

# The Clinical Psychology of Ethnic Minorities

A Newsletter of Division 12, Section VI American Psychological Association

## In the Aftermath of Tragedy & Destruction



Special Issue:  
Reflection  
Post 9-11

### President's Message

Sarah Miyahira, PhD

At the end of the APA Convention in August, my plans were to publish my Presidential address on health disparities as the final newsletter article during my tenure as Section VI President. However, the unprecedented tragedy that struck New York City and Washington, DC on September 11<sup>th</sup> completely overshadowed the events of the convention and compelled me to refocus my thoughts. The overwhelming devastation that we witnessed either

directly or indirectly through the media has left an indelible imprint on each of our lives. In the immediate and ensuing aftermath of the attack on the United States, Americans have responded with a range of human emotion--horror, fear, anger, grief, anxiety, helplessness, despair, and compassion. Although few and short-lived, there have even been moments of joy as rescue teams pulled survivors from wreckage and hills of debris.

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Estimates of those who died in

the destruction of the World Trade Center complex have grown daily. Unfortunately, the victims of this senseless act of terrorism extend far beyond those found in the rubble of the twin towers. The impact upon the human psyche has been enormous. As I watched interview after interview with rescue workers, emergency personnel, and officials who had been at ground zero, it was evident in their faces and voices that the horror of the scenes they had witnessed had taken their toll. The stress and strain of endless waiting and uncertainty were equally profound among the family members who were in desperate search of missing loved ones. Those who lost family and friends struggled to deal with their loss and to make sense of the terrible tragedy that had befallen them and the nation. People who had survived the attack and collapse of the towers spoke of their confusion and panic as they rushed for safety while others were paralyzed by their fear, unable to move and to seek cover.

Many of these individuals as well as hundreds more may experience symptoms of trauma related stress that events of this magnitude and destruction often induce. While most individuals will recover with time from the traumatic reactions they experience, others do not. Left unrecognized and untreated normal reactions to an abnormal situation may begin to interfere with a person's ability to enjoy life and to carry on with daily activities. Even if one is not a trained practitioner, recognizing the warning signs of trauma related stress and referring to treatment those exhibiting such symptoms for more than a month can be helpful to restoring control in their lives. In some cases, the indications of distress are delayed and may not appear until six months or more after the event. These individuals are particularly vulnerable to developing chronic problems, as their symptoms are less likely to be recognized as trauma related stress and the support services usually immediately available after a disaster are

less accessible. The symptoms one should be aware of are:

- Recurrent and intrusive recollections or nightmares of the event
- Reliving the event as if it were actually occurring
- Being on edge or easily startled
- Having difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Sleep difficulties or disturbances
- Feeling anxiety or fear when exposed to sights, sounds, or smells that remind one of the event
- Being irritable, easily agitated, or quick-tempered
- Avoiding activities, places, or people that trigger memories of the event
- Lethargy or low energy, feeling sad or depressed
- Feeling numb or detached from one's feelings
- Diminished interest in activities or withdrawal from relationships
- Feelings of hopelessness and despair

This is clearly a time when psychology and psychologists can make a difference. The need for experienced clinicians to respond to the substantial numbers of adults and children exposed to the terrifying event as well as people dealing with grief and loss is greater than it has ever been. Public education and information dissemination about how disaster and catastrophe may affect people and the early warning signs of psychological trauma, depression, and anxiety are essential to limiting adverse outcomes and recovery efforts. To that end, the knowledge gained from psychological research has contributed much to better understanding trauma related stress and treating the victims of traumatic experiences. Psychologists' expertise in disaster response is not only important in responding to crises, but in preparing for disasters now and in the future. Our effectiveness will in large measure depend upon expanding our knowledge about terrorism, crises, and disaster management. There is still a great deal that must be learned about trauma, resilience, and recovery.

Psychology's response to this national tragedy has been and must continue to be multifaceted. We must lend our efforts and expertise not only in the clinical arena, but in the academic and public sectors as well. Many of you have already contributed considerable time, energy, and expertise to the recovery effort and many more of you have generously responded to the call for donations ranging from blood to supplies to financial support. I applaud you and sincerely believe that your compassion and humanity has already made a difference.

