



Maine Psychologist Today

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

Message from President Tom Cooper, PsyD

Dear Colleagues,

The school year (such as it is) has begun, the days are getting shorter (and colder), political ads are all over TV, and there's someone other than Tom Brady playing quarterback for the Patriots. This is an ominous opening and I have noticed a recent sense of pessimism that has been difficult to shake. Fortuitously, a client who is new to mindfulness, recently began a session by asking about the concept of beginner's mind.



Within a mindfulness practice, beginner's mind emphasizes approaching a situation without preconceived notions or expectations. Beginner's mind is curious, playful, and not outcomes driven.

I found this conversation to be an invaluable reminder. Yes, the days are getting shorter (and colder), however my internal monologue created a version of events that matched my pessimism and not my actual experience in the moment. With beginner's mind I can notice both the colder days and the opportunity to wear as much flannel as I want (not to mention apple cider donuts on the weekend).

I encourage all of you to notice opportunities to apply curiosity and open-mindedness to the uncertain season ahead. While there is much to be

concerned about, there is also much to celebrate. As Walt Whitman said, “be curious, not judgmental.” The alternative is to sound like a pessimistic jockey I once knew.... he was a real neigh-sayer!!

Sincerely,

Thomas Cooper, PsyD

Save the Date:
**MePA 70th Anniversary Virtual Annual
Conference Friday, November 13th, 8am -
4pm**

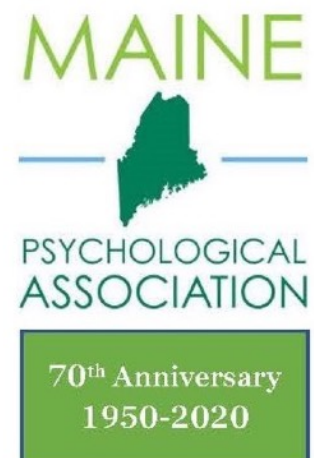


Featuring Keynote by Dr. Sandra Shullman, APA President
Morning Session: ACT Matrix with Kevin Polk, PhD
Afternoon Session: Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Panel

**Maine Psychological Association 70th
Anniversary Publication**

*An Unauthorized History of the Maine Psychological
Association*

By Ron Breazeale, PhD and Jeff Matranga, PhD



Excerpt:

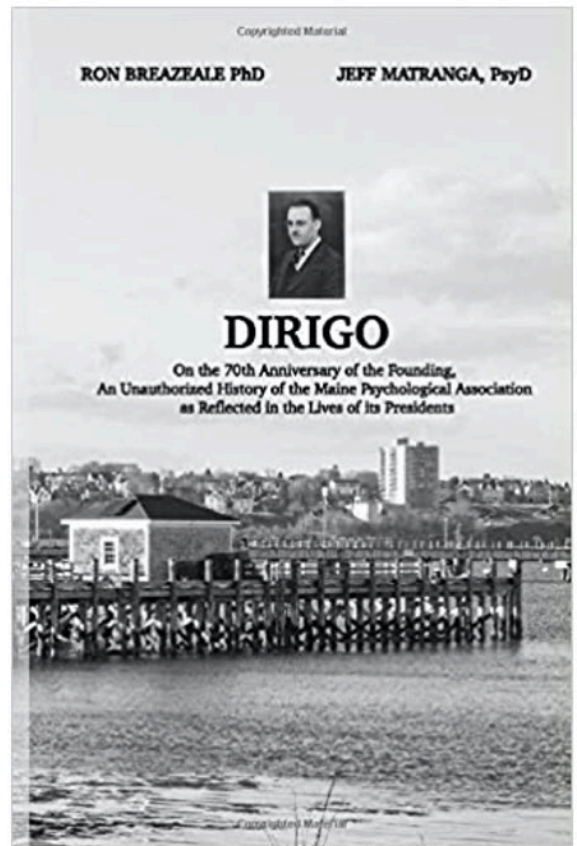
I wanted to compile a complete history of the Maine Psychological Association for some time. A history that would focus on those who led the Association: its Presidents. Many say that our country currently lacks effective and principled leadership. It seemed to me that this was the right time to look back at those who have provided leadership to our profession in Maine. Our past presidents were certainly not perfect, but as you can see, they did not govern the Association by threat, intimidation or deceit.

