

# MCFR

Minnesota Council on Family Relations

# Family Forum

WINTER 2012

*Family Forum* is the newsletter of the Minnesota Council on Family Relations, a state affiliate of the National Council on Family Relations



The Minnesota Council on Family Relations strengthens all families by educating and supporting family professionals and promoting connections among those involved in research, policy and practice.

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**PLAN TO ATTEND! Spring 2012 MCFR Conference**

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## From the President San Ha

### Greetings MCFR Members,



I am honored and also excited to start the year 2012 with enthusiasm and optimism about Minnesota Council on Family Relations (MCFR), a non-profit volunteer organization, and its ability to meet the challenges of the coming years. We are keenly cognizant of the need to keep pace with a rapidly changing world and thus are evaluating and re-evaluating the support and experience we offer professionals and students.

As with the MCFR Philosophies/Values, we believe that “families and professionals mutually benefit when professionals pursue continuing education, apply current research and theory, practice and uphold ethical professional standards, and use best practice.” We also believe that “families exist in a variety of forms. The strengths and abilities of all families need to be recognized and nurtured. Multi disciplinary dialogue enhances the ability of family professionals to effectively work with and for families.” And “families are best served within the framework that emphasizes family strengths, diversity, interconnectedness, and social context.” I think, therefore, it is so important for our work to be attuned to the needs not only of family professionals and students but also of all families in the changing world.

I am proud of the fact that the MCFR Board members’ insightful and impressive work is not a top down process but one that considers the needs, concerns, and aspirations of the entire Minnesota community – students, professionals, policy makers, and families. Our Board of Directors Annual Retreat on January 20, 2012 was filled with stories, hopes, and dreams that inspire us to become who we are, what we do, and/or what we hope to do in the future. The Board members have been planning and making progress in our projects for this year with our mission, which is to “strengthen all families by educating and supporting family professionals and promoting connections among those involved in research, policy, and practice.”

### 2012 MCFR Spring Conference

I am very excited about the upcoming spring conference. Our Spring Conference Committee members, Glen F. Palm, Sharon Powell, Mary Maher, Lisa Krause, Peggy Cardenas, and myself, are currently in the process of planning the spring conference. The topic is “Same Sex Parents, Partners, their Children and Families: Information & Resources for Family Professionals.” Stay tuned for more information posted on the MCFR website, [www.mcfr.net](http://www.mcfr.net), and **MinneNews**.

### Ethical Thinking and Practice (ETP) workshops for family professionals

Many thanks to Ada Alden, Dawn Cassidy, Betty Cooke, Beth Gausman, Glen Palm, Marietta Rice, Joyce Schultenover, Anne Stokes, Sue Stoner, and Kathy Zanner for developing and revising the publication and the workshop presentation. I want to thank Rose Allen and Minnell Tralle for coordinating the ETP workshops throughout the state of Minnesota for the past years. I also want to thank the project chair Betty Cooke, Mary Maher, Ada Alden, Glen F. Palm, Bill Allen, Beth Gausman, and other members for their exemplary leadership, revising the workshop presentation, recruiting and training

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## From the President San Ha (Continued from page 2)

workshop presenters, and planning the ETP workshops this year.

Please email Mary Maher at [mary.maher@comcast.net](mailto:mary.maher@comcast.net) to receive more information about the ETP workshops and presenters.

### 2012 MCFR Annual Fall Conference

I want to thank Sue Meyers for her impressive initiative to connect and confirm the keynote speaker, Pauline Boss, who will speak at our Annual Fall Conference on her most recent topic of ambiguous loss of elders with dementia. The Annual Conference will be held on Friday, December 7, 2012. Joining our Fall Conference Committee is another opportunity for MCFR members to get involved in our projects and give back to your community and society.

Save the date and stay tuned for more information!

### Fortune in the Wonderful World

As we sang the song, "What a Wonderful World" at the MCFR Annual Fall Conference on December 2, 2011, I

know that we are not alone to strive to make the world a better place. I have been involved in different organizations in different times and places as a volunteer to make a difference in the lives of all people in the world since 1988. However, I believe that strengthening all families is the hardest but the best way to build a wonderful world for all. I know that the issues or tasks we face everyday are not always pleasant. But in my personal opinion, volunteering is fun and rewarding, because I can experience the power and beauty of collaboration and cooperation with other people for a common noble cause. As my fortune cookie says, "An aim in life is the only fortune worth finding," I think I have found an amazing fortune here in Minnesota. In fact, I am having the time of my life by serving on the MCFR Board and working on its projects with other MCFR members! I hope someday you can also find your fortune by joining us to achieve our mission together!!

Please email me at [haxx0039@umn.edu](mailto:haxx0039@umn.edu) for questions or information about opportunities not only to serve but also to have a fun and rewarding experience!

