

Reflections on a Saturday
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On June 2, 2007 I was very fortunate to be able to attend the first National Psychotherapy with Men Conference in Northridge, California. In reading the program my first impression was that this was going to be a top notch conference. All of the presenters were leaders in the study of men and masculinity. Most of them appeared somewhere in the literature review of my dissertation, and if they didn't it was only because my topic was too narrow to include them. However, that's not what made the conference feel special.

The presenters had a big job to do. The range of attendees was enormous. Some were clinicians who had never before considered the needs of men in psychotherapy. Others were old hands at thinking about masculinity, and had published in the field themselves; still others were students just beginning to think of themselves as doing psychotherapy one day. Some of the attending clinicians were men, and others women. The presenters had a big task in meeting the needs of all of those attending, and were somehow able to make the day rewarding for everyone. Still, it was something else that made the day more than the typical CE workshop.

In addition to the diversity in knowledge, experience, and gender; the gathering was very diverse in every factor of human experience that we discussed. Through out the day we delighted to find that we were of different race, orientation, religions, and even subscribe to different psychological theories! I had one of those rare and delightful experiences of being the only WASP at my lunch table. Division 51 has often longed for more diversity, and this conference took a long step in making that happen. This seemed closer, an important part, and yet didn't seem exactly what set this workshop apart from others.

About 2/3 of the way through the day I was surprised to notice that I had not heard any comments about the "battle of the sexes". In addition, in this age when it is popular to bash men, no one seemed to be doing so. Somehow participants had managed to drop the zero sum game, and didn't react as if they had to treat men at a cost to women (and vice versa). While the crowd and presenters had an excellent sense of humor, it didn't seem to need to be at the expense of either gender. At this conference people were willing to think about men, and treating them, in ways differently than those portrayed by popular media. What a refreshing approach. It felt as if this was almost, but not quite why the day seemed unique to me.

Then it hit me. All of these factors seemed to contribute to creating a gathering of people genuinely interested in interacting with each other in a community of care. The atmosphere seemed dedicated to interest in fostering the well being of men. People were willing to set aside their personal agendas for a day to learn from each other about what can be done in the service of providing improved

therapy for masculine people. Men's ways of being, as well as their pain, seemed to be accepted and honored. Now *that* is/was unique.

What a great way to spend Saturday. What a great advancement for Division 51: putting all of these years of research to work in providing better psychotherapy to men. My thanks and congratulations go to Mark Stevens, and all of those who helped put together a Saturday that I will enjoy reflecting upon for some time.

**A Student's Perspective of the National Psychotherapy with Men
Conference
Jodie Benabe-Matz
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I must admit that I have not attended many conferences in my short time as a graduate student. Like a lot of students, I suppose I get so caught up in meeting academic and practicum responsibilities that it's hard to imagine having the time to do so. Not surprisingly, The National Psychotherapy with Men Conference slipped my mind until Dr. Chen Oren, a presenter and a member of the organizing committee, reminded me of the event. Needless to say, the conference proved to be the most stimulating and interesting one I've been to as of late. There was a real sense of excitement in the air, as though we were all part of something groundbreaking. Many of the speakers were individuals whose work I have read or heard about in my classes. Yet, what struck me as most impressive was the collegial and supportive atmosphere amongst the presenters, and the openness they had in speaking with students. The morning's keynote by Dr. Aaron Rochlen, which examined the DSM-IV's criteria for male depression, was engaging and highly informative. It challenged me to think more critically about what I am taught and re-evaluate the knowledge I've gained. In terms of the presentations, it was difficult to choose which to go to as they all sounded fascinating. The two symposiums I attended were "Engaging Men in Therapy: Learning from Research How to Improve Clinical Practice" and "Pushes, Pulls and Possibilities for Therapists Working with Men from Diverse Backgrounds." Both presentations were fantastic and the speakers were all enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge, which made for quite possibly the best lectures I've ever received. Everyone was passionate about his or her work and it motivated me to make progress on my own gender-related doctoral project. I was amazed by the sense of connectedness between the speakers and audience--as if it was more of a dynamic interaction than a lecture. It was clear that the speakers were affecting us and, in turn, we were affecting them. I could tell that it mattered that we "got" the message that was being sent, and each lecture was more like a conversation of sorts. It was truly a unique and humbling experience. The afternoon's keynote address by Dr. Anderson J. Franklin focused on "Engaging Black Men in Psychotherapy" and was likewise an encounter that I will not soon forget. Listening to Dr. Franklin was sincerely the icing on the cake of the day. It was an honor to hear him speak, as his work has transformed the way that clinicians work with African American males. In closing, it was a pleasure to attend the conference and I encourage my fellow students to make the time to do

