



# Newsletter

Web Site: <http://acfamp.org/newsletter.html>

The American Academy  
of Couple and Family  
Psychology

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The Academy of Couple & Family Psychology President:

John Thoburn, Ph.D.: ABPP

The Board (ABCFP) and the Academy (AACFP) of Couple and Family Psychology have had an eventful year. First, I would like to give a hearty congratulations to two of our very best. Dr. Florence Kaslow was awarded the gold medal for lifetime achievement in the practice of psychology from the American Psychological Foundation. Many of us, including her whole family, attended the APA/APF ceremony and the dinner that her family gave in her honor. Dr. Nadine Kaslow gave a touching tribute to her mother and colleague. Dr. Nathan Turner was awarded a certificate of appreciation from the American Board of Professional Psychology for his contribution to the couple and family specialty and he was later awarded the American Academy of Couple and Family Psychology's President's Award for his significant contributions to ABPP and to the field of couple and family psychology. Dr. John Northman was elected to the chair-elect position of the Council of Presidents of Psychology Specialty Academies (CPPSA).

The American Board of Couple and Family Psychology studiously prepared for and submitted to reaccreditation evaluation by the American Board of Professional Psychology. ABCFP up-

## President's Message

By John Thoburn, Ph.D.

dated its manual with a particular focus on establishing clear criteria for prospective diplomates qualifying for candidacy. Areas that were reformulated included the requirements for applying for the senior track and the need for strong mentoring of candidates. Reaccreditation feedback from ABPP confirmed the high professionalism built into the ABCFP, the value of board certification in couple and family psychology and the vast potential for developing diplomates in the discipline. Kudos go to Dr. Karen Prager, Dr. Frank Ezzo and Dr. Rodney Nurse for all their hard work in securing successful reaccreditation.

The interest in board certification in couple and family psychology from prospective candidates has not been this high since the early days of the Board. Several of the officers of the AACFP and ABCFP spent considerable amounts of time at APA nurturing and encouraging potential applicants to the couple and family specialty. By the end of the conference we had a solid eight people commit to pursue their couple and family ABPP within the next year. Dr. Melton Strozier (AACFP President-elect), Dr. Rodney Nurse (ABCFP President-elect) and I have been in touch with these folks since the conference and will continue to follow up. We believe an important part of the mentoring process occurs during pre-application, helping people with motivation, reinforcing the positive elements of ABPP certification and answering any questions regarding the start of the application process. These eight people are in addition to approximately another eight people who are already in the pipeline (undergoing some part of the review process). I'm generally not given to hyperbole, but I believe that this will be an explosive and breakout year

for the specialty. What this tells me is that each diplomate in couple and family psychology can have a significant impact on the specialty by promoting board certification to colleagues and other psychologists in the area in which you reside. If each of us recruits just one applicant we stand to double our numbers in the next few years. This is a vision that I believe can be achieved.

The Academy is assiduously seeking to make board certification in couple and family psychology relevant and necessary for highly effective practice. Dr. Strozier and I have committed to get a renewed AACFP website up before the end of the year. It was very clear from the reports of the other specialties that a website is integral to effective marketing and recruitment. We had been waiting to get a clear idea about the part that the Central Office might play in the development of the website. While this is still not entirely clear, what is clear is the Central Office's commitment to helping us get the website off the ground. Dr. David Cox, ABPP's executive director has been entirely gracious and helpful as we've begun to pull the various elements of a site together, from web design to content. We have redesigned the AACFP brochure to reflect the name change to *couple and family psychology*. If anyone would like some brochures to disseminate in your area, just contact Nancy McDonald ([www.abpp.org](http://www.abpp.org)) at the Central Office or myself at [thoburn@spu.edu](mailto:thoburn@spu.edu). We are evalu-

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Advertise your practice or faculty position in the APF Newsletter.