## What's New at NCFR

Rose Allen, President Elect – Affiliate Councils & NCFR Board Member

NCFR is gearing up for the 2012 Annual Conference – Families and Health being held in Phoenix, Arizona – October 31 through November 3, 2012. Conference proposals are due on or before March 1. If you have a paper, poster or workshop idea, check out the process for submitting a proposal at: [www.ncfr.org/sites/default/files/downloads/news/2012\\_Call\\_for\\_Proposals\\_0.pdf](http://www.ncfr.org/sites/default/files/downloads/news/2012_Call_for_Proposals_0.pdf)

In addition, the NCFR Families and Health Section is sponsoring a "Walk to Phoenix". This is a project to encourage us all to walk. Our miles can be recorded and there are lots of opportunities to win prizes. To register go to:

[www.ncfr.org/ncfr-2012/ncfr-walk-phoenix/register-walk-phoenix](http://www.ncfr.org/ncfr-2012/ncfr-walk-phoenix/register-walk-phoenix)

The latest edition of the Journal of Marriage and Family is available for anyone to access on-line. This provides non-NCFR members the opportunity to take a look at this publication. Some of the current topics addressed relate to marriage – who gets to marry and demographic trends in marriage. Check it out at: [www.ncfr.org/news/journal-marriage-and-family-open-issue](http://www.ncfr.org/news/journal-marriage-and-family-open-issue)

NCFR has an active web presence. Check them out at [www.ncfr.org](http://www.ncfr.org)



Stay in touch at [www.mcfr.net](http://www.mcfr.net)

### Treasurer's Corner

**Beth Yokom, MCFR Treasurer**

It's a new MCFR year and a new MCFR role for me as Treasurer - a somewhat daunting position with big shoes to fill following Heather Cline's excellent work as our previous Treasurer. I promise you my best efforts in this new role.

Before we look forward to 2012's new budget, we must first look back to 2011's financial performance. The good news is that 2011 was a very good year. The year-end balance in December was \$11, 820.96, an increase in 2011 of \$4,976.69, due primarily to profitable conferences, both spring and fall.

The key financial learning in 2011 was that sponsoring two conferences annually is an essential element for MCFR's continued financial health. Conferences maintain MCFR's visibility; fulfill our mission (it is what we do as an organization); and retain our unique position in the family field of offering workshops that cover the family life span. Most importantly, our conferences determine membership by retaining members and attracting new members. We have exciting plans for 2012's upcoming conferences, which you can read more about in this issue of the Family Forum.

More good news from 2011 - you generously donated \$911.30 to the Student Scholarship Silent Auction at the December 2010 conference. Thanks to you, MCFR will continue to support the professional participation and development of students in the family field, a key goal of the Board. Thank you for your generosity!

The 2012 budget is similar to the 2011 budget, with a few minor tweaks, including a \$500 grant writing allocation; reduced credit card fees due to a change in vendors; higher conference expenses based on 2011 costs; reduction in some administrative expenses due to technology utilization. The MCFR Board approved the 2012 budget at the annual Board retreat on Friday, Jan. 20.

I look forward to serving you as Treasurer for the coming year. As always, you are welcome to review the financial records and monthly reports by contacting Linda Vukelich, MCFR Administrator. Thank you for being a part of this unique and important organization.

### 2012 Spring Conference

#### Same Sex Parents, Partners, Their Children, and Families: Information and Resources for the Family Professional

All families have strengths. All families face challenges. MCFR recognizes that regardless of the outcome of this year's Marriage Amendment, families in all their forms will continue to seek family education and related services. Therefore, the spring conference will focus on the knowledge, skills, and community resources needed by family professionals to serve same sex parents, partners, their children, and families. The conference will feature half-day and full-day options. Watch MinneNews for details on date, location, and speakers.





# Communications Committee Report and Suggestions

by Peg Lindlof, Past Chair

During the past several years the Communications Committee has been fortunate.

Building on the pioneering work done by Rose Allen in setting up and managing the listserv and website, the consistent editorial work of Ron Pitzer, the graphics, logo, and the marketing updates spearheaded by Beth Yokom, the committee has continued to advance electronic tools to connect people with MCFR efficiently. This could not be done without the excellent work of Linda Vukelich, who constantly and patiently advances her skills to keep up with our work.

The Family Forum is a treasure we can all be proud of in terms of content and longevity. Publishing it electronically and storing issues on the website has immensely reduced the cost of making it widely available. Thanks, Ron and Linda.

Thanks to San Ha, Linda Vukelich, and Jason Samuels at NCFR, the MCFR website has evolved into an organized, beautiful, and useful

tool for all members and the general public.

The MCFR listserv and MinneNews weekly posts have given MCFR a place for ongoing internal communication. Board communication and efficiency has also been enhanced through the use of Dropbox, initiated by Mike Brown.

Collaborating with Nancy Melquist, Membership Committee chair, we established an ad hoc Marketing Task Force to explore how the two committees overlap, and how we might improve marketing of MCFR. The Task Force determined that connecting with students is very important for the future, and the Student /New Professional Section Chair, Alisha Hardman, joined the group to help us develop strategies.

As with all work on the MCFR Board, there's always more for the Communications Committee to do. Although we can't do everything, when lots of ideas and suggestions are listed, it's sometimes easier to prioritize which to work on with our

limited capacity. With that in mind, here is a list to start with!

- Set up a link to information on the NCFR website about the CFLE credential.
- Further discuss adding a Board policy about listing names of MCFR members with credentials related to family professions, e.g., LPE, CFLE, LSW, LMFT.
- Discuss how and whether to connect family professionals through social media.
- Add information on the website about how (and why) to donate to MCFR.
- Communicate with NCFR about any new services or tools that might be available to MCFR as an affiliate council.
- Explore ways to disseminate past resource articles from The Forum to those outside of MCFR as a marketing/policy tool.
- Distinguish when to use the listserv to communicate and when to use MinneNews.
- Get input from students and new professionals about how to reach other students.
- Post video testimonials about MCFR on YouTube or Vimeo and link on the website.
- Communicate one "nugget" of news from each Board meeting to MCFR members.



2012 MCFR Board



# 2011 MCFR Awards

San Ha, President and 2011 MCFR Awards Committee Chair

MCFR gives two awards annually in recognition of contributions to the family field. The following awards were presented at the MCFR Annual Conference on December 2, 2011.