so in the future. I thank everyone responsible for such a wonderful and enriching experience and believe that it could not have been more of a success.

Dan Saland

I have experienced several phenomena during my time as a graduate student. Most of these phenomena are intrinsic to the status of being a student. Some are related to the academic realm such as courses, papers, and examinations. Others come from clinical training such as supervisory relationships, client sessions, and multidisciplinary consultations. I experienced a new phenomenon when I attended the first National Psychotherapy with Men Conference.

There is a particular experience many people have when they are in the presence of a celebrity. Feuer and Karasu (1978) coined the term *star struck phenomenon*. It describes a reaction felt that reflects “awe” and “unresolved countertransference.” The Psychotherapy with Men Conference occurred just four days after I defended my doctoral project (Adolescent Boys with Cancer: Impact of Gender Role Conflict on Psychosocial Adjustment). Suddenly, I was shaking hands with and attending workshops given by some of the very same people I had cited throughout my manuscript. I was star struck!

Dr. Aaron Rochlen was one such author; he spoke about the diagnosis and treatment of men and depression in the conference’s opening address. His descriptions of the mask that men wear in order to shield their emotional selves is a concept I detailed in my work. It was amazing to hear others speak as well. Dr. Matt Englar-Carlson, Dr. Mark S. Kiselica, and Dr. Fred Rabinowitz were three such people. I found their symposium on engaging men in therapy outstanding. I appreciated the overview of the psychology of masculinity, the discussions on therapeutic approaches, and the showcase of many examples of how to deepen therapy with men.

Earlier in the semester, I was taking a course called Multicultural Competencies. One of the authors we read was Dr. A.J. Franklin. I felt star struck during his talk on engaging Black men in psychotherapy. Seeing him in person was incredible. Ironically, my professor for the course also happened to be in attendance. After Dr. Franklin spoke, I found my professor outside and was excited to process his oration with her.

Overall, it was a privilege to be part of the first National Psychotherapy with Men Conference. I hope to experience much more of what Division 51 has to offer during APA’s Annual Convention in San Francisco this summer. As I venture off to Temple University in Philadelphia for my pre-doctoral internship, I know some of the connections I made during the conference will contribute to my professional development. For example, I hope to practice in New Jersey, so, Dr. Kiselca, I will be reaching out soon! As for “celebrity status” in our field, and with Division 51, hopefully succeeding graduate students will feel the star struck

phenomenon when I'm signing my book at a future National Psychotherapy with Men Conference!

Feuer, E. H., & Karasu, S. R. (1978). A star-struck service: Impact of the admission of a celebrity to an inpatient unit. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 39(10), 743-746.

Division 51 Psychotherapy with Men Conference, June 2, 2007
Paulette Theresa

If social *stigma* is the main barrier resulting in male absence from the therapy chair, APA Division 51's first National Psychotherapy with Men Conference certainly sparked optimism, notwithstanding the myriad of cultural beliefs held by potential clients regarding treatment. While reacquainting myself with event organizer, Mark Stevens, director of University Counseling Services at California State University, Northridge, which sponsored the event along with Phillips Graduate Institute, I approached the day determined to identify how I as a graduate student and woman of color would better equip myself as a clinician working with men.