Contact us at:  
[drguyerli@yahoo.com](mailto:drguyerli@yahoo.com)



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ating other recruitment ideas such as partnering with Division 43 on continuing education workshops, scholarship and presentations at APA; offering scholarship awards to students in conjunction with promoting the early registration

of psychology graduate students; developing local new graduate groups that we can point directly to board certification; holding joint conferences with other specialties through coordination with the Central Office. If you or someone you know is ready to take the next step in his or her career development as a fam-

ily psychologist, consider board certification in couple and family psychology. Those who have taken the leap, succeeded in the work and evaluation process and obtained board certification have virtually without exception, considered it one of the best career moves they have ever made.

### A Call For Nominations

The American Academy of Couple and Family Psychology (AACFP), is seeking committed board certified couple and family psychologists to be members of the AACFP Board. The term of a board member is 2 years. Candidates must be current in their renewal of all attestation

fees with ABPP, ABCFP and the Academy. The experience of working with others on the cutting edge of the field is a rewarding one. Before nominating, please check with your nominee to see if he or she is willing to serve if elected. (Self-nomination is accepted.) There are four openings on the

board . Please have your nominations in by **November 30, 2008.**

Contact: STROZIER\_AM@Mercer.edu

### NOMINATION BALLOT

#### AMERICAN ACADEMY OF COUPLE AND FAMILY PSYCHOLOGY

#### Nominations for positions on the American Academy of Couple and Family Psychology

Write in candidates for Nomination to the AACFP Board. There are three slots to be filled. Fill as many spaces with your nominations as you like. You may nominate yourself. Please do this in a timely manner; the deadline for nominations is **November 30, 2008.**

#### President-elect

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Treasurer

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Secretary

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Fax or mail your completed Nomination Ballot to Melton Strozier Ph.D. ABPP

Fax Number: 478-301-5337

Address: Mercer School of Medicine 655 First St. Macon, GA 31210

## ABPP UPDATE

By Florence Kaslow, Ph.D., ABPP



### NEWS FLASH

Exciting New Developments with the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) and ABCFP

Florence W. Kaslow, Ph.D., ABPP  
ABCFP Representative to  
ABPP Board of Trustees

In August the ABPP office relocated from Savannah, Georgia to Chapel Hill, North Carolina. This move provides ABPP with larger office space out of which to service all ABPPs and potential ABPPs and to relate to other relevant organizations and constituencies. Our new headquarters are located in the well

respected research triangle where there is a large pool of talented individuals to draw from for staff positions and other tasks, such as overhauling our web site. Our CEO, Dr. David Cox, ABPP, will now have a full time position with us, and Nancy McDonald will remain on as our Assistant Executive Director. So the transition has been a smooth one and it is now all systems go. If you are in the area, call and arrange to visit.

Some important facts for you to know as an ABPP and when you encourage others to apply for Board Certification, which we ask all members of the Academy to do:

- Candidates who take and successfully pass their ABPP exam can now receive 10 CEU credits from ABPP, which is an APA approved CE provider.
- All candidates can request a mentor from the President-elect of the American Academy of Couple and Family Psychology who will guide them through the process.
- All those who successfully complete the process and attain Board Certification will receive \$100 rebate toward fees paid from AACFP.
- Arrangements can be made for reduced premium cost for malpractice insurance for ABPPs.

- VA, the Armed Forces and other Government agencies pay higher salaries to ABPPs.
- Some hospitals require all professional staff members to be Board Certified. ABPP works in close collaboration with ASPPB to facilitate interstate and inter-province mobility.

These are just some of the reason for seeking Board Certification. Perhaps most important is:

It is the next step in career building and attainment; candidates learn a great deal during the examination preparation phase and the vast majority report they feel terrific about achieving this highly esteemed credential.

As the number of ABPPs grows, our combined value and influence grows. If you are a Director of Clinical Training of a treatment facility, of a graduate educational internship or residency training program, we urge you to repeatedly underscore to your faculty, staff, students, trainers and superviseses the importance of becoming Board Certified. And also, when you advertise for new faculty or staff, why not indicate that Board Certification is expected – either being hired or within two years of employment. That will help get the message across!