**Friend of the Family Award - Hennepin County Co-Parent Court – Judge Bruce Peterson** (nominated by Rose Allen) This award is given to a professional or organization who may or may not be in the family field, but who has made significant contributions to the quality of family life in Minnesota.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District – Family Court in Hennepin County, under the leadership of Judge Bruce Peterson, has developed an experimental Community/University Research model to establish Co-Parent Court – a problem solving court for never married parents who are establishing paternity.

Judge Peterson is a long time advocate for families in the court system. Several years ago he recognized a major change in the cases coming before him in Hennepin County Family Court. What once was a court that primarily addressed the needs of divorcing families was now seeing over half its cases with parents who were not married and needed to establish paternity or legal fatherhood.

These families had great needs that were not being met by the court. Judge Peterson proposed establishing a problem solving court for never married parents. This would expand the services of the court beyond the process of genetic testing, paternity establishment, establishing child support and giving fathers reasonable custody and parenting time. It would add 12 hours of co-parent education, an assessment of needs, and if necessary, social service, domestic violence and mediation referrals and support.

Judge Peterson worked with the community to develop the concept, secure public and private funding and provide oversight and continuing support to this program. Co-Parent Court officially began operation in September 2010. It is being rigorously evaluated to learn what works and what needs to be adapted.

Judge Peterson has worked to connect the research about these families with the systems that can support them. Although in the early stages of operation, preliminary results indicate that this program has the potential to make a big difference for the families it touches.

**Ruth Hathaway Jewson Distinguished Service to Families Award- Debbykay Peterson** (nominated by Peg Lindlof) This award is given to a professional in the family field who is recognized for outstanding work on behalf of families. Preference is given to individuals who are members of MCFR and NCFR.

In a 17-year career at the Dept of Education, Debbykay Peterson has provided oversight to the state's Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening program, the School Readiness and First Grade Preparedness programs, developed the interactive Early Learning Services Data System, and conceptualized and launched the multi-faceted Help Me Grow Public Awareness Initiative for children birth to kindergarten enrollment.

Debbykay spearheads the award-winning state of Minnesota parent website - [www.MNParentsKnow.info](http://www.MNParentsKnow.info), and with collaborative partners, seeks new strategies that use technology and other methods to provide accessible, research-based child development information for parents and those that work with families. She has provided leadership on several statewide early childhood, family and health initiatives to improve children's early learning outcomes and, through cross-sector partnerships, leads successful efforts to enhance the quality of programs for children.

Prior to her tenure at the Minnesota Dept of Education, she worked as an instructor at the University of Minnesota, was an early childhood administrator in a school district, a licensed early childhood educator, a licensed parent educator, critical coronary care nurse, and worked in a rural clinic and hospital in Zimbabwe, Africa. She has studied at the University of Minnesota, University of St. Mary's, Bethel University, Wheaton College/West Suburban Hospital School of Nursing. Ms. Peterson is an education policy fellow with the Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, DC and an Early Childhood Policy Fellow with the National Governor's Association/ZERO TO THREE, Washington, DC.

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## 2011 MCFR Awards *(Continued from page 6)*

**In recognition of outstanding contributions for decades, the President's Award For Contributions Above and Beyond Award was presented to Mary Jo Czaplewski.**

This special, occasionally-offered award was presented to Mary Jo Czaplewski to recognize and honor her long and illustrious career in the family field and her many contributions to both the Minnesota Council on Family Relations and the National Council on Family Relations. She has taught family courses at both the high school and college level and served for many years as Executive Director of the National Council on Family Relations. Her involvements in MCFR activities have been myriad and invaluable—from conference planning to policy efforts to work on probably every committee to silent auction organization. Our deep and sincere thanks, Mary Jo.

Congratulations to Bruce, Debbykay, and Mary Jo who inspire us through their work! Thank you so much for your passionate commitment to supporting, educating, and empowering professionals, students, and families in Minnesota and beyond!

## Membership Committee Report

Mary Maher, President-Elect, and Nancy Melquist, Past Membership Committee Chair

Committee chair Nancy Melquist worked closely with Linda Vukelich to update the membership lists and identify active and past members so that our services stay current. A system for contacting past members to rejoin and encourage current members to renew on time was implemented.

Nancy also helped Peg Lindlof of the Communications committee spearhead a Marketing Task Force to explore how members can be recruited, retained and served most effectively. The need to more clearly define benefits and increase ways of communication between the organization and its members was explored.

The Membership committee also partnered with the Student/New Professional Chair, Alisha Hardman to identify ways to encourage MCFR membership among those new to the field. A separate membership status with lower fees was created thanks to their work.

Ongoing goals include the recruitment of a diverse group of family professionals as members. We hope to reach out to social workers, counselors, health professionals and others in the family field. In addition, ways to quickly survey member needs and develop a membership directory need further review.

## Minnesota Council on Family Relations Annual Conference The Power of Relationships - Enhancing Skill-based Practice Friday, December 2, 2011

Conference Co-Chairs Rose Allen and Minnell Tralle

The MCFR 2011 Fall conference addressed the concept of relationships – between the family professional. We may have skills to share – but the fact is, this must happen within a relational context.

The theme for the conference came from an address by Wally Goddard, an Extension Family Life Specialist with the University of Arkansas at the National Council on Family Relations conference held in Minneapolis in 2010. We invited Wally to come back to Minnesota to share this information at our annual conference in December.