Although research shows that an expanding number of men experiencing psychological stress are seeking psychotherapy (Cochran & Rabinowitz, 2003; Kiselica, 2003; Levant, 2007), real obstacles remain that impede treatment efforts in securing safety in the room with men (i.e., the need for a "real man" to avoid connecting, showing the emotional and embrace independence, showing indifference). The conference provided memorable moments surrounded by a cast of presenters that was like thumbing through a who's who collection that gave me opportunity to network with authors with whom I had previously known only by way of their research. This included two distinguished keynote speakers: Aaron Rochlen, known for his work in treating men with depression; and A. J. Franklin, known for his work in treating men of African descent and developing/introducing his theoretical concept of *Invisibility Syndrome*.

Within minutes of my first workshop, William Parham melted away any doubts about my participation based on gender by noticing what he called a positive highlight in the number of women participants committed to working with men. Panelists shared their personal experiences of diversity that they bring with them into the room which shed light on the internal process that we all enter both individually and collectively in preparing ourselves before beginning to address multi-layered client concerns. A central theme of the workshop was a reminder that our male clients come with a complexity of what I have now come to understand as layers of masculinities within the masculine gender. This means men not only come with culturally diverse backgrounds, but they have the daunting task of examining themselves as men thrust onto a masculinity scale comprised of a set of standards resulting in expected social behavior.

A man's degree of masculinity may be determined by what is expected from his behavior (i.e., masculinity based on his age, his SES, his educational background, or masculinity based on employment, etc.). Typically, it is anticipated that a man will act a certain way within his environment that will help those around him conceptualize the degree and type of masculine man he is. Authors refer to the phenomenon as a masculine socialization process where men are aware of exhibiting varying degrees of gender from female to male identified behaviors (Fischer & Good, 1997; Levant, 1992; O'Neil, 1981).

The question of how to engage men in therapy was a significant one for me as I made a bee-line for a second panel discussion led by Matt Englar-Carlson, Mark Kiselica, and Fred Rabinowitz. Englar-Carlson reminded clinicians to be aware that our male clients will be scanning the room to detect how sensitive we are to them. Men experience gender socialization that teaches models of masculinity directing them toward how they ought to behave. Depending on a male's ethnic background, he has the additional undertaking of embracing western influences that dictate that a more aggressive and angry stance is more highly masculine.

Kiselica shared that he managed his years of work with adolescent fathers and male teens overwhelmingly by being real with his clients. Clearly being real and available to our clients sometimes calls for us to step out of the traditional therapeutic box and lean more towards advocacy work. This includes a re-examining of our own internal messages in how we view teenage parents. If the end goal is to help the young man become more caring and responsive to those in his world, then we need to model such behavior to the client regardless of his circumstances.

Rabinowitz brought to clinicians' attention that it is useful to help men become aware of and comfortable with the sensations in their physical bodies. Men have years of messages built up inside of them of how they ought to be strong, tough, remain cool, calm and collected on the outside. Allowing male clients opportunity to beat their fists into a punching bag, hit a big pillow with a plastic bat or even deep breathing exercises or role playing oneself as the "hurt," "angry," etc., may be the needed physical intervention to help sooth the emotional pain.

The conference emphasized there is true value in cross-gender therapy and that I need to be open to genuinely connect with male clients. As such, a therapeutic relationship may be one of the few healthy ones men experience with a female. Central to my understanding of male clients is that they are vulnerable because boys and young men growing up are not permitted to express their fears and doubts. This demands that I respect the male's difficult position regarding societal pressure and do my part to bring about a place of comfort and safety as the man moves through the steps connecting with his own internal stuff while simultaneously discovering what it means to be fully comfortable with his masculinity.

