

# PSYCHOLOGY NEWS

THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

Spring 2012

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## Notes from the Chair

This is the final newsletter of the 2011-2012 academic year. It also marks the end of the final chapter of my tenure as department Chair. After three years at the helm, I will be returning to civilian life on July 2nd. Taking my place will be Emanuele Castano and Jeremy Safran as the first co-chairs in the department's history. The decision to move to a co-chair system of departmental governance was prompted by the realization that there is a need for a better match between the administrative responsibilities of the department and its growing structural complexity. Most of the other leadership positions in the department will remain unchanged, the one exception being that Joan Miller will be taking over as the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Needless to say we are extremely grateful to Jeremy and Emanuele for their willingness to assume their new positions, especially at a time of stifling austerity and dwindling resources. On a personal level, I would also like to thank all of the individuals who helped me muddle through my stint as chair. In particular, I owe a substantial debt to Janiera Warren, Nichelle Horlacher, and Trisha Toelstedt. Without their help and support, the true level of my cluelessness would have been even more painfully apparent. I would also like to thank my colleagues and the students in the department, most of whom were not only extremely supportive but also kind enough

to greet my many missteps along the steep learning curve with patience and good humor. I sincerely hope that you will extend the same level of good will to my successors. Farewell and may the wind be always at your back.

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## Faculty News

**Daniel Casasanto** published a review of his lab's work on the "body-specificity hypothesis" in *Current Directions in Psychological Science*. This research shows that people with different types of bodies tend to form correspondingly different thoughts, feelings, and judgments. Casasanto's Experience and Cognition lab also published papers recently in *Psychological Science*, *Cognitive Science*, *PLoS ONE*, and *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*. These papers have been featured in *Scientific American*, *New Scientist*, MSNBC, *US News and World Report*, *New York Magazine*, *The Atlantic*, and *WIRED*, and on national TV and radio.

One paper, "The QWERTY Effect: How Typing Shapes the Meanings of Words", was covered in the "most popular" stories of the day in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Economist*, and surprisingly, *Men's Health*. This study shows that words spelled with more letters from the right of the keyboard tend to be more positive in meaning than words spelled with more left-side letters. This pattern, found across several QWERTY-using languages, suggests that filtering language through our fingers as we type is changing the meanings of words. The paper, which has only been pre-published on the journal's website to date, is already the most downloaded article in the history of *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*.

This season, Daniel gave invited talks at Yale University, Columbia University, NYU, Stony Brook University, University College London, University of York, University of Edinburgh, University of Lausanne, and the University of Paris.

He was recently appointed an Associate Editor of *Frontiers in Cognitive Science*, and an editorial board member of *Psychological Science*. He was invited to blog for *Psychology Today*, and will be reporting regularly about ways in which physical and social experience can shape the brain and mind. His column, *Malleable Mind*, can be found at <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/malleable-mind>

**Christopher Christian** moderated a panel "On Therapeutic Action: Relational and Lacanian Perspectives" featuring David Lichtenstein and Adrienne Harris on, March 30, 2012 in Wolff Conference Room.

**Joan Miller** and **Marcel Kinsbourne** co-authored an article on "Culture and Neuroscience in Developmental Psychology: Contributions and Challenges" in *Child Development Perspectives*, 2012, 6, 35-41. The article is part of a Special Section of the journal on *Cultural Issues in Child Development*. **Joan Miller** was also recently selected for Fellow status in the Association for Psychological Science (APS).

**Marcel Kinsbourne** delivered the Visitor's Day address at City College, department of psychology. He has published three articles on autism, two appearing in a book entitled *The Neuropsychology of Autism* (Ed. Deborah Fein), and an article with Dr. Merrill Hiscock on attention and dichotic listening. Summaries of his scientific contributions have been included in two recently published encyclopedias, the *Encyclopedia of the History of Clinical Neuropsychology* and the *Encyclopedia of Theories in Psychology*. He also recently delivered a lecture on the brain to the kindergarten class at the Ambrose School in Winchester, Massachusetts.

**Lisa Rubin** recently published the paper, "Gender representation of cancer patients in medical treatment and psychosocial survivorship research: Changes over three decades" in *Cancer*, with Michael Hoyt, professor at Hunter College. With colleagues from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Lisa published the paper, "Measuring and managing patient expectations for breast reconstruction: impact on quality of life and patient satisfaction" in *Expert Review of Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research*.