### FLORENCE KASLOW RECIPIENT OF APF AWARD

Florence Kaslow, PhD received the Gold Medal Award for Life Achievement in the Practice of Psychology from the American Psychological Foundation at the 2008 APA Convention in Boston, in recognition of her major contributions to practice in the areas of couples and family, media, international and forensic psychology, and family business consultation. Her foresight in establishing and serving as first president of the American Board of Forensic Psychology advanced this specialty field. The citation also included the following facts: Her involvement as an early president of Division 43 (Family) and formalizing the Journal of Family Psychology during her presidency, her founding and becoming first president of the International Family Therapy Association, and serving as president of the International Academy of Family Psychologists are all testaments to her dynamic energy; inclusive, stimulating leadership style, and "can do philosophy". "Florrie has also been a recipient of a Distinguished Florida Psychologist Award and is a frequent presenter at FPA conferences, is a past President of Division 43 and of the American Board of Couple and Family Psychology, currently represents ABCFP on the ABPP Board of Trustees, and also has represented Division 43 on APA Council for the past six years. She is Board Certified in Couple and Family Psychology, Clinical Psychology, and Forensic Psychology.

## President, American Board of Family Psychology

Frank R. Ezzo, Ph.D., ABPP

In my last contribution to the Newsletter, I informed the membership about the critical paucity of new Diplomates in Couple and Family Psychology, and the possibility that our specialty could be "sunsetting" by the American Board of Professional Psychology. I am pleased to inform our membership that ABPP Central Office is working collaboratively with our board and other boards whose number of new Diplomates have fallen below the standards set by the Central Office (at least 21 new diplomats over 3 consecutive calendar years). We are not in imminent danger of being "sunsetting". We have candidates at various stages of the board certification process, which we refer to as the "pipeline". The number of candidates, however, is still short of the standards set by Central Office. Therefore, I continue to ask all members of the Academy of Couple and Family Psychology to recruit colleagues who are appropriately trained in our specialty to pursue board certification in Couple and Family Psychology. If each of us, or even half of our membership recruited one candidate, the specialty of Couple and Family Psychology would be infused with new members and vitality.

The ABCFP has been very busy with this critical project and others since I assumed the presidency on January 1, 2007. We have been working collaboratively with the Academy, Division 43, and the Family Psychology Specialty Council. We are also looking to explore a collaborative relationship with the Journal of Family Psychology. The enthusiasm, commitment and synergy among these constituent organizations has been palpable. The Academy members should know that the board

members and officers of ABCFP, and the Academy of Couple and Family Psychology have volunteered numerous hours of work to increase the number of board certified specialists in Couple and Family Psychology. To this end, I want to express my gratitude to the ABCFP and the Academy board for their contributions, not only of time and ideas, but in some cases sacrificing income to contribute to the causes of our specialty.

Some of the projects being collaboratively pursued by ABCFP and the ACFP are:

**Periodic Comprehensive Review (PCR):** ABPP Central Office has instituted a PCR process for all specialty boards. We have completed our PCR and it has been reviewed and accepted by ABPP Central Office. Karen Prager has been the Chair of our PCR and has worked diligently in concert with Rod Nurse, Florrie Kaslow, myself, and others in the preparation of our PCR. We have revised the Examination Manual and have developed three tracks, in addition to the Senior Option to obtain board certification in Couple and Family Psychology. The PCR process is far more encompassing than just a revision of the Examination Manual, and represents only one part of the work we have done. The PCR process also involved ABPP Central Office observing one of our board meetings and an examination in Boston at the APA Convention.

**Collaborative Relationships with Constituent Organizations:** I already addressed the collaborative relationships developed between the ABCFP, ACFP, Division 43, the Family Psychology Specialty Council, and coming soon, collaboration with the Journal of

Family Psychology. Working together with these organizations has represented one of the tenets inherent in our specialty; systemic thinking and practice.