Unfortunately, Wally was not able to join us due to a medical issue. Fortunately, we were also working with Ted Bowman who was asked to engage in a dialogue with Wally about the topic. Alisha Hardman, MCFR Student Section Chair developed an overview of Wally Goddard's concepts and shared a video clip of his NCFR presentation. This set the stage for Ted to expand on the topic and engage the participants in exploring what the power of relationships meant in their work with families.

The conference also featured student posters, breakout sessions in the afternoon that expanded on the conference theme and a silent auction that raised \$900 for student scholarships for future MCFR conferences.

## Student/New Professional Section Alisha Hardman, CFLE, Past Chair, Student Section

The S/NP Section hosted a social gathering at Sweeney's Saloon on Friday, November 4. There were five students and new professionals who attended the event and one board member. It was a great opportunity to meet new people, learn what research projects others are involved in, and get suggestions, ideas, and support from other students.

A student poster session was held at the Fall 2011 MCFR conference on December 4. Four students (listed below) presented posters at the conference. It was a fantastic opportunity for students to share their areas of interest and engage in dialogue with practicing professionals.

Jen Doty,	U. of Minnesota	Online Social Support for Parents: A Critical Review
Colleen Clements	U. of Minnesota	Parent Education: New Definitions, New Visions
Alisha Hardman	U. of Minnesota	A Conceptual and Practical Shift in Family Life Education
Sarah Nelson	U. of St. Thomas	Your Parents and Your Maladaptive Views of Living

Be sure to check the student/new professional page of the MCFR website regularly for information about upcoming events and opportunities for students.

Chun Zhang is the new chair of the Student/New Professional Section. Here, to introduce her, is a brief bio.

### Hi everyone!

This is Chun Zhang. I am from Yunnan, China. I received my bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education at Yunnan Normal University, China, and master's degree in Early Childhood Education at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. I am currently working on my PHD degree in Education, Curriculum and Instruction, Family, Youth and Community Education at the University of Minnesota. I am in my first year of work as a research assistant with Dr Yvonne Genzler on family life educational projects. My job responsibilities include collecting data, analyzing the data and reporting it to my advisor. I am a big fan of Chinese tea and am proficient in Chinese Tea Ceremony performance. I love roller- skating and got really excited in trying ice-skating in Minnesota's winter this year. I am thrilled to serve on the MCFR Board as the Student/New Professional chair.

### A note from the Editor:

I hope you have not been disappointed by our rather mild winter to this point. I would be happy if it stayed that way. Enjoy this issue of the newsletter. My thanks to all of the contributors who have prepared these items to inform and enlighten us. Again, I encourage each of you to consider contributing to Family Forum by preparing a book review or a research article/brief or by submitting an item for "Members' Corner" (our version of Letters to the Editor). If you have any suggestions for improvement of Family Forum, please let me know. Thank you.

Ron Pitzer  
Family Forum editor  
612-331-1970, [pitzer@q.com](mailto:pitzer@q.com)





# Training Available for Presenters of MCFR's Ethics Training and Practice Workshops

Mary Maher, President-Elect

Are you willing to serve as a presenter at MCFR's Ethical Thinking and Training Workshops? New AND continuing workshop trainers are welcome to attend a review of the revised powerpoint and presentation strategies this spring. Bill Allen, Betty Cooke and Mary Maher will facilitate.

Let Mary know of your interest and availability so a date can be set for later this spring. You can write her at [mary.maher@comcast.net](mailto:mary.maher@comcast.net)

**CONTINUING Presenters: Please come to share your input and expertise!**

**NEW Presenters: Please join the Ethics Workshop team.** We need members of MCFR who have a Master's degree or higher. It helps if you have already attended an Ethics training.

Presenters are asked to be available a couple times a year to lead or assist with the workshops. Mileage, travel and childcare reimbursement is available for this volunteer opportunity.

These are three-hour workshops that may be local or require some regional travel. Mileage and other travel costs including a childcare stipend as needed are provided. You are partnered with an experienced presenter on your initial assignments. This unique opportunity enhances your own professional development as you serve MCFR and colleagues in Family Education and related fields.

## New Column on Ethical Practice

Glen Palm, Professor and Head, Family Studies Department, Saint Cloud State University

The MCFR Ethics committee invites parent and family education practitioners to share their ethical issues with other practitioners through a regular column in the MCFR Family Forum. The column will present a case study and describe the application of the five step Case Study Analysis Process (see below) to the ethical issues in the case study. The column is an important way to keep ethical thinking and practice alive through sharing examples of ethical dilemmas and how a program staff can utilize the process to bring new perspectives and insights to difficult situations. The Ethics Committee has been refining this process over the last 20 years and will continue to offer workshops on Ethical Thinking and Practice to assist family practitioners in developing thoughtful approaches to addressing ethical dilemmas.

If you are interested in participating in this opportunity you should work with program staff to apply the Case Study Analysis Process to a dilemma that a member of your staff has encountered. This process was designed to take 45-60 minutes to complete once individuals have been introduced to the MCFR approach to Ethical Thinking and Practice. Attendance at an Ethics Committee Workshop is advisable before guiding staff members through this process. Send a brief description of the case study and take careful notes of the results at each step of the process and send them to Glen Palm at [gfpalm@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:gfpalm@stcloudstate.edu). When case studies are received they will be edited and presented as an ongoing column in Family Forum. This will allow other practitioners to gain a better understanding of how

the process works and encourage them to use the process to address their own ethical issues.

The outline of the Case Study Analysis Process is provided below.

**Case Study Analysis Process Steps**  
Steps 1 through 4 focus on carefully applying ethical thinking as defined by the MCFR Ethics Committee. This is important; give it plenty of time. Practitioners tend to leap to brainstorming possible actions/solutions before thoroughly engaging in the process.