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National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health 2020

Douglas Kimmel, PhD, shared this recent survey reflecting the mental health impact of the multiple crises in 2020 for LGBTQ+ youth. Here are some of the key findings of the report from LGBTQ youth in the survey:

- 40% of LGBTQ respondents seriously considered attempting suicide in the past twelve months, with more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth having seriously considered suicide
- 68% of LGBTQ youth reported symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder in the past two weeks, including more than 3 in 4 transgender and nonbinary youth
- 48% of LGBTQ youth reported engaging in self-harm in the past twelve months, including over 60% of transgender and nonbinary youth
- 46% of LGBTQ youth report they wanted psychological or emotional counseling from a mental health professional but were unable to receive it in the past 12 months
- 10% of LGBTQ youth reported undergoing conversion therapy, with 78% reporting it occurred when they were under age 18
- 29% of LGBTQ youth have experienced homelessness, been kicked out, or run away
- 1 in 3 LGBTQ youth reported that they had been physically threatened or harmed in their lifetime due to their LGBTQ identity
- 61% of transgender and nonbinary youth reported being prevented or discouraged from using a bathroom that corresponds with their gender identity

- 86% of LGBTQ youth said that recent politics have negatively impacted their well-being
- Transgender and nonbinary youth who reported having pronouns respected by all or most people in their lives attempted suicide at half the rate of those who did not have their pronouns respected

[Complete Survey Report](#)

Recorded Webinars Now Available for Purchase and CE Credits:



2 hours (2 CEUs)

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Working with the LGBTQA+ Community Across the Lifespan

Moderated by Susan Maataoui, PhD

Co-presented by Douglas Kimmel, PhD and James McElligott, PsyD

This presentation will cover psychoeducation and terminology for working with the LGBTQA+ community and focus on meeting the unique clinical needs of LGBTQA+ clients across the lifespan, from adolescence to adulthood to the aging community. This presentation will also include discussion of the impact of COVID-19 on the LGBTQA+ community and ways of supporting LGBTQA+ clients during this time.

MePA Telepsychology Webinar

Panel Presentation moderated by President Thomas Cooper, PsyD

Panelists: Kendra L. Bryant, PhD, Marshall Robinson, PhD, Diane A. Tennies, PhD, and Julie L. Quimby, Ph.D.

This webinar was designed to promote best practices in a COVID-19 Telepsychology world. Topics of discussion explore clinical considerations, practice management, and technological resources.

<https://mepa.org/continuing-education/>

RURAL USA: A Personal Vignette of Practice as a Psychologist in the time of COVID-19



By Dr. Diana Prescott: APA's Recording Secretary, APA Board of Directors; Clinical Psychologist

Originally published in International Association of Applied Psychology Newsletter: Snapshots Across the World

I was in Washington, D.C. in March, as COVID arrived on the mid-Atlantic East Coast of the United States. It was a surreal moment, to see the map on CNN of the migration of novel coronavirus across the globe. We were attending the American Psychological Association (APA) Practice Leadership Conference (PLC), preparing to head to Capitol Hill to advocate for issues importance to psychologists. It felt like what I imagine it must have felt like to have found oneself on the Titanic, when it was taking on water. I was attending PLC in my role as Federal Advocacy Coordinator (FAC) from Maine, while also serving as APA's Recording Secretary. I was attending a Black-Tie dinner in honor of Connecticut Congresswoman DeLauro, wearing a red stole given to me by Dr. Breeda McGrath. I treasure the vivid memory of sitting next to APA President Dr.



Sandy Shullman at a luncheon. I felt like this was one of the last times we would be able to be together in this way.