Lisa gave an invited talk entitled, "Either way, we have the responsibility to make the decision": Navigating parental responsibility in the context of PGD for BRCA1/2" in Geneva, Switzerland at the Brocher Foundation's workshop BRCA gene research and medical practice: a comparative transnational social science workshop.

**David Shapiro** presented a talk entitled "Theoretical Value of Psychological Tests" on March 16 at the Society for Psychological Assessment meeting in Chicago in connection with the award for "Distinguished Contribution to Psychological Assessment." On January 23 he gave a talk on "Action and Responsibility" at the Center for Effective Psychotherapy in Los Angeles.

**Miriam and Howard Steele** are giving keynote addresses at the 16th annual Spring Conference of the NY branch of the national Zero-to-Three organization titled "Using Reflective Function to Transform Trauma and Build Relationships" (<http://www.nyzerotothree.org/>).

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**Jenifer Talley** organized Dr. Andrew Tatarsky's Integrative Harm Reduction training at The New School on February 10 and 11. Dr. Talley was interviewed on February 16 about training New School students in harm reduction psychotherapy on HAMS (Harm Reduction for Alcohol) Blog Talk Radio. She also presented on harm reduction psychotherapy, mindfulness, and treating PTSD and substance use at the Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy's Trauma Studies Training Program on March 14.

## Student News

**Geoffrey Brookshire** received an Honorable Mention from the NSF in the 2012 competition for Graduate Research Fellowships. Geoffrey was also the lead author on a paper published in *PLoS ONE* called *Motivation and Motor Action: Hemispheric specialization for approach motivation reverses with handedness*, co-authored with Daniel Casasanto. This electroencephalography (EEG) study shows that the hemispheric specialization for affective motivation that was predicted by Marcel Kinsbourne in 1978, and which has been demonstrated repeatedly in right-handers, completely reverses in left-handers. This discovery suggests a functional relationship between the way people use their hands to perform approach and avoidance actions and the way basic aspects of emotion are organized in the brain. Geoffrey is following up on this research on emotion in the brain using a new tool, recently acquired by the Experience and Cognition Lab—a transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) device. tDCS delivers mild, completely safe doses of electrical stimulation to the brain, via electrodes on the scalp. The device can be used to increase or inhibit neural activity, and provides a means of establishing causal relationships between brain and behavior.

**Jennifer Doran** was selected as an APAGS Leadership Delegate to represent student needs at the APA's Annual State Leadership Conference in March of 2012. Working with leaders at the New York State Psychological Association, she participated in Congressional Hill visits to

advocate for the field on issues such as Medicare reimbursement and including psychologists in the "physician definition." Jennifer received confirmation that she will hold the position of APAGS Chair-Elect for 2012-13. More information about Jennifer's visit can be found in this issue in an article titled "Why Advocacy Matters".

Jennifer co-authored a paper with Anjanette Ryan and Dr. Jeremy Safran entitled "Therapist Mindfulness, Self-Acceptance, Alliance, and Treatment Outcome" that was accepted for publication in the journal *Psychotherapy Research*. She was an invited participant at the April 1st symposium at Hunter College on student excellence and organizational involvement.

**Sharlene Leong** recently published a paper in the *Journal for Neurochemistry* in the issue from August 2011. The article, entitled "Neuronal tryptophan hydroxylase expression in BALB/cJ and C57Bl/6J mice", is a brief quantitative analysis of a possible animal model for assessing the neurochemistry for individuals with high anxiety proneness and depressive passivity symptoms. She worked on it during her time at the Molecular Imaging and Neuropathology Department (MIND) of the New York State Psychiatric Institute. Her time spent there influenced her interests in neuropsychological aspects of psychotherapy and interventions.