**Step 1. Identification of Relationships:** Identify important relationships in the situation using the educator role as the primary focal point.

- a. What is the relational field – what are all potential relationships in the case?

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## New Column on Ethical Practice *(Continued from page 9)*

b. What is the primary caring relationship the educator needs to address in this case? (Examples: educator to family member, educator to group, educator to another staff person)

c. What do we know about this relationship – quality, stage of development, etc.?

### **Step 2. Identification of Principles:**

Look over the list of principles to identify those that apply to the important relationship(s) in this situation. Decide which principles may be relevant to guiding ethical

behavior. Are there any additional principles that might apply? Which are the 3-4 most relevant principles? Why? (Spend some time alone to select principles before discussing in small group.)

### **Step 3. Identification of**

**Contradictions/Tensions:** What are some potential/actual contradictions or tensions among or between relevant principles?

### **Step 4. Identification of Possible**

**Solutions:** Brainstorm possible actions by the parenting educator – keeping in mind the relationship(s),

the relevant principles, and the virtues.

**Step 5. Selection of Actions:** Select one action or combination of actions to use that reflects adherence to the ethical principles. All of the principles are important and should be addressed in a thoughtful and respectful manner.

If you have any questions about the process or what to submit please contact Glen Palm at 320-308-2129 or [gfpalm@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:gfpalm@stcloudstate.edu)

## MCFR History

Sue Meyers, Professor Emeritus, School of Social Work, University of Minnesota; MCFR Historian and Board member

Dick Hey, retired Family Social Science Dept, U of MN, had his 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday at his new location in Eagle Crest, long-term care. He and Miriam moved last year after a fall meant hip surgery and more care. It is so joyful to have your partner grow older together. They lean on each other and continue to love and support each other and not be isolated in those later years. They have been models for me since I arrived in Minnesota in 1969.

Keeping active in things you have enjoyed over the years and expanding those activities to what you enjoyed prior to your hectic work schedule seems to keep physical and mental health at a peak. When there are physical setbacks, the strengths gained over the years appear to provide that inertia to bounce back.

I learned from a speaker to my retiree group (UMN) about a longitudinal study on memory loss at Regions Hospital, St. Paul. They were interested in adults 40 and older who are diagnosed with memory loss, adults

providing care for someone with memory loss, or are adults 55 years and older. Since I was 55 and older, I signed up. I must admit that I had never taken a memory test before, and was a bit thrown at first. I was far more comfortable for the second year testing. It has made me attempt to be more “mindful” of what I am doing in my life – creating small memories to keep me aware of what I have done or need to do. It has been interesting, and I think worthwhile. I strongly believe in longitudinal research, and wanted to jump at the opportunity when it arose.

They are encouraging more participation – and I would encourage any of you who are interested to contact the Minnesota Memory Project at 651-254-3999 or 1-800-229-2872. The study is sponsored by: The Alzheimer’s Research Center, Regions Hospital, 640 Jackson St., St. Paul, Minnesota 55101.

# Did My Parents Impact My Distorted Views of Reality?

Sarah Nelson, Student, Psychology Department, University of St. Thomas

Schemas are cognitive knowledge structures that contribute to how individuals view/perceive the world. They are used (often without conscious awareness) to organize, explain, and make sense of life experiences. The formation of schemas begins early in life, and some of these childhood schemas persist into adulthood. Young (1999) has asserted that while some of these childhood schemas are healthy and constructive, others are maladaptive. In other words, some of these schemas provide inaccurate views about the world and can lead to unhealthy behaviors, decisions, and lifestyles. Research has revealed that maladaptive schemas can lead to a wide range of mental health problems, such as substance abuse disorders (Ball & Cecero, 2001), depression (Calvete, Estevez, Lopez de Arroyabe, & Ruiz, 2005), anxiety (Stopa, Thorne, Waters, & Preston, 2001), and eating disorders (Cooper, 1997).

Investigations by Young (1999) have identified 16 unhealthy childhood schemas, which he has termed Early Maladaptive Schemas (EMSs). Each of the 16 EMSs fit under one of five domains. These five schema domains are: (1) Disconnection/Rejection, (2) Impaired Autonomy/Performance, (3) Other Directedness, (4) Overvigilance/Inhibition, and (5) Impaired Limits.

Each of the 16 EMSs has been categorized in one of these five schema domains. The EMSs (a) Emotional Deprivation, (b) Abandonment, (c) Mistrust/Abuse, (d) Social Isolation/Alienation, and (e) Defectiveness/Shame fit under the domain of Disconnection/Rejection. The domain of Impaired Autonomy/

Performance consists of the following EMSs: (f) Social Undesirability, (g) Failure to Achieve, (h) Dependence/Incompetence, (i) Vulnerability to Harm and Illness, and (j) Enmeshment. The domain of Other Directedness consists of the EMSs of (k) Subjugation and (l) Self-Sacrifice. Overvigilance/Inhibition is comprised of (m) Emotional Inhibition and (n) Unrelenting Standards. Lastly, (o) Entitlement, and (p) Insufficient Self-Control/Self-Discipline fit under the domain of Impaired Limits (Young, 1999).

Young (1999) has proposed that these schemas are formed throughout childhood and may last into adult life. A schema can begin as a belief instilled in a person, and through reinforcement, that belief may become a major part of that person's thinking and perception of the world. For example, a person who is bullied as a child may develop the negative self-image, "I am unlovable." If that person experiences more rejection, particularly powerful rejection, the negative self-image may be reinforced and structuralized, becoming a concrete part of his or her self-perception for years to come (Beck, Freeman, & Davis, 2004, pp. 24-25).

