

## May/June 2023 Newsletter



### From the Directors

By Sophia Coudenhove, LCSW-C



Sophia Coudenhove, MSW, LCSW-C

I am writing the afternoon after ICP+P's graduation and I couldn't be prouder of our graduates, faculty and program chairs.

As graduates shared their papers and reflections, I was struck by how much courage - and support - it takes to be deeply curious in the context of a relationship with another person, organization or system. To paraphrase Alyson Kepple, as she graduated from the psychoanalytic program,

our training is all about learning to find that courage. The deeper we go, the more we risk, as we ask the questions that threaten the very ground we stand on.

As an institute, we have started to get more curious about ourselves, each other and how we fit into the wider world. And that curiosity has at times taken us to places that feel intolerable: rage, shame, splitting, a reckoning with the harm that we have inflicted as a field, as an institute and as individuals.

Last month, with the help of Victoria Lee, Ayana Watkins-Northern and Rosemary Segalla, we took a new, tentative step towards leaning into our curiosity together.

One hundred thirty-seven people showed up at a community meeting on Zoom. Some expressed dismay, confusion and fear. A few expressed hope. As a group, we tried to make room for nuance and ambiguity. I hope that those who continue to have questions ask them. You can contact the [whole board here](#), or reach out to [me](#) or to [Naomi Nim](#), who is ICP+P's new Associate Director for Membership.

Several people expressed a desire to continue a conversation in small groups, ideally in person, where possible. We are working hard to make this happen, and as with everything else, we can't do it alone. We have a few volunteers to facilitate small groups (thank you!), and we need more, plus someone to help us create a structure to hold the groups together.

As another immediate response to the meeting, Naomi and director emerita Ruth Migler are putting together a DEI workgroup dedicated to responding to the community and implementing the recommendations that antiracism consultants Vision 4 Equity have given us. All are invited to join (see below for details).

As I look back on my first year as co-director, it seems like a very long time ago (actually, February) that we finished the relatively easy part of V4E's anti-racism training, from which many of us have benefited as individuals, as therapists/analysts, or as teachers. The challenge now is implementing what we have learnt. We have held two dynamic anti-racism roundtables, are revising bylaws, updating syllabi and strengthening dialogue between the board and the training programs. The graduation papers were a testament to

ways in which DEIB is becoming an integral part of training. When the board reconvenes we intend to publicize meetings, invite members to attend and post summaries on the website.

All of these changes are necessary but insufficient responses to V4E's recommendations.

At times we - by which I mean all of us - have been derailed and sidetracked by our biases, by lack of resources and by the kind of disagreements we have seen on the listserve. We would all rather be making faster progress, and it is vital that we continue the process of change. Here are their recommendations. I hope that we can hold each other mutually accountable to implement them.

- [V4E Year 1 Report](#)
- [V4E Year 2 Report](#)
- [V4E Year 2 Slides](#)

As many of you know, we are awaiting more information from the Washington School of Psychiatry's National Group Psychotherapy Institute, to inform possible collaboration. Several of our members have spoken with great tenderness of their experiences at NGPI. Also, the program centers on the overlap between the intrapsychic and the socio-cultural, an overlap that is integral to ICP+P's vision of what it means to be contemporary, equitable and inclusive.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to ICP+P's partnership with the award-winning quarterly, ROOM <https://analytic-room.com/#>. ROOM views psychoanalysis as a lens for social discourse and sees itself as a portal to community-building through psychoanalytically minded essays and art. I hope you will read and perhaps even write for it. It's a space for us to look outward to a much broader, more diverse and international community than our own.

Wishing you all a wonderful summer.

Gratefully,

Sophia



## **Two Perspectives on Reactivity to Relational Empowerment in Couple Therapy: Insights from Interpersonal Neurobiology, a Conference by Dr. Mona**

### **Fishbane, with case presentation from Dr. Constance Cannon.**

We are lucky to have two perspectives on this excellent conference from two people associated with the Couples Therapy Training Program. This is a good indication of the power of the conference.

Tom Holman, Editor

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## **From Reactivity to Empowerment in Couple Therapy: An**

# **Integrative Relational- Neurobiological Approach by Mona**

**D. Fishbane, Ph. and Constance Cannon, PhD**

**By Yasmine Kaidbey, LICSW, LCSW**

The lecture's central idea is that couples in distress often get stuck in a cycle of emotional reactivity, where they blame each other and view themselves as victims. The presentation highlighted the importance of understanding the interplay between neurobiology and psychotherapy in promoting healthy relationships.