## **Message from the President-Elect:**

Dorothy Tucker, Ph.D.

### **REMEMBRANCE STATEMENT FOR SEPTEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2001**

The Section of Ethnic Minority in Clinical Psychology, its board committees, members, related entities express our deep sorrow and sadness at the tragic and incomprehensible loss of life resulting from the events of Tuesday, September 11, 2001.

Many of the professions of the victims have been widely reported. Thus far, we know of no psychologists who listed the World Trade Center as their mailing address. We suspect there are none. We are in the process of determining if any of the people who have died had spouses or family members who are psychologists so that we may remember them personally in some way at our winter meeting.

As your president elect, I have taken our conversations and messages and generated five specific statements that we as a Section would like to make to our colleagues and the public.

First. What is it that we should try to understand from this tragedy? That it is an epoch-defining event, such as that rarely happens in our life. In future years, you will define your life as before or after September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The way many of us divide our lives as before or after November 22, 1963. We must carefully store and reflect upon the feelings and the statements of this critical time.

Second. Despite the horror of the past days, the greatest threat to us is not terrorism. The greatest threat now and always has been the paralyzing effect of being desensitized to violence, and the resulting powerlessness and apathy that engenders.

The possible solution is to feel things is to feel deeply and to visit the endless efforts of others to package, to spin and to trivialize that which offends the human spirit.

Third. As psychologists we are concerned with the direction of our anger. It is wrong to blame any religious or ethnic group for the criminal acts of the few.

Fourth. We should worry that in the aftermath of Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup>, we are not swept away in a current of overreaction to the point of jeopardizing basic

freedoms and tenants of democracy that are our greatest strengths and were the terrorist's real target. As psychologists, we must maintain our objectivity in helping our country to think, to reason and to ask questions.

Fifth. We have to remind ourselves that we are not now and never have been powerless. By rejecting violence, by struggling to reason, and to understand and by opening our hearts, nothing evil can ever prevail.

As we grieve this horrible loss, the Section calls upon all members to draw upon the strength of America, which is rooted in its democratic institutions, its commitment to justice and its tolerance of diversity. It is this common bond, which unites all Americans and is the defining characteristic of America and is the defining characteristic of America's greatness. None of us is untouched by these events. We all share the pain of those who are suffering the greatest. In our common pain and in our dedicated commitment to justice, democracy, diversity and tolerance, we shall find the strength to persevere together and defend and preserve our fundamental American institutions.

I am proud of the efforts of Section VI psychologists have made and I encourage each of us to do whatever we can to be of assistance.

### **"US and THEM"**

By  
Jeni McAnally, M.A.  
University of Iowa

I still have not fully processed the full horror of the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks on September 11. Pieces of it hit me every day, in different ways. I am far away from the events in New York and Washington D.C. physically, and while I have some friends and family in New York, no one I know was hurt or killed. I am not fighting the battle of personal loss. However, I do find myself fighting a battle every day with common American (read: white) citizenry in Iowa and around the country.

I am writing because I have opened several dozen emails in the past three weeks that are about the WTC and Pentagon attack. Many of them with sources for helping those in need; some news items where there are happy endings and people finding their loved ones; some of narrow escape; some of tragedy. Then, there are those that make my stomach hurt. They are the ones that go "US" and "THEM." Shamefully, I don't personally have

any friends who are Middle Eastern or Muslim. However, I feel as though my very way of being an American is attacked when I hear these jokes about tight turbans and Arabs not bathing, and other such material.

In the history of propaganda and war, the best way to be able to kill someone (or to rally support for killing someone) is to dehumanize them. That's what I see happening with so many of the emails and news items I've seen. I can't be silent about it.