For many years, psychologists have asserted that parental behaviors have a wide-ranging and significant influence on the thoughts, behaviors, actions, and emotions of children, including how a child organizes and interprets experiences. (Maccoby, 1992, 2007; Seligman, 1995; Halpern, 1990).

In a separate stream of developmental research, parenting characteristics have also been associated with levels of depression

in children (e.g., Dallaire, Pineda, Cole, Ciesla, Jacques, laGrange, & Bruce, 2006), adolescents (e.g., Brennan, Le Bracque, & Hammen, 2003), and adults (e.g., Bok & Taris, 1997). A parental characteristic that has shown to be related to depression in children is parental authority. Parental authoritarianism is positively related to depression (Simons & Conger, 2007), while parental authoritativeness is inversely related to depression (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Radziszewska, Richardson, Dent, & Flay, 1996).

Other parenting characteristics found to be correlated with depression are parental intrusiveness and overprotection. Research by Lamborn, Mounts, Steinber, and Dornbusch (1991) and Bendo (2001), has shown that parental intrusiveness is positively correlated with depression. Parental overprotection has also shown to be positively related to depression (Denollet, Smolderen, van den Broek, & Pederson, 2007; Shah & Waller, 2000).

Research has additionally revealed that family autonomy, family intimacy, and early positive bonds with parents play a crucial role throughout a child's life as strong emotional ties promote mental health (Bowlby, 1988). Family autonomy and intimacy have been shown to be correlated with maladaptive schemas as the presence of EMSs are inversely related to perceptions of parental nurturance, time together, and warmth (Bendo, 2001).

As this brief review of research has shown, parental factors are related to the development of

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several mental health problems. Similarly, the presence of EMSs has been shown to be associated with mental health problems. The present study observed parenting factors' influence on the development of maladaptive schemas.

Participants included 105 students (31 males and 74 females) from the University of St. Thomas. The responses of 25 students were not included in the present analyses, leaving a total of 80 participants. The 25 participants were omitted because they were from non-intact families of origin. [This research is on-going, and comparisons of participants from intact and non-intact families will be carried out as the non-intact sample size increases.]

Participants were given a packet containing a consent form, instructions, and six questionnaires regarding their family-of-origin, mother and father's authority, mother and father's overprotection, family intrusiveness, maladaptive schemas, and demographic information. Before receiving the packet of questionnaires, participants read the consent form and instructions. The participants were asked to take the packet home, to complete all the questionnaires, and to return them to the researcher within one week.

The results of this study seem to offer a viable connection between parental practices and the presence of EMSs. These findings suggest the presence of EMSs as an intervening factor between parental practices and the development of mental health problems.

The following variables were found to have a significant direct correlation with participants' Total EMS scores: mother's overprotection ( $r=.466, p<.000$ ), family intrusiveness ( $r=.366, p<.001$ ), mother's authoritarianism ( $r=.361, p<.001$ ), father's authoritarianism ( $r=.337, p<$

$0.02$ ), and father's overprotection ( $r=.335, p<.002$ ). The following variables were found to have a significant inverse correlation with participants' EMSs: family-of-origin intimacy ( $r=-.379, p<.001$ ), family-of-origin autonomy ( $r=-.345, p<.002$ ), mother's authoritativeness ( $r=-.324, p<.003$ ), mother's permissiveness ( $r=-.269, p<.016$ ), and father's authoritativeness ( $r=-.260, p<.020$ ).

For the total EMS score, the variable of overprotective mother explained 21.7% of the variance. Family-of-Origin Intimacy explained a further 6.3% of the variance, meaning the total percent of the variance explained in the Total EMSs is 28.0%. Intrusiveness explained an additional 1.4% of the variance, and so on. All of the parenting variables combined explained 33.5% of the variance in the Total EMSs.

Due to the previous research that discusses the positive influence parental warmth has on children (Bowlby, 1988; Bendo, 2001), the present results are not surprising. Researchers have consistently reported a link between Parental Overprotection, Authoritarianism and Intrusiveness, and mental illness in children (Denollet, Smolderen, van den Broek, & Pederson, 2007; Shah & Waller, 2000; Simons & Conger, 2007; Martin, Bergen, Boeger, & Allison, 2004; Bendo, 2001).

Observing the phenomenon of how schemas are developed, these results may be supported. A child who experiences authoritarian parents (who tend to be demanding but not responsive) may experience a thought such as, "I am incompetent." As the parents continue an authoritarian style, that belief is reinforced and the child may soon truly believe that he or she is completely incompetent and needs to depend on others. Authoritative parents (who tend to be both demanding and responsive) can

teach a child to be independent and confident by providing structure and discipline, but without being harsh or arbitrary (Baumrind, 1971). This supports the present results of Parent Authoritarianism being directly correlated and Parent Authoritativeness being inversely correlated to the presence of EMSs.

In regards to the schema domains, strong correlations were found between the domain of Disconnection/Rejection and the parental factors. Mother and father Authoritarianism, Family Intrusiveness, and Parental Overprotection were all shown to be positively correlated with the presence of the EMSs under this domain. Factors inversely correlated were Mother and Father Authoritativeness, and Family-of-Origin Autonomy and Intimacy. The hierarchical regression analyses of Disconnection/Rejection showed that the parental factors explain 46.2% of the variance.

