you receive an award, you will be expected to complete the application for board certification within one year from the date of receiving the award.

Applicants for the Academic or Doctoral Student grant, please submit your CV, reference letters, and statement of interest to AACFP Board President Elect, Dr. Christen Carson, drccarson@mac.com.

If interested in the early career psychologist (ECP) grant, please submit your CV, reference letters, and statement of interest to the ECP AACFP Board representative, Dr. Rachael Silverman silverman.rachael@gmail.com.