From lifelong friends, I have received emails that are so racist I can't even believe that they clicked "send." And in the news, I see it too: "US" good, "THEM" bad. "US" righteous, "THEM" evil. Who is the "them," exactly? How do we know? And why are we ready to bomb "them"? It is automatic, it seems – the urge to bomb Arab nations in the wake of terrorism. I have long said that if we learned nothing from Oklahoma City, it should be that we should not rule out our own back yard before we go snooping around in others'. And yet, I read in the New York Times yesterday that even as people were being rescued from Tower 1, Stairway B, that police handcuffed an Arab-looking man holding a stuffed lion before "hustled him down the stairs."

Were we ready to bomb Kentucky and Indiana and Minnesota (and Iowa?) when Timothy McVeigh bombed Oklahoma City? Were all young white men suspicious looking then? Were we stopping white men from entering federal buildings or randomly detaining them for "questioning"? Was there ever a building full of people who refused to enter if "that white man" was going to enter (as happened on a Northwest Airlines flight last week -- the passengers refused to fly with three Arab men -- so the Arab men were removed -- "there was nothing we could do" said the airline). Were we willing to sacrifice thousands of lives to "get him"? There was no "them" in the OK bombing. There was just a him -- or a couple of hims. But, now we've created a "them," and we are ready to kill. We want blood. It's easy -- "they" aren't like "us."

I was thinking the other day that this is part of our socialization. A colleague of mine made the connection to American High Schools. Look at the way any high school in America has its rivals. From the time we are very young, there has to be a "THEM" to "get." One cannot have pride in one's school unless there is a "THEM" to be better than, stronger than, richer than, and more beautiful than. Don't let me get started on the topic of college football, where we find the same phenomenon. One cannot just look to one's self or one's community for pride, to one's values and family and friends. We have to define ourselves according to the "not them."

For example, I recall reading a study about girls and boys. When they ask boys what's great about being a boy, they say, among other things "I don't have a period, I won't be discriminated against in the workforce, I don't have to wear a dress." In other words, the best thing about being a boy is *not* being a girl.

The same thing goes for studies where white people are asked, "What's great about being white?" The replies range from "I won't be followed in stores" to "I can find housing for me and my family without being discriminated against" to "I don't have to be afraid of the police." Here, the best thing about being white is *not* being black (or Latino, or Arab). We get it from a very early age: there has to be a "them" for you to know the "me."

Toni Morrison wrote a book about literature that talks a little bit about this process (Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination). In this case, she is talking about the presence of African Americans in U.S. literature and culture (the "Africanist persona," she calls it). She says that the Africanist persona "is the vehicle by which the American self knows itself as not enslaved, but free; not repulsive, but desirable; not helpless, but licensed and powerful; not history-less, but historical; not damned, but innocent; not a blind accident of evolution, but a progressive fulfillment of destiny." I think the same pattern is emerging with Arab, North African, Middle Eastern and Muslim people all around the world. We know what *we* are (and it is GOOD) because we are *not them* (and they are EVIL).

I am also thinking of the fluidity of who is "us" and who is "them" and according to what/whose purposes. For instance, lawmakers are considering lifting the "Don't Ask / Don't Tell" military policy for gay and lesbian service people during this conflict in order to recruit as many citizens as possible into the military. Gays and lesbians have always been, and continue to be a "them" in our society. But, now it seems, the "Us" might be willing to allow gays and lesbians to be part of the "Us." When will the "Us" be done using "them," though? What will happen to gay and lesbian service people then? Will they have to continue living in metaphorical "foxholes" even after they have left the literal ones? On one list-serve, a member wrote about his concerns for African American support for military action. He fears that though hesitant, African Americans will come to the aid of the nation, only to be betrayed once the conflict is settled. I fear the same will be true for our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. It starts me to questioning who gets to be an "us" and who will remain a "them" throughout this conflict -- and furthermore, who will be re-relegated to "them" once (and if ever) the conflict is

brought to some kind of resolution?

I guess what I am asking of my friends and loved ones, of my American brothers and sisters, is that we just take a minute -- a brief second -- to look at what is happening around us with a critical eye, with some thought and concern for the many thousands of innocent people that will die if (when) we launch a military strike. Why now? In what ways is it easier to do "over there" when we wouldn't do it here, with McVeigh? I know it's not the same kind of situation, Oklahoma and New York -- but can we just extend a little compassion to our Muslim and Eastern friends around the world?