These results strongly suggest that EMSs are less likely to be present when parental practices are demanding yet responsive, and promote self-sufficiency and intimacy. The conclusions in this study reveal that parenting is important. Parenting styles and practices influence children and their cognitive development. Homes where parents are overprotective, intrusive, and authoritarian promote the development of EMSs. It is important for parents to practice authoritative parenting and provide an intimate, yet autonomous home environment, in order to support the healthy development of their children.



*Reviewed by Marcie Parker, Ph.D., CFLE, President and CEO of Parker and Associates, a healthcare research and consulting firm in Excelsior, Minnesota.*

It is a little known and under-appreciated fact that the group at highest risk for successful suicide consists of 85-year-old and older white men who are widowed. Unlike teenagers who suicide, these guys don't talk about it and don't issue cries for help with unsuccessful attempts. They succeed the first time they try and use such lethal methods as hanging or gunshot. That's why this book is all the more remarkable: a true story about The Gang, a group of 80- and 90- plus year-old men in a tiny town in western Minnesota who, despite widowhood, manage to band together to support each other and keep an active and very satisfying social life going right up till they pass peacefully away.

Six men [membership changed with varying health issues and deaths] made up what came to be known as The Gang in Morgan, Minnesota and surrounding counties. Initiated by Russel Albrecht, this group came together at least weekly to drive to area restaurants, share a meal and socialize. They told war stories from World War II, talked about the weather, the soil, the crops, farming, hunting, fishing and gardening. Russel was a much respected man in Morgan, who kept the books for a local business and took payments from local residents to cover funeral expenses when locals died. When his wife of 48 years died [he had hoped to make it to at least 50 years of marriage],

Russel learned to cook basic meals and supplement them with fresh vegetables from his extensive garden.

We have huge amounts of research and information on families, women and children but precious little in the literature on men and the ways of men, especially older men. This book is a fascinating example of how men can come together to provide the kind of care and support we all need as we age. Some of The Gang became surrogate kin and were listed as next of kin for those with no kin at all; some were listed at the hospital and the medical monitoring center as the contact of first resort; some men could no longer drive or navigate very well and members of The Gang made social plans and did the driving; and some cooked meals and invited the others over for a drink, a meal and some friendly gab. Even men who did not know each other well, who attended different churches, who had different values and backgrounds [Danes, Norwegians, teetotalers or light drinkers, Catholics, Protestants] were absorbed into the group and made to feel welcome.

Berger felt the need to preserve the stories her father Russel shared with her faithfully over the years before his death in 2003. One of the most remarkable things about The Gang is that despite a host of health problems and health deficits [they managed to overcome and just forge ahead with their lives], virtually each of these guys lived well into their

90's, amazingly long lifespans for American men. Throughout the book, we come to learn a great deal about what life is like in small rural towns in America: the little family-owned grocery store that is put out of business by the coming to town of a huge chain store; the intense scrutiny and gossip that goes on for anyone living in town; and the general caring and support that everyone in town tries to provide for all the town's residents.

One interesting side note in the book is that while Meals on Wheels is appreciated, the men felt that it isolated them alone in their homes. They much preferred to be part of The Gang that planned and executed their weekly socializing meals to local area cafes and occasionally to farm fests [to see the latest farm machinery], or to other activities. There is even a time when The Gang [4 of the 6 members] flew to Miami to go on a week-long cruise. Here they delighted in all the activities, the fact that they could eat an endless, wide variety of interesting and exotic foods they did not have to cook, and the fact that one of the men stumbled by accident into a special area where women went to sunbathe topless [!!!!].

There is also quite a bit on how these men, aging and dealing with lots of health issues, relate to their families and try to keep a satisfying balance between independence and accepting help. Russ is a person who

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can find delight and happy memories in seeing wild turkeys in the yard or his wife's flowers along the property line or a particularly beautiful sunset or in sharing a simple meal. He is grateful for good neighbors who are there if he needs them but who never intrude or presume. He and the other Gang members love to tease each other and laugh like kids when they pull a subterfuge on a young new waitress at the café. The Gang was limited to 6 men [though others wanted to be invited] because that is all Russ could fit into his car.

These guys are all survivors and cope very well. They all know men who isolated themselves at home, became inactive, ended up in the local nursing home and died. They are determined to avoid that route. They support each other through hospital and clinic visits, through knee replacement surgeries, vertigo and dizzy spells, cancer and terminal illness. At one point [p.55], Russ says, ".....What can anyone do about it? Dying is just part of life, that's all----we just pick up and carry on. Yup, just a part of life." They joke about cremating each other in one of their son's hog roaster in the back yard, to keep down the funeral expenses when they die. Despite financial difficulties, cascading health problems, widowhood, whatever, these guys just keep plugging along and keep active and engaged. Russ has his part-time job, his huge garden of vegetables and flowers, the various boards on which he sits, his friends and his daughters, people who rely on him for all kinds of things, penny gambling at card games with the guys at the pool hall, duck hunting and walleye fishing, as well as eternal conversations about the

Minnesota weather, hog prices and agriculture. He stops by a friend's house every day for coffee and rolls and he pays the guy's bills and balances his checkbook. Russ also loves to listen to music, oldies but goodies. Initiating the cooking, planning the meals, picking up the guys and selecting the restaurant of the day all make Russ feel independent, competent and capable. And there are times, especially with other WW II vets, when Russ tells stories of freezing cold and nearly getting killed in an explosion. Throughout the War, in Normandy, northern France, Belgium, Holland and Germany Russ carried two carefully folded pages of coloring by his small daughters. All Gang members are intensely devoted and involved Minnesota Twins fans who follow every game on the radio and even take a bus to the stadium one day to see a game in person; they had to plan to have seats where those with bum knees could get to a seat and where they could all get to a bathroom easily. Russ even took to watching the Oprah show on TV because the topics educated him and expanded his understanding of the world. What was sexual harassment in the workplace and why did it make women so mad? How were kids impacted by divorce? Oprah and her experts knew and could talk about this and so much more.