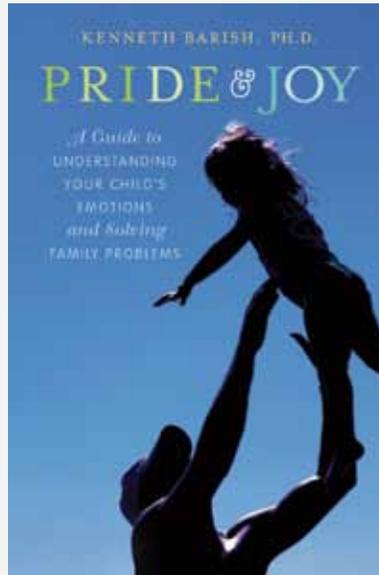
**Laurie Paul's** poster, "A Psychoeducation Workshop for American Jews on Identifying and Addressing Racial Microaggressions Against People of Color" was accepted to the Center for Anxiety Research Day. The poster is based on a workshop Laurie gave to Jewish Americorps volunteers and alumni on utilizing CBT tools for

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recognizing and reducing anxiety about the anticipated negative interpersonal consequences of speaking out against racial microaggressions and for confronting them effectively. The workshop also touches on Jewish religious texts and cultural values that espouse social justice messages to inspire participants to do the work of anti-racism for spiritual and moral reasons.

## Alumni News



**Kenneth Barish** PhD has written a new book titled *Pride and Joy: A Guide to Understanding Your Child's Emotions and Solving Family Problems* (Oxford University Press). Ken also now has a parenting blog on PsychologyToday.com (also called Pride and Joy). You can read his blog at <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/pride-and-joy>

**Alin Coman** PhD accepted a tenure-track assistant professorship position at Princeton, a joint appointment between the Psychology Department and Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. His appointment will begin the first of July.

**William Gottdiener** PhD was promoted to full professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice Department of Psychology.

**Ilan Harpaz-Rotem** PhD was promoted to an associate professor (ladder track) at Yale University School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry (effective July 1st 2012).

**Matthew Steinfeld** PhD gave a clinical case presentation entitled "Trauma and the Burden of Invisibility: Recovery and the Reclamation of a Visible Self" at the January 2012 meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association in New York City. Starting this July, Matthew will join the faculty in the Department of Psychiatry at Yale School of Medicine as an Instructor.

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## Analyzing Analysis: NSSR Celebrates Psych Professor Safran's New Book April 19

The cartoon image of the bearded, ponderous analyst and his couch-bound patient is familiar to any *New Yorker* reader. But New School for Social Research professor of psychology Jeremy Safran's new book *Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Therapies* (American Psychological Association Publications, 2012), seeks to complicate and contextualize this stereotyped notion.

"Psychoanalysis was the dominant form of treatment for psychological problems until the early 1970s," says Safran. "Since that time it has become increasingly marginalized and discredited in scientific circles and mainstream culture... This book was written remedy that situation and to provide a contemporary audience with a new way of thinking about psychoanalysis."

Safran's book explores the history of psychoanalysis and its origins in the late Austro-Hungarian Empire, tracing the practice through the 20th century. Along with examining the various politically progressive and culturally conservative strains that have developed in the field, Safran brings the conversation up to the present, with an exploration of the vital and constructive role that contemporary

psychoanalytic developments can potentially have on the future of our healthcare system and culture.

*Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Therapies* has garnered impressive advance praise from leading voices in the field including Peter Fonagy of University College London, who called it a masterpiece of integration between new and old; clinical and conceptual; and research with practice.

The New School for Social Research celebrated the release of *Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Therapies* on Thursday, April 19, with an in-depth conversation on the book.

## Ten Important Things to Know in Developing a Private Practice

The Clinical Psychology Alumni Chapter held an event, "Ten Important Things to Know in Developing a Private Practice" on Wednesday April 25th, 2012 at 8 p.m. in Wolff Conference Room.

Dr. Steven Walfish discussed ways to develop and manage a private practice in the current economy. Dr. Walfish is coauthor (with Jeff Barnett) of *Financial Success in Mental Health Practice: Essential Tools and Strategies for Practitioners*, editor of *Earning a Living Outside of Managed Care: 50 Ways to Expand Your Practice* and coauthor (with Jeff Barnett) of *Billing and Collecting for Your Mental Health Practice: Effective Strategies and Ethical Practice*, all published by APA Books. Dr. Walfish is the editor of *The Independent Practitioner*, the Bulletin of APA Division 42 and is also President-elect of Division 42. He is in private practice in Atlanta, Georgia and is a Clinical Assistant Professor at Emory University in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.

## Breaking the Cycle of Abuse at Miriam and Howard Steele's Center for Attachment Research

How can psychological intervention break generations-long cycles of child abuse?

With approximately 30,000 children known to New York City's Association for Children's Services as being at risk of maltreatment, the question is more pertinent than ever. At present, the typical form of intervention is an 8-12 week course of parent training seminars, built around weekly group therapy sessions for anger management training and generic advice on parenting. Unfortunately, a low success rate suggests that this traditional program meets neither parent or child needs.

