

Empowering relationships...

FEBRUARY 2019



The Redwood Empire Therapist

OUR FEBRUARY MEETING

Working with the Highly Sensitive Person (HSP) in Psychotherapy **Ivy Griffin, L**

How familiar are you with the trait of Sensory Processing Sensitivity (SPS), more commonly known as being a Highly Sensitive Person (HSP)? Do you wonder if this is related to the Autism Spectrum? Did you know that as many as 50% of your clients may be HSPs?



The term Highly Sensitive Person (HSP) was first coined by Elaine Aron as she delved into her research around the characteristics associated with this personality trait. Being an HSP is not a disorder. Instead, it is a personality trait, which can be very healing when people are able recognize, understand and work with their sensitivity, rather than spending their efforts fighting against it. This workshop will explain what it means to be an HSP, explore possible overlapping mental health concerns and identify treatment considerations and interventions for folks with this trait, who are also a large percentage of clients who seek therapy.

Ivy Griffin is an LMFT, Clinical Supervisor, Director and Founder of Thrive Therapy & Counseling in Sacramento, CA. Ivy began her own private psychotherapy practice in 2012 and has since grown into a group practice of 6 therapists. Ivy also has 6 years of experience as a trainer at UC Davis where she facilitated workshops on harassment, bias, discrimination and sexual violence prevention. Ivy is a Highly Sensitive Person herself and is passionate about helping others understand, work with and value this personality trait. To that end, Ivy has obtained advanced training in the highly sensitive trait and

February 1, 2019 - RECAMFT Meeting

10:30 – 11:00 social & sign in
11:00 – 1:00 meeting

Working with the Highly Sensitive Person in Therapy **Ivy Griffin, LMFT**

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February 23, 2019

Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR) Training: An Extension of Psychological First Aid
Dr. Patricia Watson & Dr. Joe Ruzek

March 1, 2019

What's Up with Men? An Attempt at a Deeper Understanding and Solution to the Problems Men Create
Joe Petzel, LMFT

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MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO ALL ~ NON-MEMBERS FREE (\$15 FOR CEUS)

specializes in working with HSP clients individually and in group therapy. Additionally, Ivy specializes in providing psychotherapy to adolescents and young adults.

*What Else is in Here This Month?
Check It Out*

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RECAMFT is now accepting applications for our monthly trainings for 2019-2020. You can complete an application by visiting our website and clicking the news and events tab on the top of the page.

President's Message

Doreen Van Leeuwen, LMFT



A Valentine for RECAMFT

“How do I love thee? Let me count the ways...”

I'm so thankful to be part of this wildly successful chapter! Why, did you know that last year we raised over \$5000 in sponsorship monies, which in turn allowed us to respond generously to each of the eight members who lost homes in the 2017 fires?

Then, RECAMFT had at least 100 members offering pro bono services to our fire-traumatized community! And a dozen or more of you facilitated support groups at Catholic Charities on Saturday afternoons for months! Our website has been promoting free services for fire survivors for well over a year. Several members served as liaisons with important collaboratives to ensure Sonoma County residents gain access to mental health services - thank you, thank you, thank you!

Leadership Circle is our loving nickname for our dedicated board of directors. Why that name? 1. We sit

in a circle. 2. Even though we play different roles, we value and respect each one's input equally. 3. Like the circle, we embrace our mandate to RECAMFT as our highest guiding principle. Many on the team have volunteered for years, and we are blessed to have their pooled wisdom to lead us. And we have fun too! What other BOD wears tiaras???

You must know about the wonderful speakers we host month after month. But do you know about the amazing library of videos being compiled on our www/recamft.org website One of your member benefits is FREE access to over 40 videos, along with the bibliographies and slideshows that our presenters share. Attendance at our annual January Law and Ethics Conference this year is at an all-time high. Hosted at the beautiful Agatha Furth Center, our conference committee works super hard to create a wrap-around day full of excellent material offered by none other than the talented and humorous David Jenkins, JD. Included in the value price: delicious refreshments & lunch to keep us alert, & CEUs to keep the BBS happy!