*Diana Prescott, PhD, Diane Tennes, PhD,
Senator Angus King, and Amy Safford (MePA ED)*

Meanwhile, my youngest daughter, Eleanor Prescott, called from college crying, not knowing how she would get home safely to Maine from New Jersey. On Capitol Hill, congressional office doors were shuttered, due to COVID. I will never forget the firm handshake from Maine Senator Collins at her constituent coffee, hosted with a photographer present. Maine Senator King preferred to bump elbows, when greeting us. I flew home later that afternoon, instead of going to visit my sister, Kathleen Etchison, and her family in Virginia. A pharmacist was hysterical in the card shop, exclaiming to the clerk that she had to get back to Boston, and she was afraid airline workers would not let her on the plane with her nebulizer.

When I got home, my oldest, Rachel, and youngest daughter, Eleanor, soon joined me. The oldest is getting a PhD in Microbiology at NYU and is considered an “essential coronavirus researcher.” I will never forget the fear in her face, as she came in from the garage returning on a flight from New York City’s Manhattan, wearing a mask. She knew what the world was up against. She was home for about 10 weeks. During that time, we spent most Sundays hiking in Maine, as all of the restaurants and bars were closed.

It was hard to know what to do with regard to visiting my elderly parents, who are in their 80's and living in a retirement community nearby. We decided to continue visiting them, wearing masks. Meanwhile, we heard from our middle daughter, Meredith, who had begun farming in Grand Junction, Colorado, for Americorps and would not be coming home.

In my rural consulting practice, I knew how to use telepsychology, but I was only using it to treat women with childcare issues, transportation or snow obstacles, or long distance to the office. We now flipped the practice nearly overnight to 100% telepsychology (some psychologists struggled to make this change). I assumed about a third of the patients would choose to use this modality, finding instead a tremendous demand and willingness to pay for the service, an increase in the show rate, in part due to the increase in emotional distress. I expressed concern to the APA Board of Directors about the possibility of an increase in child abuse, domestic violence, and suicide during the COVID pandemic.

Both at home and in the office, it was difficult to find supplies and certain necessities (e.g., antibacterial gel, toilet paper, Lysol or Chlorox wipes, paper towels). There was no travel allowed, nail care, open gyms, church or school. Parents of school-aged children were distressed, home-schooling with no childcare. We began to learn a new language, using words like "social distancing", deciding who was in our social "pod". Mail and other deliveries were delayed. Weddings were postponed. There were drive-through graduations and birthdays and many Zoom events. Even the APA Convention was offered online.

At the time I am writing this, we have opened the office up to in-person therapy again with safety precautions (e.g. masks, use of hand gel, social distancing). However, many clients remain satisfied with online treatment.

I am concerned about the long-term emotional impact of this pandemic on people, especially in terms of how we relate to one another. I wonder when I will be able to safely return to Washington, DC and sit with my colleagues on the Board and at an APA dinner again. When this happens, I will know we have

survived 2020 and the arrival of coronavirus to the United States. In the meantime, I wish all of my colleagues in the United States and around the world the best of health during this challenging period in our history.

Article written for Division 17, Professional Practice division, of a IAAP's (International Association of Applied Psychology) newsletter. See Full Newsletter.

If they are interested in joining Div. 17, please contact:

Robyn F. Vines, Ph.D.

President: IAAP Division of Professional Practice (Div. 17)

School of Medicine, Western Sydney University, Australia

Email: r.vines@westernsydney.edu.au

The Importance of Understanding Disability Insurance Claims



List serv post Aug. 8, 2020 by Michelle D Schwab, PhD

In our first worldwide pandemic accompanied by huge mental health issues, we do need to be discussing these issues. We should be preparing to deal with unique 'asks' for at least the next 6-12+ months. I try to stay very low key about my background but perhaps it's time to come out of the closet in case I can be of service to others. I worked as a "Medical Director" and also a "Physician QA Reviewer" at UNUM for many years, I did a stint as the Lead Medical Director in the Portland office and, until a few months ago, I did some work on the side as a behavioral health disability consultant, reviewing disability claims for other insurance companies. I know more than I want to about how insurance companies view claims for FMLA, STD, and LTD.