But an alternative exists: it's called Group Attachment Based Intervention (GABI), and it has its roots here at The New School.

GABI, developed by New School for Social Research Professors of Psychology Howard and Miriam Steele and a clinical and research team at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM) brings children and parents together for treatment. Different from typical intervention, groups of at-risk families gather up to three times a week to learn parenting skills, share experiences and meet with a range of therapists. Using robust and previously

validated interview and observation-based measures, the Steele's research team engages the families in a range of assessments that reliably measure their progress towards goals.

"This work benefits a large number of stakeholders, from the families who participate to the clinicians and grad students who are being trained through their involvement in the project," says Howard.

GABI is a promising and novel mode of therapy, and last month, it received a significant vote of confidence from the federal government. In March, the Human Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the US Department of Health and Human Services funded the Steeles and their Einstein colleagues (Anne Murphy, Karen Bonuck & Paul Meissner) in the amount of \$900,000 over three years. The funding will enable the team to undertake a randomly controlled trial (RCT) assigning parents known to ACS' Preventive Services to either the garden variety, parents-only weekly training seminars or the intensive Group Attachment Based Intervention.

The HRSA grant is one of the more competitive pieces of federal funding offered to medical and health researchers; only five of the best and most promising projects submitted annually qualify for the grant. What makes the Steele's work stand out is their reliance on state-of-the-art attachment assessments, that is, measurements that capture reliably the quality of parents' relationships with their children. In addition to the clinical group from the Bronx, the Steele's research team also tracks and monitors normal or typical development via studying parents and families in the local Manhattan and Brooklyn community (recruited via parenting websites).

"One of the unique features of our lab is what we call our 'toolbox of

measurements,'" says Miriam.

We really stress interviews and observation-based methods, adds Howard. Rather than just relying on the standard self-reporting questionnaires, we find that interviewing and videotaping parent-child interactions provides a fuller and more accurate picture.

The center's system of in-depth measurement and reporting calls for a lot of heavy lifting. And with more than 50 students from across divisions participating in the laboratory, the Steeles' work is truly a university-wide effort. Graduate students from the Psychology department at The New School for Social Research lead peer group discussions among children; Eugene Lang College undergraduates help recruit, escort, and process families; and Parsons students create personalized video keepsakes for parents, featuring footage taken in the lab.

Many students who participate in the lab get more than work, but an opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the field. "The data we're collecting here is a goldmine for future dissertations," says Howard. Many graduate students and even undergrads working in the lab are able to use these results to satisfy Senior Work Project, or dissertation requirements.

But it's not only the researchers who benefit. Noting that many of the families in the group suffer from generations-long histories of violence and poverty, the Steeles hope that the Group Attachment Based Intervention sessions represent a chance to break the cycle of trauma.

"In these workshops," says Miriam, "we're helping our participants become the parents they dream of being".

## Tilmann Habermas, Visiting Heuss Professor

I am very happy to have had the chance to teach at the Department for 2011-12 as a Heuss Professor, a position that rotates between the departments of the New School each year. My background is in Psychology and Psychoanalysis. At the New School I found a rare combination of colleagues from both areas in the same department. I graduated from the University of Heidelberg, and also did an MA Ed at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. My clinical training started at the Psychosomatic Clinic in Heidelberg and was followed by a formal psychoanalytic training in Berlin. After teaching Medical Psychology at the Medical School of the Free University of Berlin for many years, in 2002 I became Professor of Psychoanalysis in the Department of Psychology at the Goethe University Frankfurt.

For over a decade, I studied modern eating disorders, specifically anorexia and bulimia nervosa, focusing on their history and on the cultural conditions that led to their development in the 19th and early 20th century. After writing a book on the psychology of material things, I turned to my current research area, everyday autobiographical narratives. I am interested in the development of the life story and its role for identity, especially a sense of personal continuity. I am working on a longitudinal study of life narratives in a lifespan sample. One of the seminars I taught was devoted to the topic of the development

of autobiographical remembering. My other research interest is emotions as they are evoked, communicated, and expressed in narratives of past personal experiences, a topic that is discussed in literary theory, narratology, sociolinguistics, but only infrequently in psychology. My main thesis is that processes of defense against emotions may be analyzed at the narrative level in terms of the exclusion of subjective perspectives. This in turn influences the emotions that are evoked in a listener. I taught two courses in this area, one undergraduate course on narrative and emotion, and a more specific one on anger, morality, and narrative. My fourth course was dedicated to the concept of bipersonal field in psychoanalysis. These courses allowed me to try out ideas in a new academic context and to be inspired by the very special students of The New School. On February 8th I had the honor to present this study to the department and was happy to see many students in attendance. I have been intrigued by the warm welcome the faculty granted both myself and Nadine Teuber, who joined me for the fall semester as the Visiting Heuss lecturer.