**Role of the Past President as a Conduit of Information and "PR" Person:** The Past President of ABCFP will serve as a conduit of information about contributions, awards, and accomplishments of Diplomates in Couple and Family Psychology. These various accomplishments will then be funneled to the appropriate organizations (eg. State and Local Psychology Associations) to effect better public relations within our profession.

We have also had an election of board members which resulted in the retention of Michele Harway, John Northman, John Thoburn, and Mark Stanton. Thanks to all the members who voted and congratulations to the reelections of the four Board members.

In closing I will return to my mantra of recruiting, and ask each of you to become more involved in the recruitment of candidates for board certification in Couple and Family Psychology. I encourage you to contact colleagues, give presentations at the local and state levels, and write articles on our specialty and board certification for your local and state psychology associations. These represent only a few examples of how you can help...please help.

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Dr. Melton Strozier President-Elect Of The American Academy of  
Couple & Family Psychology

**FAMILY PSYCHOLOGY AND THE ECONOMY:  
A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS**

The title of the popular children's book series by Lemony Snicket, "*A Series of Unfortunate Events*," (HarperCollins) may best describe our current economic situation. We are in economic hard times. This is stressful. Per Hans Selye, stress is "The non-specific demand on an organism for change." Selye posited that there are three stages of reaction to prolonged stress: Alarm, Resistance, and Exhaustion. The litany of the daily reports about the worsening economy moves most of us rapidly through all three stages. Two important issues for Family Psychologists to consider are: 1. How is this affecting families? and 2. How is this affecting us and our practices?

**How is the economic downturn affecting families?**

The quick answer is that families are affected, but in highly variable and complex ways. Anecdotal incidences catch the attention of the media. The "Psychology in the News" on your APA member website lists a number of recent newspaper articles, some of which report horrific events, such as the despondent man who killed himself and his family in response to their economic distress ("Is the economic crisis leading to more suicides?" *Los Angeles Times*, October 27, 2008) or the woman whose home was to be repossessed who burned it down with herself in it.

The Los Angeles Times cites research which indicates that poverty and financial distress are associated with higher suicide rates. However, the kind of losses people are currently suffering has not been seen before (e.g. the extensive home foreclosures) and therefore is not well researched. APA press research releases support the notion that there are increased family and psychological casualties in hard economic times (at the height of the Great Depression the suicide rate was 16 per 100,000, the highest ever recorded. Most recently it stood at 10 per 100,000).

*So what do we need to know about the effects of the economy on families?*

Domestic Violence Increases. Remember the two rats in the old experiment who were shocked through their feet randomly, without warning or control or an escape route? I vividly remember watching the film in Intro Psych and observing how they first jumped, then tried to find an escape then, finally just attacked each other each time they were shocked. In my community the battered women's shelters are overflowing, beyond their capacity to handle the numbers of wives and children coming for help.

Neglect of homeless and chronic psychiatric patients due to public mental health budget cuts increases. The cutbacks in our community health center are leaving many chronically mentally ill persons homeless and without medication. My office is on the path between the bridge many homeless persons live under and the shelter they go to for daily meals. We have had two incidents in the past few weeks of these men entering our offices looking for psychiatric help and threatening themselves and others.

Families experience exacerbation of existing stressors. Many families are already stressed. Financial issues, relational problems, difficulty adequately negotiating predictable family and individual life stage stress. Adding economic stress to that may just result in a "tipping point". The economy may be a necessary but not sufficient stressor for family dysfunction. It may combine with other extant stressors and/or inadequate coping skills to precipitate a variety of negative events.