[Read More](#)

How to Provide Telehealth to Older Adults

This is the latest information from the APA Committee on Aging. Telehealth allows patients across the lifespan to receive care remotely in a manner that is often more accessible and convenient than in-person care. A common misconception is that older adults have either no interest in the use of technology or cannot use technology platforms. Current data indicate otherwise; in fact, most older adults (7 in 10) have and utilize a computer, smart phone, or tablet with internet access at home. However, when it comes to the use of telehealth, there is limited reach among older adults (e.g., only 11% feel comfortable using telehealth).



[Read More](#)

CDC Report Mental Health during Pandemic: The importance of psychology to support better overall wellness



During June 24–30, 2020, U.S. adults reported considerably elevated adverse mental health conditions associated with COVID-19. Younger adults, racial/ethnic minorities, essential workers, and unpaid adult caregivers reported having experienced disproportionately worse mental health outcomes, increased substance use, and elevated suicidal ideation.

[Read Full Report](#)

How can Therapists Become More Culturally Competent?



As our nation struggles toward building a better society for all races, therapists may find themselves doing some self-reflection on how they handle diversity in their own practices. Cultural competence has become a key phrase within the field. But how does one become culturally “competent?” In its “Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services to Ethnic, Linguistic, and Culturally Diverse Populations,” the American Psychological Association explains that providers should have a “sociocultural framework” that will help them use a systematic approach to working with a “diversity of values, interactional styles, and cultural expectations.” The organization recommends that psychologists become knowledgeable and [\[More\]](#)

The post first appeared on [New England Psychologist](#).

Dr. Ron Breazeale CNN Interview

You're Feeling all the Feelings. Here is how to Feel them.

CNN: What is the first step to understanding your emotions?

Ronald Breazeale: Most people like to deny that they're having any feelings: "Oh no, it's not bothering me that much."

Acceptance is the first step toward doing anything about anything, emotionally or otherwise. You've got to recognize that you've got to accept it, rather than deny it.



[Chronic fatigue syndrome a possible long-term effect of Covid-19, experts say](#)

Then you're going to figure out how to deal with it and recognize what the emotions are that you're having. With loss, ordinarily, it's very simple for people to feel sadness. But they also often feel anger too, and it's a mix of those emotions that sometimes vacillate back and forth when people are dealing with a loss.

Admit that you feel angry or you feel sadness or you feel confusion about how you should feel. Don't say to yourself, "Well, you're not dead with a pandemic so what are you complaining about? I shouldn't be upset over this, this much." Well, you are. Admitting that and recognizing that is really important.

[Read Full Interview with Dr. Breazeale](#)

Confiding in Others Identified as the Strongest Protection Against Depression



A new study has found that strong social connections are the strongest protective factor for depression. "Depression is the leading cause of disability world-wide," said Karmel Choi, Ph.D, an investigator in the department of psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and lead author of the paper. "About one in five people will experience an episode of major depression in their lifetime. If we could prevent depression, we could not only reduce years of suffering, but also improve health and life outcomes." That led researchers to ask the question: Which modifiable factors in [\[More\]](#)

The post first appeared on [New England Psychologist](#).



Letter from the APA

The Centers for Medicare and Medicare Services (CMS)
Proposing a Reduction in Payment to all Providers – Physicians
and Psychologists – by 10.6% in 2021.



This will affect services for older adults and people with disabilities, particularly during a time when our nation is grappling with a global pandemic.

You can help prevent proposed [Medicare cuts](#) and advocate for telehealth and your scope of practice by submitting your comment on the 2021 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule.

The issues in the proposed rule will impact all providers, even if you are not a Medicare provider. Issues range from reimbursement and telehealth to scope of practice, and what happens in Medicare impacts all other payers – even the VA. So, it is critical for all psychologists to submit comments to CMS.

You have until **October 5, 2020** to make your voice heard.

SUBMIT COMMENT

It is critical for CMS to receive a very large number of psychologists' comments. **We need every single one of you to participate.** It will only take a couple of minutes to comment. Please join with us in advocating for your patients and for the important services psychologists work hard to provide.

Cordially,

Jared L. Skillings, PhD, ABPP
Chief of Professional Practice
Stephen R. Gillaspy, PhD
Senior Director of Health Care Financing



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