Al-Qaeda (the network of terrorist groups) has been said to be to Islam as the Ku Klux Klan is to Christianity. The aims and goals of Al-Qaeda do not represent the values and religious beliefs of Muslims around the world. Let's not be so quick to make a "THEM;" let us remember to include all of the many fair minded, freedom-loving people from a myriad of backgrounds who are also grieving the loss of their loved ones, friends and fellow Americans (and global citizens for that matter).

Can we find ways to heal ourselves that cause us to look inward at "us" instead of outward at "them"? Can we rebuild without hate and violence and "othering"?

It is incredibly lonely where I sit -- sometimes feeling as though I am the only one who is offended by the propaganda and the rude and racist jokes. I am not so arrogant to believe that to be true -- but sometimes it feels that way. I know I am not the only one that thinks that violence is not the answer, or that the religious rhetoric of the media and the politicians is completely inappropriate. Still, I am struggling to find my way through the healing. In the process, I know what I will not tolerate: the further perpetuation of what Toni Morrison calls "dismissive othering" in my presence.

Peace be with you all.

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Editor's Note: I came across this story from several of the list serves that I subscribed to and it occurred to me that I had not heard this story on the various news programs pertaining to the September 11<sup>th</sup> events. I think that it is worth writing about. Below is the story of the pilot on United Flight 93.

### Remembering Leroy Wilton Homer, Jr.

The story of Leroy Wilton Homer, Jr., should be passed along. On Sep. 11, 2001 the hijacked plane, United Airlines Flight 93, crashed into rural Pennsylvania. Leroy was the copilot or first officer of that plane. An !! African-American brother living his childhood dream of flying. Brother Homer was a 1987 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy where leaders are groomed.

A husband, a father, a brother, and a son who as a child would plead with his parents on trips to the airport to stay a while so he could watch the planes take off and land. As a teenager his dream grew so strong that he partnered up with a friend to clean medical buildings just to earn money for flying lessons. In pursuit of his dream he

attended the Academy and soon after became a Desert Storm veteran who flew missions in a C-141 Starlifter during the successful Gulf War campaign.

In 1995 he achieved his ultimate goal of flying commercial airliners when he joined United Airlines to fly 757s and 767s. He also remained active in the Air Force Reserves as a liaison who worked with inner city high school students interested in attending the Air Force Academy. Leroy was a defender of this country who learned how to fly before he learned how to drive. He had a "gentle and nonviolent nature" yet died a violent death and his story is hidden and not being told. We must make sure his story is told to the young brothers and sisters who need to hear of his journey. No one really knows what happened on that flight. But I do know this, unless Leroy Homer was dead or incapacitated before the plane went down, he without a doubt was a leader in the insurrection against the terrorist! t! hat so many others are being honored for. The lessons from his background and training would not have allowed him to sit idle.

As a result, he was a man who along with others made the ultimate sacrifice. But the T.V., talk shows, newspapers, and magazines have yet to properly acknowledge his account. Yes, I know that it is difficult to hold up the mirror in a time like this when we are all "American."

But it is important because the recent tragic events and the subsequent consequences will have a massive impact on my generation and the generations to come.

Leroy's legacy deserves recognition. The brother paid his dues. His life and spirit is in the essence of the flag that most Americans have recently become proud to bear. His life should also be a constant reminder to all of us of the importance of pursuing our dreams instead of settling and becoming a slave to them. For that reason, I will not

let

Leroy's contribution silently fade away.

Brother Homer your service, your struggle, and your death were not in vein. You found freedom and joy in flight and now you've flown on to the Kingdom. I'll see you at the crossroads, but in the meantime your memory lives on in me.

Here's a toast...

Written by  
Marc Ranger  
US Air Force Academy Graduate, 1997

### HISTORICAL FACTS

On a happier note, a special congratulations to the recent Nobel Peace Prize winner, **General Kofi Annan**. General Annan's, originally from Ghana, receipt of this important prize have sparked an interest in other African Americans who have been winners of this title over the years. Below are some historical facts regarding other Black recipients of this award.