Personal Reflections on the National Psychotherapy with Men Conference
Sam J. Buser, Ph.D.
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When asked about my interests as a psychologist, I usually respond by saying that I am a specialist in treating the problems of men. I find myself, though, feeling a little apologetic portraying myself as a specialist in treating roughly half the human race. Yet, like most of the rest of you that read this newsletter, I have found that men experience some problems that are distinctly different from those of women, or, in other cases, men's problems are expressed in different ways than how women usually experience them. I was very curious as to how these basic ideas might be addressed at the 1st National Psychotherapy with Men Conference. Do men and women really have the same problems? Should we be treat men and women differently in psychotherapy?

The initial keynote address by Dr. Aaron Rochlen from The University of Texas at Austin focused on these very questions. He noted that men are less likely to be diagnosed with depressive illnesses, but he argued that men frequently present with different depressive symptoms than do women. For example, depressed women seem more apt to blame themselves for their problems while depressed men may be more likely to blame others. Additionally, women seem to more likely to use food and friends to "treat or medicate" their depression, while men seem more likely to use alcohol, work, sex, and sports in a similar capacity. Dr. Rochlen described men using masks to hide their depression, and he made numerous suggestions regarding developments in the diagnosis and treatment of male depression. He suggests that we may have envisioned mental health problems in generic terms, and some of the distinctions in frequency rates between men and women need to be reexamined. I came away with a desire to see more development in the psychometrics of diagnosis of depression and other problems of men.

Another highlight for me was to attend the father/son presentations by Dr. Jon Carlson and Dr. Matt Engmar-Carlson. Jon Carlson, named a "Living Legend" by the American Counseling Association, made a very interesting presentation utilizing a videotape of his treatment of a man. Although the tape, part of the APA Video Series, was labeled as a demonstration of Adlerian therapy, Dr. Carlson correctly noted that it also could be viewed as a model of dealing with male clients. Dr. Carlson impressed me with both his sensitivity to the client's situation and his ability to incisively intervene in an elegant, parsimonious manner. As he presented his work, he also personally engaged with his audience, and I left wishing I could have been that client on the tape. I also attended the presentation by Dr. Matt Engmar-Carlson of California State University, Fullerton. Dr. Engmar-Carlson co-presented with Dr. Fred Rabinowitz of the University of the Redlands and Dr. Mark Kiselica of The College of New Jersey. Their topic concerned using research findings to more effectively engage men in psychotherapy. Although the subjects of the two presentations by the "Carlson boys" were not necessarily coordinated, I drew additional lessons from

seeing them both. Son talked about how to connect with men, and father demonstrated how it was done.

My biggest complaint about the conference was that I had to choose from among offerings. All of the presentations were thought provoking, but more importantly for me they were delivered by men who were unusually gifted in connecting to other men...especially this one. Thanks.

Reflections on the First Conference on Psychotherapy with Men
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As a female therapist, I find working with male clients can sometimes pose difficult and challenging issues. I enjoy providing therapy to men, however, as a woman, I sometimes feel that there are certain insights and understandings that I may lack. The National Psychotherapy with Men conference, which I recently attended, proved to be an important resource for myself as well as others to learn and grow in psychotherapy work and understanding of men. The conference was particularly rewarding in educating me on the engagement of male clients.

One of the challenges I have encountered working with men is getting them to connect to their feelings. At the conference, Dr Sam Park showed a video presentation that depicted psychotherapy sessions with a male client. As I watched the videotape, I noted the way Dr. Park enabled his client to express and get in touch with his feelings in a gradual fashion. He progressively intermixed questions about client's thoughts and feelings. I learned some valuable lessons and have since used this strategy with some of my male clients with positive results.

I also attended a powerful presentation titled, "Engaging Men in Therapy: Learning from Research How to Improve Clinical Practice", given by Dr. Matt Englar-Carlson, Dr. Mark S. Kiselica and Dr. Fred Rabinowitz. One lesson in particular involved having a male member of the audience hold and tug at a towel as he described his relationship with his father. This exemplified 'men as doers' and provides a way to make therapy more engaging and active for men. Through this demonstration, I realized some of the difficulties men may have in participating in therapy, as it may appear to be a passive endeavor. Suggestions given by the presenters to make therapy more engaging and active for men were very helpful.

