



Maine Psychologist Today

Welcome to the Maine Psychologist Today, MePA's new online newsletter!

President's Message



Hello dear colleagues! Well, Autumn has arrived in full glory, including a full moon. Also arrived is the start of a new school year which brings to mind an incident. I awaited the arrival of a 10-year old student in order to conduct a Special Educational re-evaluation. Upon arrival he smiled and said "Oh, YOU again...Got another joke?" Yep, and for readers I ask the following: "How many 4-legged animals can jump higher than a house?" (Answer is at the end of this column). And now to review several MePA developments.

A successful conference was just completed, topic being "Navigating a Board Complaint: What's the Process and How to Deal with it?" Much thanks to Glen Davis (Board Chair) and Dennis Carrillo Esq. for this well received presentation. I personally was very appreciative given that I had served on the Board of Examiners with Glen, and had also served as that Board's Ethics Complaint Officer. In addition to formal presentation, Q & A and the diversity of each presenter's position, there was also provided the specific website in order for all licensees to gain access to Board rules / regulations to be followed. Again, thank you, and especially to our CE Committee (Susan Maataoui Chair) for your work in this organization.

Another is coming! Please mark Friday, November 9th for a full day conference regarding Telehealth practice, at the Clarion Hotel in Portland. It is titled "Telehealth and Psychotherapy: Best Practices, Current Research and Ethical Considerations", with featured speaker Dan Florell Ph.D. from Eastern Kentucky University. Topics include review of telehealth technology, questions to ask oneself as to benefits of usage, ethical considerations of usage, and potential legal issues. Given the State of Maine's rural characteristics, this practice offers much potential when practiced appropriately. Let's find out the basics.

Another positive development: our Policy Council met on 9/14/18. One of their acts was approval provided to extend free MePA membership to all Psychology graduate students, either in or out of state, for the entire time period that they are enrolled as graduate students. The intent here is to provide professional stimulation to students, be stimulated in turn by their potential involvement in committees and poster sessions, and to do so without financial burden to them. Thank you Policy Council for your sensitivity to these factors, and to your action!

And now for the answer to the above riddle: ALL animals can jump higher than a house...a house cannot jump! J

Tom Collins, EdD
President

The Deeper Significance of Seasons

By Alexandra Lash, Psy.D.

Approaching a change of season, our clients often share feelings with us, like “apple picking in the fall is romantic,” or “the spring makes me anxious,” or “I hate that time of year; that is when it happened.” From working with couples and individuals, I have learned not to underestimate the power of the seasons and actual dates on client’s calendars. Processing our client’s associations to and with the seasons and how their personal calendars affect their emotions and relationships can be meaningful and helpful work.



Some impacts of the seasons are more predictable than others. Like the aforementioned quotes, it is not surprising that clients have emotional associations to the seasons. Due to the smells, sights, and distinct qualities of the seasons, it makes complete sense that we probably recall things that happen around Thanksgiving or Halloween more clearly than a random Saturday in April. When I am working with a client, or a couple, and they are uncertain about what they are feeling, I sometimes ask what this season looked like for them last year. Often times, this question evokes an “aha!” moment.

What can be less apparent to a clinician or someone who is not the client, or part of a couple, is how the exact time of year and dates on the calendar can impact individuals and couples. Perhaps a couple who is struggling in their relationship look forward to picking out a pumpkin together or leaf-peeping each year, and this may impact their feelings and decisions. Alternatively, after a summer of obligatory social engagements, a couple may look at their lack of planned commitments and think it might be a good time to take a break. Most of us will ask about big holidays, but it is often helpful to ask what special upcoming events may or may not be on an individual, or couple’s calendars to see what may be impacting their feelings and choices.

Each season evokes varying feelings, memories, and expectations for each client. By checking in with our clients about the season and their personal calendar, we may start many meaningful conversations. What might seem like a surface pleasantries outside of the therapeutic relationship often leads to a deeper discussion about family, history, and personal relationships in session.

Dr. Alexandra Lash, Psy.D. is a graduate of the William James College who has experience with many different patient populations. She recently moved to Southern Maine where she works with couples and individual therapy patients. Legislative Committee Active During Session

“Navigating a Board Complaint: What’s the Process and How to Deal with it?” September 2018 MePA Conference



Participants at the September workshop learned how the Board of Examiners handles complaints against psychologists and how psychologists should respond to a complaint filed against them from a legal standpoint. Many thanks to presenters Glen Davis, PhD and Dennis Carrillo Esq. for this well received presentation.

Welcome New Members!

Kelly Kleinman, PhD
Cumberland Foreside

Chloe LeVine, PsyD
Portland

Kelly Parker-Guilbert, PhD
Brunswick



Save the Date!

**Telehealth and Psychotherapy:
Best Practices, Current Research and
Ethical Considerations**

Friday, November 9, 2018

8:45am-4:15pm

Clarion Hotel Portland ME

\$129 Members

\$179 Non-members

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Back to School for School Psychologists

By Daniel Schwarz, M.S. NCSP, Doctoral Candidate USM

September is the time when many of us shake off the cognitive cobwebs of summer and begin to prepare for the influx of triennials and referrals that the new school year will bring. As a school psychology neophyte, I am quickly learning how to manage my time more effectively, and I find myself employing many of the executive functioning skills I impart on my students.



Most of us have at least two digital calendars, and I have found that – especially when you work for numerous institutions – many of their events are irrelevant to your own schedule. The resulting chaos is confusing. Having a paper agenda ensures that you can stay on top of everything that is added or changed in your own schedule. Any daily or weekly planner will do. Set aside time every Monday morning to confirm any additions or changes made to your digital calendars and add them to your analogue planners. Be sure to turn on notifications for any cancelations or rescheduled meetings so you are always in the loop.

How many times have we been in the trenches mid-year and thought, “I really should sign up for the gym or those yoga classes, but when am I ever going to find the time?” Schedule those activities now. Get them into those new planners and work your appointments around them. Think of them as miniature daily vacations, a bit of self-care that we so often promote to our patients. Having them scheduled in our calendars elevates the importance of these activities and ensures that we will follow through in keeping them.

How often have we been distracted from our work by a ding on our phone? With the influx of distracting stimuli in our digital world, it is easy to get derailed. A strategy I taught while working with adolescents in executive functioning skills workshops was the 45:5 ratio. While engaging in something arduous, turn off all notifications, put your phone or laptop in Airplane Mode, and set a timer for 45 minutes. When the timer goes off, set another for 5 minutes and allow yourself time to walk around, stretch, or check Facebook. After those five minutes of free time are up, return to work and reset the timer. Adjust your ratio to what works best for you, but stick to it.

I hope that some of these strategies will prove as useful to others as they have for me. We can all learn better ways to utilize our time and become better organized in order to better serve our populations when things become hectic, as they always seem to do.

Daniel Schwarz, M.S. NCSP is a doctoral student finishing his coursework at the University of Southern Maine. He received his master's degree in school psychology at St. John's University in New York and is currently a practicing school psychologist in the South Portland School District. His research interests include executive functioning, cross-cultural assessment, and treatment of attention deficit related disorders.

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