**History Fact:** Six African Americans Have won the Nobel Peace Prize

Annan is sixth Black winner of Nobel Peace Prize

OSLO, Oct 12 (Reuters) - U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who shared the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize with the United Nations on Friday, is only the sixth Black person to win since the award was first made 100 years ago.

The five-member committee has often been accused of racism in favoring Europeans and North Americans in its early years. But defenders say the prize has had a global range since the late 1960s.

The following is a list of black winners:

1993 - African National Congress President Nelson Mandela, who shared the award with South African President F.W. de Klerk for efforts to dismantle apartheid.

1984 - South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, also for working against apartheid.

1964 - Martin Luther King, American civil rights leader.

1960 - African National Congress leader Albert Luthuli.

1950 - Ralph Bunche, American U.N. mediator in Arab-

Jewish hostilities over Palestine.

## AWARDS WINNERS!!

### Mentor Award

CONGRATULATIONS to Dr. John Robinson the recipient of the Section VI Mentor Award for the year 2001.

### Report of Section VI Representative

The Clinical Psychology of Ethnic Minorities  
**APA Convention, 2001**  
 Asuncion Miteria Austria, PhD

#### **Summary of Activities of Section Representative for 2000-2001.**

The following is the list of activities I have accomplished as the Section Representative:

- Continued to report on the activities and accomplishments of the Section as well as individual members to the Division Board of Directors.
- Continued to report Division 12 Board's activities that are of interest to and have relevance to Section VI to the Section Executive Committee as well as to the membership.
  - As Chair of the Division's Task Force on Diversity Representation in Society Governance, I advocated for increased diversity representation on the Board, as well as in APA governance. As a result of these efforts, we obtained the Board's approval for a resolution to implement increased diversity representation.
  - Called attention to CEMA's survey that showed low ethnic minority representation and participation in the editorial and publication process.
  - Obtained Board's endorsement to devote a special issue or a section in the Division's flagship journal on diversity issues.
- Presented the Mentor award to Beverly Greene in the absence of Gordon N. Hall, (Mentor Awards Chair) at the Division Award's Ceremony.
- With other section VI members, I contributed a

chapter "Peoples of Asian Descent: Beyond Myths and Stereotypes" to the book on: Diversity in Human Interaction: The tapestry of America, edited by John Robinson and Larry James.

- Wrote a proposal for diversity representation on Council that was not endorsed by the Section caucus.



### Announcements

Dear Colleague:

The spontaneous outpouring of care and concern by Metropolitan area mental health professionals to the tragedy of 9/11/2001 has been outstanding. The number of volunteers often exceeded the initial need. But this initial phase is beginning to change. We must now plan for the next level of disaster response when government agencies, schools, corporations, religious and service organizations, and other groups in the community begin identifying specific needs that require practitioners to be at specific locations with particular experiences and distinctive skills. The Trauma Response Database (located at [www.psychanalysis.net/911Response](http://www.psychanalysis.net/911Response)) is a centralized, comprehensive practitioner database to help specifically with these next phases of ongoing disaster relief.

Although we are in the mental health capitol of the world, it can often be difficult to find desired mental health services. By creating a centralized, comprehensive practitioner database we can help our communities. More than a list of names and numbers, this is a way to locate clinicians with the professional training, organizational affiliations, and specific specializations and skills necessary to meet a wide variety of needs. Psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, clinical nurse specialists and psychoanalysts are urged to fill out the form located at [www.psychanalysis.net/911response](http://www.psychanalysis.net/911response) and also to urge their friends and colleagues to register. As you will see the database is designed to provide users with highly nuanced information--e.g, "Who is doing bereavement groups for adolescents in specific zip codes?"

We are, of course, aware that many groups and organizations are compiling different lists of interested volunteers and we applaud these efforts. In fact, we want to make it easier for these groups to identify the needs they intend to serve by eliminating the vast duplication of effort in creating multiple lists of volunteers. We want to create a resource for all such programs.