There are many other pieces of wisdom and insights I have taken with me from this conference. Dr. Aaron Rochlen gave a talk that provoked my thoughts on men's difficulties expressing their vulnerability and emotional side. Although we all to some degree 'wear masks in our lives', it seems that men in particular may feel the need to do this more, as society often does not encourage or validate men for showing these parts of themselves.

As a woman, I don't know if I can ever fully comprehend the intricacies of men. However, I feel that this conference has provided me with invaluable tools and insights that I can use in my clinical work. I look forward to attending this conference again, and hope it is offered on a regular basis, as I feel that there is much to learn and discuss. I also look forward to utilizing this conference as an opportunity to have open and informative discussions regarding the issues, challenges, and rewards with regards to working with men.

**Reflections on the First National Psychotherapy With Men Conference
APA Division 51
June 2, 2007
California State University Northridge (CSUN)
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I was quite pleased when asked by Dr. Mark Stevens, President APA Division 51, and organizer of the First National Psychotherapy With Men Conference for some reflections on my experience of the conference.

I had a sense that it was important for me to attend the conference for several reasons. After a hiatus of approximately 13 years, approximately two years ago, I returned to an interest in programming for men, particularly young men within a college or university setting. This was partly due to change in employment to a position as a Psychologist, and Director of Internship Training at a university counselling centre, and my work with young men there. This rekindled interest was also nurtured through my meeting Mark Stevens, and presenting a paper on programming for men along with several other male training directors at another national conference. Familiarizing myself with new literature, ideas and developments in programming was important. I am Canadian, and until relatively recently, I have been unable to locate colleagues in Canada with an interest in programming for men. Anyone who has ever been working independently in an interest or research area can attest to the importance of a community of other individuals in the area for dialogue, exchange of ideas, support, and/or guidance. In addition to myself, I believe the conference was an important and timely springboard for individuals wanting to learn and add to their repertoire of skills in their work with men. I anticipated that the conference would provide the opportunity to learn from scholars, clinicians and individuals knowledgeable in men's programming. I also hoped to develop a network of colleagues for expertise, support and encouragement to sustain my renewed interest, and, to have fun! I was not disappointed!

I had the privilege of being able to meet all the presenters at dinner the evening before the conference, as well as throughout and after the conference day. All of

the presenters were uniformly warm, friendly, encouraging, unpretentious and knowledgeable about psychotherapy with and programming for men. Planning for a maximum of 250 attendees for the conference, also maintained an air of informality, and opportunities for additional discussions and dialogues with the presenters after their sessions. The mixture of Keynotes and Practice Oriented Symposia which repeated, were good options. I particularly appreciated the ability to attend more than one symposium – I wished I would have been able to see them all! The presentations provided a good mix of information presented by people knowledgeable in an area, as well as more interactive presentations – meeting the needs of people who learn in different ways. APA continuing education credits was also an added incentive to attendees. I was pleased to see many graduate students in attendance, and many men and women who attended the conference. I appreciated the convenience of having copies of presenters' recent books/publications for purchase at the conference, and the opportunity to have the books signed by the presenters.

As with most conferences, there is the formal learning which happens listening to presentations, and the learning in conversations with colleagues that occurs outside of sessions. Both are important, valuable and, I believe were facilitated by the structure and smaller size of the conference.

Overall, I believe the conference was well organized, comfortable, and very successful. I learned a great deal and, met and developed relationships with several colleagues which I trust will continue to grow and flourish. I know all of this happened as a direct result of my attending the conference. For that, I'd also like to thank Dr. Mark Stevens for encouraging me to attend and, for his hospitality. I believe the First National Psychotherapy With Men conference occurred at the right time, and that this contributed to its success. The only questions remaining are: When and where is the next one? and, How often will they be occurring? I look forward to meeting you all at the next conference!