Russ and The Gang are suddenly confronted with changing group dynamics and possible disbandment when a twice-widowed German lady takes a shine to Russ and starts dropping by his house with homemade pickles and jam. The group quickly rallies to start helping Russ initiate and plan their outings,

to crank up and drive their own long-unused cars, to pay for Russ's gasoline and to pick up an occasional meal tab for Russ. One night, when The Gang is out for dinner, one of their number, Roy Hanson, is taken by ambulance to a local hospital. By the time the guys get there, he has died and the members of The Gang, in response to the doctor's question, admit that they are the only family Roy has. Russ is also called upon to give the eulogy when Rich, one of The Gang, dies, and he does so eloquently and without notes.

The Gang lasted for about 9 years, before deaths and disability slowly brought it to a close. Russ did have a trip to Hawaii with his new lady love. The book ends with a couple of recipes from some of the ladies of Morgan, Minnesota, as well as an epilogue updating what happened to members of The Gang.

This book is really about how older widowed men can stay very active and vital physically and mentally and how they can support each other. Throughout this book, I was reminded of a scene from the TV show "Rescue Me". Denis Leary's character, a tough alcoholic fireman, is talking by phone with his dad, a retired tough alcoholic fireman. We *hear* them talking about superficial things such as "the weather, what kind of a day did you have", but we *see* subtitles that show what is implied, such as "I care about you, I need you in my life, I worry about you, I hope you are doing OK". As one reviewer of this book said [Audrey Kletscher Helbling in [Minnesota Moments](#)], [Gumption](#)" ..... is a book about small-town life, aging, and the value of friendship."

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This book, about late-life friendships in a small rural town, would be of interest to anyone interested in the lives of men, to students and graduate students, those in medicine, nursing and the helping professions such as psychiatry, psychology and social work, for anyone who is aging, for children and family members of older men and for anyone who interacts with the

elderly, to planners and policymakers and to widowers who would like to see a successful model of how to manage the transition to aging selves and new lives alone without wives.

The book needs the services of a really good editor, as there are misspellings and misused words throughout. But these are minor quibbles. Berger has contributed an

important, revealing and heartwarming book to enhance our understanding of how men age and cope with loss and widowhood. I recommend it highly and think it would make a great reading group book, guaranteed to generate a lot of good discussion and thoughtful assessment.

## Ethical Thinking and Practice Workshops

Mary Maher, President-Elect

Several members involved with developing and presenting the Ethical Thinking and Practice workshops met in December. The group reviewed the process of promoting and staffing this unique professional development opportunity. We thanked Rose Allen for helping to coordinate the initial training, outreach and scheduling of the workshops and presenters.

Availability of the workshops will continue under the leadership of Betty Cooke and Mary Maher. Contact [l.vukelich@comcast.net](mailto:l.vukelich@comcast.net) or [mary.maher@comcast.net](mailto:mary.maher@comcast.net) for information about scheduling a workshop for your program or group.

The following changes and goals were proposed. The volunteers to accomplish each task are indicated in parentheses. Let them know if you can assist.

- 1) Make minor changes including the addition of visual representations in the PowerPoint based on feedback from presenters and attendees. (Betty Cooke, Mary Maher, Bill Allen)
- 2) Offer a training for new presenters including an update

for current presenters this winter/early spring. Let Mary know if you would like to be contacted for this training! (Mary Maher, Betty Cooke, Bill Allen)

- 3) Collect case studies from practitioners who use the process. Analyze and review them in future editions of Family Forum. (Glen Palm)
- 4) Develop new case studies reflecting internet/social media, home visiting, child abuse reporting and situations from outside ECFE/ECSE to increase selections for workshop audience. (Betty Cooke/Glen Palm)
- 5) Create a budget plan for the workshops that reflect the organization's income and expenses including full prep of the materials and adding a childcare stipend in addition to mileage and other travel costs. (Linda Vukelich, Mary Maher) Please note that no honorariums to workshop presenters are proposed at this time. Proceeds are to benefit MCFR. Current and future trainers are asked to seek support from their workplace in order to participate in this professionally enriching

activity on a volunteer basis a few times per year.

- 6) Adjust the delivery system to reach out to a wider range of family professionals at their conferences by offering to present it as a separate pre- or concurrent workshop registration. Send suggestions and contacts in other family or related professional groups to Mary Maher.
- 7) Explore additional ways to offer the workshops including webinars through NCFR. (Betty Cooke, Beth Gausman)

Please consider serving as a volunteer presenter of these workshops. Additional information regarding the next orientation/training will be available soon. New presenters will have an experienced partner for their first workshop. Watch your MinneNews or contact Mary and Linda to be individually notified.

## Annual MCFR Conference – December 7, 2012



### The keynote speaker for the Annual MCFR Conference on Friday, December 7 will be Pauline Boss, PhD

Pauline's most recent book is "Loving Someone Who Has Dementia: How to find hope while coping with stress and grief." Building upon her background in ambiguous loss, she turns the tables to focus on the families who are living with dementia and caring for loved ones. She has kept very busy with many speeches and work throughout the United States and beyond. We are very lucky to have her with us, and wanted to share the date and name early.

*If you would be willing to work on the program,*

please give me a call or drop an email to me.  
Sue Meyers, 651-645-1975, [smeyers@umn.edu](mailto:smeyers@umn.edu)