Every second year (this is one!) the conference committee also hosts a fall conference. Stay tuned for details, which will be announced soon!

It's a real thrill to have members join us at a board meeting: your suggestions and feedback are crucial to our ongoing development and growth. Even more exciting is when one of you says, "I'd like to help. Do you have a spot for me to fill or a job for me to do?" Come and find me at our next meeting...!

Doreen Van Leeuwen, President

Doreen is in Private Practice in Santa Rosa at 951-347-1837

RECAMFT TEAM CIRCLE

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What You Missed

By Michael Krikorian

We had a very interesting and informative presentation today by Rick Grant-Coons, PsyD. He presented on "Preventing Suicide in the LGBTQ+ Community Using LGBTQ Affirmative Therapy." Dr. Grant-Coons' presentation combined an orientation to the damage



done to many LGBTQ individuals by society's heterosexism, to information on suicidality and finally to a description of how to make your approach to therapy more life-affirming for LGBTQ individuals that may come to your practice.

Dr. Grant-Coons started with sharing his own journey as a gay male including how at age 4 he began getting messages that had a shaming effect on his own natural experience of himself. He talked about how even when not directed personally at a particular LGBTQ individual, what gets directed at other individuals in society due to heterosexism can get internalized by an individual and can lead to self-hatred. He explained how the earlier term "homophobic" did not reflect how besides feeling fear, some people direct hostility towards LGBTQ individuals. The term now in use, heterosexism, like "racism," more accurately reflects the active disempowerment and aggression often directed to these individuals. At the same time that heterosexism still exists in society, there is also movement towards a less rigid or "binary" way for people to identify and describe their own experience of gender identity (how you understand your own sense of gender) and sexual identity (who you are attracted to). That is why the "LGB" acronym keeps expanding.

Dr. Grant-Coons described how the internalization of heterosexism leads to much higher rates of suicidal feelings and acts in the LGBTQ population than the general population. Dr. Grant-Coons talked about counteracting the effects of heterosexism by an approach called Affirmative Therapy. He explained that Affirmative Therapy is an attitude and orientation towards your clients rather than a set of techniques. He described it as having a positive view of LGBTQ people and making interventions to counteract the damage done by heterosexism. Examples of how this is done is

by having check boxes on intake forms that offer choices besides binary male/female and his/her, having magazines in the wait area that include LGBTQ people, having rainbow flag symbols displayed, self-reflecting and addressing your own prejudiced feelings and biases, and getting involved in political/societal activities to support LGBTQ rights.



Dr. Grant-Coons also talked about therapy with individuals struggling with suicidal feelings, both LGBTQ people and the general population. He talked about using the Life Risk Assessment Chart by Thomas Joiner as a tool to ask the right questions to accurately assess risk that a person may act on suicidal thoughts. He talked about the importance of a therapist being able to ask in a direct way if the client is having suicidal thought or thinking of killing themselves. Being able to directly ask this question 1) does not increase the likelihood of them acting on those feelings, 2) gives the message you can handle the truth, and 3) gives them permission to talk about these feelings which is helpful in reducing the internal pressure to act on them. He non-judgmentally lets the client talk about the wish to die and listens for any ambivalence i.e. any part of them that hesitates to act on the wish. He then tries to build on that. Instead of a "no suicide contract" which Dr. Grant-Coons says is ineffective, he develops a "safety plan" for the client. This plan includes internal coping strategies, external coping strategies and lists of available people to reach out to when struggling. He also tries to help them put buffers between themselves and any means they have to actually carry out a suicide, e.g. pills, guns, etc.

Besides giving an excellent presentation, a special thanks to Dr. Grant-Coons for being patient when we had a 20 minute technical difficulty with the PA system right in the middle of his presentation. Dr. Grant-Coons can be reached at Empowered Living Therapy in Sacramento at (916) 572-9442.