Registering will NOT obligate anyone to provide services (pro bono or otherwise) but will allow qualified users an efficient way to locate needed services. This is NOT a credentialing service. It is a non-commercial community service conceived and promoted by psychiatrists, psychologists, psychoanalysts and social workers who feel the public is best served by an ecumenical, non-partisan joint effort. Together we can make mental health services more readily available in this time of need.

Please help us build a coalition of helpers -- visit [www.psychanalysis.net/911Response](http://www.psychanalysis.net/911Response) and register.

## **Newsletter Submission Guidelines**

Have any newsworthy information of interest to our Section membership? Tell us about your activities, or discuss an issue relevant to the clinical psychology of ethnic minorities. Let us know when a colleague or you have received an award or recognition.

- 1) Deadline for Fall edition: September 30; Spring edition: February 28; Special Convention edition: June 30.
- 2) Submissions may be edited for consistency, length, redundancy, and format.
- 3) Officer reports will be limited to 3 paragraphs or a half page; President's report will be limited to a full page; all other articles will be limited to a full page or less with references.
- 4) Submissions should be sent copy ready, preferably on disk in Word 6.0 or less, or via E-mail on an ASCII file to newsletter editor, Guerda Nicolas.
- 5) No submissions will be accepted after the deadline.

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## **Section VI Membership**

*Carole Rayburn, PhD*

Membership Chair, Section VI, Div. 12

### **MEMBERSHIP IN SECTION VI ENCOURAGES AND FOSTERS BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF ETHNIC MINORITIES AND ALL PEOPLE**

This country has gone through a most frightening and depressing assault in the past week with the terrorist attacks on the USA. Now, perhaps more than ever before, people must seek to better understand and appreciate others, including those not of their own ethnic group. We must put away petty anger and jealousy and concentrate on greater caring and sharing with others for better mental health of not only others but of ourselves. This we must do if we are to survive, and what better and more knowledgeable profession to help in this effort than psychology? In particular, clinical psychologists can help others to understand what inner strengths need to be brought to bear such catastrophes and to get beyond them to "soar like an eagle".

Becoming a member in the Clinical Psychology of Ethnic Minorities enhances the goal of better understanding and helping to achieve optimum health for ethnic minorities and others because the motivation to

help rather than hinder the well-being and success of all people is in the forefront. We need Section VI and so do all of our colleagues. Encourage them to join not only for their professional enhancement but also for their personal growth. There is hope that the recent tragedies will result in psychologists and others working more efficiently and meaningfully in more caring ways---ways that our cowardly enemies might never have anticipated. Pulling together, professionally and personally, we will survive! Join Section VI and urge your friends and colleagues to join too!

Why not surprise a fellow student or friend with a one year gift membership to Section VI? Membership includes a subscription to the Section's Newsletter and invitation to sponsored programs during the APA convention. Student membership is only \$5 and regular membership is \$15. Contact Membership Chair: Maria Garrido.

## Membership Application

I wish to join/renew membership in Section VI, Division 12, APA. Enclosed are my dues of U.S. \$15.00 (U.S. \$5.00 for students).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Status for which I am applying:

\_\_\_ Member, Section VI, Division 12    \_\_\_ Student, Member, Division 12    \_\_\_ Non-APA member (Section Affiliate)

\_\_\_ Member of APA, not Division 12    \_\_\_ Student, not Division 12

If student, indicate training program currently enrolled in: \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Information (Optional)

Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_

Area(s) of Concentration \_\_\_\_\_

(Optional for students) Please rank order 3 main issues/areas of concern for you in your program:

\_\_\_ Financial support    \_\_\_ Availability of faculty mentors    \_\_\_ Support to pursue research topic    \_\_\_ Curriculum

\_\_\_ Availability of supportive environment for ethnic minority students and faculty (e.g., department's commitment to recruitment and retention, opportunities to participate in committees to address program issues).

Please check:

\_\_\_ I am interested in being mentored by a Section 6 member.    \_\_\_ I am interested in mentoring a student member.

\_\_\_ Both

Make checks payable to: APA Division 12, Section VI

Send to: Carole Rayburn, Ph.D. See Section on officers for address.

Guelda Nicolas, Ph.D.  
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