*What do the families in our communities need?*

Support, both emotional and economic. Family psychologists should help educate the

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public regarding the importance of the "family as buffer". Families who pull together in stressful times can become closer. When the family's resources are taxed to the limit the extended family of the community can help. Some research has indicated that the support of a good social network may be as effective as therapy for many externally stressed families. (See "Managing Your Stress in Tough Economic Times", Nancy Molitor, Ph.D., APA Press, 2008).

A sense of perspective. No family in distress should be told they are "whiners." However, the rest of us should remember that during the height of the Great Depression 25% of people looking for jobs could not find one. The stock market eventually fell by 89%. We are in a recession. Hopefully we will not end up in a depression. The difference is enormous. For our frightened but not acutely disadvantaged patients a little cognitive reframing (i.e. perspective) can be therapeutic.

Support and appropriate therapy. Families who are acutely affected by economic hard times clearly need both support and appropriate therapy.

Appropriate family therapy. This care includes family systems work which focuses on adaptive coping mechanisms, stress management, management of systemic conflicts and issues, as well as consideration of financial stressors.

All family psychologists should be prepared to ask about and listen to issues regarding finances and how they are affecting the family. Given that money is often used/abused in dysfunctional systems for power and control, we should do that anyway. However, these times call for us to especially be attuned to financial issues.

All family psychologists should keep the local United Way directory in their offices at all times. We do not have to be financial experts or social case workers, but we should know where to help families find those resources when they need them.

Cultivate financial referral resources. I once had a connection to an MBA with family systems training who counseled families about their finances from a family systems perspective. If you can find this rare bird, cultivate a relationship and refer for consultation the same as you would any other specialist. If not, still refer to financial counselors, but use them as an adjunct while you work with family financial issues from a systemic perspective.

#### **How is the Economy Affecting Family Psychologists?**

Private practitioners may be especially subject to professional financial stress. I have been through this before. In Houston, Texas, in the 1980's, the oil surplus (!) dropped the cost of a barrel of oil into the teens. It cost more money to pump oil out of the ground than the crude sold for. The job losses in that oil based economy were appalling. Many neighborhoods were "upside down" on mortgages, with people owing more than their houses were worth. People mailed in the keys to their homes, backed up and loaded U-hauls and left town. Here's what happened to my private practice: more people both wanted and needed family therapy and psychological help, but many of them lost their insurance and incomes and could not pay. Patients who stated "I'm depressed because I can't pay my bills" often resulted in a depressed practitioner whose billings were not paid.

#### *How does the practitioner handle this?*

First, vigorous practice plan enhancement. Most of us know how to do this or can learn from books or other resources. Briefly, do things such as cash charges; alternative payment methods, e.g. extended payment plans; offer psycho educational groups such as couples communication workshops; target and market to population groups with good coverage; review your payer sources and enhance the better ones while culling the inadequate ones (how much does it cost to deliver your services vs. how much does a particular third party provider pay for them?). Build a hospital based consultation practice (med-surge as well as psychiatric). The options are virtually endless. Volunteering some of your time for community education and service is both good citizenship and practice enhancing. Pay more attention to cultivating good existing and potential referral sources (e.g. pediatricians, family physicians, etc.). Do more testing and assessment. Second, pursue alternative income sources. Teach adjunct courses at a local college. Contract for consultations with agencies. Offer continuing education courses.

Third, consider a change in your work placement. Private practice vs. agency/institutional practice vs. academics are all choices for family psychologists, both in good times and bad.

Fourth, be aware of your own issues with the economy and be prepared for outcomes of actions, both positive and negative. Though moving to another community for a more reliable agency income helped us survive, it took a year to sell our house in the struggling Houston real estate market. When we did we lost all equity in the house. Consider risks vs. benefits before you make a significant change.

**Conclusion:** Ultimately, as Viktor Frankl believed, we survive difficult times by finding meaning. In the face of a struggling economy; finding and celebrating the meaning in our noble profession may be as important as almost anything.