Michael Krikorian, MFT brings 40 years of experience to his practice in Santa Rosa. He works with both individuals and couples. For more information, go to www.mkrikorian-therapist.com.

Invitation to the Center for Mind Body Medicine

One amazing and wonderful development arising out of the Wildfires is the formation of Sonoma County Resilience Collaborative. This dedicated group of people reached out to Dr. James Gordon at The Center for Mind Body Medicine (CMBM) in 2018, and that conversation has now evolved to the 2nd phase of training in a bevy of mind-body centered skills to release trauma and build resilience. The Santa Rosa Health Foundation funded a large grant which has brought Dr. Gordon and ten of his staff to Rohnert Park, for two four-day periods of training. About 113 people were accepted into the program, which is comprised of a basic and advanced phase. Tuition for the program was covered by the grant, however each participant agreed to complete all eight days of training and afterwards, facilitate an eight-session group based on the Mind-Body Medicine skills & theory. Supervision by CMBM staff will be available for group facilitators.

For several decades Dr. Gordon has been working with people around the globe who have experienced the traumas of war, civil unrest and natural disaster. He has compiled a protocol of strategies based on scientific research that are effective in helping children, teens and adults change and re-regulate their autonomic nervous systems.

Because of my close involvement with survivors of the various fires occurring in CA in 2017 & 2018, I took an immediate interest in his work. By the time you read this, I'll have completed the advanced training, and will be looking for candidates for an eight-session group to facilitate.

I'm inviting you, my colleagues, to ask if you would consider participating. Your commitment is eight two- hour blocks of time, or alternatively, four four-hour blocks. You will participate in various periods of meditation, both active (moving) and sitting; some very basic training in autogenics and biofeedback; several opportunities for self-expressive reflection; practice developing your inner wise guide.

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From Doreen Van Leeuwen

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At Eternity's Gate
A film worth seeing

As I sat in the theatre at the beginning of this movie about the creative life of Vincent Van Gogh, I complained to my companion that the cinematography and the score were both not particularly pleasant. As the film unfolded, though, I realized the genius of the producer who was not only experience as much as possible. Further, Willem Dafoe, who played Van Gogh, did a fantastic job of portraying the ups and downs of that life and the dialogue did its best to explain what that felt like on the inside and why he was driven to continue painting no matter what. This is a film worth seeing, especially from the psychological point of view.

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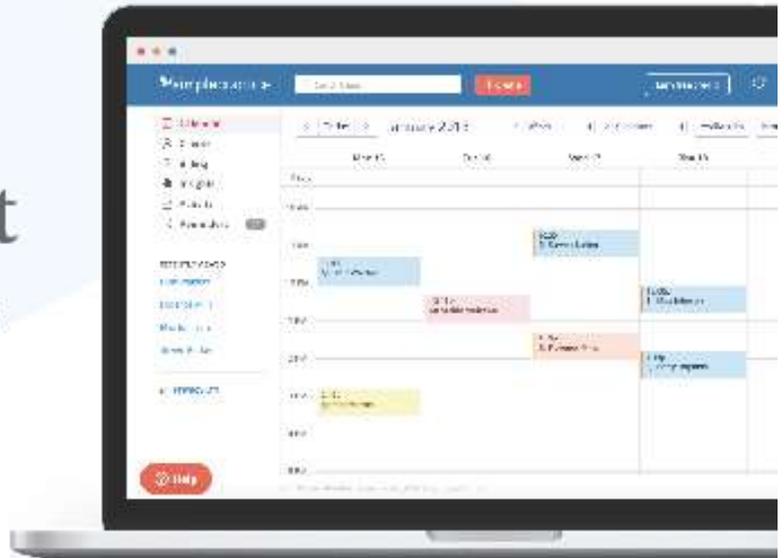
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FEBRUARY ISSUE