## Why Advocacy Matters

This March, Jennifer Doran attended APA's State Leadership Conference as an APAGS Leadership Delegate. It was a fascinating, educational, and empowering experience. As a result of the economic downturn and the call for healthcare reform, there are systemic changes happening now that will have a large impact on our careers in the future. The reality is that decisions are being made every day that have the potential to alter how we practice and how sustainable our jobs will be. The best way to secure our future is to be informed and make sure our voices are heard.

Some important current issues include:

- The internship match imbalance: Every year, the number of students who do not match for an internship increases. This year 26% of students nationwide did not match in Phase I and only 53% of students who originally enrolled matched to an APA-accredited internship.
- Changes in appropriations and funding cuts for the behavioral sciences, which has the potential to impact both clinical training and research/grant funding significantly.
- Getting psychologists included in the Medicare "physician" definition. Psychologists are currently the only doctoral level provider not covered under this definition (e.g. dentists and chiropractors are) which imposes unnecessary supervision requirements and makes psychologists ineligible for benefits such as incentives to adopt electronic health records (under the HI-TECH act).
- Working to find a better solution for Medicare provider payments than the SGR (Sustainable Growth Rate) formula currently in place. As it stands now, payments for psychological services will be cut by 32% by January of 2013.

Recent advocacy successes have been both national and local. At the national level, advocates were able to stop a dramatic funding cut to SAMHSA that threatened to eliminate the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, the largest network of providers and researchers dedicated to reducing the impact of child maltreatment and neglect. Locally, advocates persuaded Governor Cuomo to reinstate the "NY-22." Nearly 4,000 people responded to action alerts from APA and NYSPA, which resulted in the Governor reversing the decision to fire 22 New York State employed psychology interns this past October.

If these issues are important to you, the best ways to get involved in advocacy are:

- Join your local state psychological association (NYSPA: <http://nyspa.org/>) and their student group (NOFP) and ask to join a committee or listserv dedicated to advocacy efforts.
- Get more involved with APA and APAGS and consider applying for a leadership position (<http://www.apa.org/apags/governance/index.aspx>). Stay in contact with your Advocacy Coordinating Team Campus Representative and ask to be kept up to date on the issues and any outreach efforts.
- Respond to "Action Alerts"—these are sent out via email over the clinical and MA listserves and are a quick and easy way to let your Congressional representatives know about what is important to you.
- Consider joining APA Division 31 (<http://www.apadivisions.org/division-31/news-events/free-membership.aspx>), which deals with local, state, and territorial affairs and is an active voice for student needs (including the internship crisis).
- Start to build relationships

with local politicians and attend political events in your neighborhood (<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/NY>)—politicians need us to keep them informed about what policy changes mean for our field, and we need them to keep psychology's best interests in minds when it is time to vote on bills.

- Join student grass-roots movements, such as Occupy the Imbalance (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/223654767715768/>), dedicated to increasing awareness and promoting action on the internship crisis.
- Be a voice for the field—write Op-Ed pieces for local newspapers and think about ways that you can help promote psychology to the public.

For those interested in learning more or becoming involved, please contact Jennifer Doran at [doraj943@newschool.edu](mailto:doraj943@newschool.edu) or our new APAGS campus representative Shira Schuster at [schus827@newschool.edu](mailto:schus827@newschool.edu).



The photo includes Jennifer Doran with (left-to-right) Norman Anderson (APA CEO), Todd Raymond Avellar (APAGS Leadership Delegate), Melba Vasquez (APA Past-President), Amanda Oerther (APAGS State Advocacy Coordinator), Janet Lydecker (APAGS Regional Advocacy Coordinator), Sabrina Esbitt (APAGS State Advocacy Coordinator), and Eddy Ameen (APAGS Assistant Director).