### Member Highlights

The Academy newsletter is published twice a year. Please send us the highlights of your career in the Spring and in the Fall so that we can highlight them in the Newsletter. Highlights include changes in career, awards/honors, publications and significant presentations.

### New Publications

Nutt, R. L. & Stanton, M. (2008). Family psychology specialty practice. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 39, 5, 519-528.

Thoburn, J. W., Hoffman-Robinson, G. & Shelly, L. (2008). Collaborative treatment for the psychosomatic couple. *The Family Journal*, (accepted for publication, 10/08).

### New Positions

John Northman Ph.D. ABPP was elected to the chair-elect position of the Council of Presidents of Psychology Specialty Academies (CPPSA) of the American Board of Professional Psychology.

Lenore Walker Ph.D. ABPP was elected Co-Chair (along with Dr. Florence Kaslow) of the Florida ABPP (FABPP), which is the first state affiliate with ABPP. Dr. Walker was also elected as co-chair of the Psychology Academy of the National Academies of Practice.

John Thoburn, Ph.D. ABPP was elected President-elect of Division 43 to begin in 2010.

Mark Stanton, Ph.D. ABPP was named acting Provost at Azusa Pacific University.

Rod Nurse, Ph.D., ABPP, formerly West Coordinator and Vice President for ABCFP, will serve as our specialty President January, 2009, through December, 2010.

### Awards

Dr. Florence Kaslow was awarded the gold medal for lifetime achievement in the practice of psychology from the American Psychological Foundation.

Dr. Nathan Turner was awarded the American Academy of Couple and Family Psychology's President's Award for his significant contributions to ABPP and to the field of couple and family psychology. He also received a certificate of appreciation from the American Board of Professional Psychology for his contribution to the couple and family specialty.

### Awarded APA Fellows through The Society for Family Psychology of APA:

Neil Grossman, Ph.D. ABPP

George Hong, Ph.D. ABPP

John Thoburn, Ph.D. ABPP

## THE AMERICAN BOARD OF COUPLE & FAMILY PSYCHOLOGY

### Brief Description of Specialty

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

### Current Board Members

- Frank Ezzo, Ph.D. fezzo@applewoodcenters.org
- Irene Goldenberg, Ed.D. igoldenberg@mednet.ucla.edu
- Scotty Hargrove, Ph.D. pydsh@olemiss.edu
- Michelle Harway, Ph.D. mharway@antiochsb.edu
- Florence Kaslow, Ph.D. drfkaslow@bellsouth.net
- Jerry Morris, Ph.D. cmhcjerry@sbcglobal.net
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- Rodney A. Nurse, Ph.D. drrnurse@aol.com
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- John Thoburn, Ph.D. thoburn@spu.edu
- Nathan Turner, Ed.D. nmt2@mindspring.com

### Mentoring

Mentoring is helping qualified colleagues prepare their application, theoretical paper and work sample, and to prepare for examination.

If you would like to be more fully and formally involved in the very satisfying mentoring process, please forward your name to **Dr. Melton Strozier** at **strozier\_am@mercer.edu**.



## New Newsletter Editor for the Academy

Charles (Chuck) G. Guyer II, Ed.D. ABPP received his doctoral degree from the College of William and Mary in Virginia. He is Clinical Director of the substance abuse rehabilitation program at Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune, NC (a teaching hospital). Dr. Guyer also maintains a part-time consulting practice in clinical and family psychology in Jacksonville, NC. Dr. Guyer holds diplomates from ABPP in Couple and Family Psychology and Counseling Psychology. He is a past-president of the American Board of Couple and Family Psychology and a past board member of the American Board of Counseling Psychology. He is the founding secretary of the Academy of Couple and Family Psychology, and a past-president the Academy. He is the founding president of the American Academy of Counseling Psychology. He is a fellow of the American Psychological Association (Divisions 17, 30, 42, 43, and 49). Dr. Guyer has published several research articles and book chapters and has been on the clinical faculties of several universities including UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke University.



*From everyone at AACFP!*