The lecture presents a clear and practical approach to working with couples in distress. The Vulnerability Cycle Diagram offers a useful tool for therapists to identify and work with each partner's vulnerabilities and survival strategies, which are often rooted in the family of origin and the larger psychosocial, cultural and I will add political context. By understanding and addressing these underlying factors, the couple can break the cycle of emotional reactivity and the couple will understand the circular nature of their impasse, where both partners are victims and co-creators of the cycle.

The presentation of a clinical case material by Dr. Constance Cannon adds depth and context to the approach. The tension between habits and change is also a crucial aspect of the approach, as it recognizes that changing entrenched patterns of behavior requires both insight and sustained effort for the prefrontal cortex to reengage and the amygdala to disengage the fight or flight mode.

In addition, Dr. Cannon emphasized the importance of addressing power dynamics and the blame game in relationships. By applying the concepts presented to a specific couple, the speaker demonstrated how the Vulnerability Cycle Diagram can be used in practice. The discussion of the couple's vulnerabilities and survival strategies highlights the importance of understanding each partner's individual history and context in working towards relational empowerment. Dr. Cannon, demonstrated the importance of building trust and rewiring old patterns of defense to repair damaged relationships.

Moreover, new concepts such as Multidirectional partiality: to listen to each party and give justice to each while mediating and remediating; Relational Ethics: the rights and duties/responsibility towards the other we're relating to or in a relationship in and last but not least Construal humility: which is our agility to move between narratives without getting too attached to one or the other in order to always leave space for more to be added.

In conclusion, these ingredients give therapists the ability to acknowledge the merits of each side and allow ourselves to take turns in taking sides restoring a sense of personal worth to the couple. This method may be applied to help move any couple or any two parties be it political parties, romantic partners, or any two people in discord. The purpose is to move them from a "me" to a "we" and help them recognize when they are engaging in the dance. These ideas are aimed at promoting fairness, impartiality, and personal worth in relationships. And for the therapists to better help couples move towards a more constructive and fulfilling relationship.

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## **From Reactivity to Relational Empowerment in Couple Therapy: Insights from Interpersonal Neurobiology**

**By Janice Sanchez, BCD, LCSW**

The ICP&P Couple Therapy Training Program sponsored this conference that took place on March 26, 2023. Our guest speaker was Dr. Mona Fishbane, who has taught and written extensively on the intersection of neurobiology and couple therapy. She discussed exciting new understandings of how our brains underlie our behaviors, emotions and thoughts, and how these insights can enhance the approach to couple therapy.

Falling in love happens when our critical judgments about the other are offline, and the chemicals of early love flow generously. That passionate love usually doesn't last more than a few years though, and then we must cultivate it if we want to keep it. Cultivating love is one of the goals of couple therapy.

There is a basic paradox: We are wired to connect AND to self-protect. We are social animals who need attachment and interdependence with others. We achieve this through attunement to self and other, increasing trust through the rupture/repair process.

When couples are distressed, they often get emotionally reactive, each blaming the other and seeing self as victim—a linear view. Dr. Fishbane promotes a different way of looking at this. She helps the couple understand the circular nature of their impasse and the ways in which both are victims of and (inadvertently) co-creators of the cycle. She draws a diagram identifying each partner's vulnerability and survival strategies. She helps them develop these understandings together and work on them, thus moving from a "vulnerability cycle" to relational empowerment.

Dr. Fishbane engaged the audience in exercises several times. In one she instructed us to make a model of the brain with our hand, making a fist with our thumb being covered with our other four fingers. The four fingers represent the prefrontal cortex. The thumb represents the amygdala, part of the limbic system. The amygdala, biased toward negativity, is constantly scanning for danger, setting off fight/flight reactions. The prefrontal cortex is needed to manage it. Sometimes the amygdala hijacks the brain. The brains of distressed couples are often in this state. They get caught up in a dance of the amygdalas!

The couple needs emotional regulation, and there are many ways we can help them. A few examples are cognitive top-down approaches such as "Name it to tame it," "Reframe it," and "Explore your own value." There are many bottom-up approaches such as belly breathing, mindfulness meditation, and hand on the heart. Promoting co-regulation in couples is also very valuable.

After Dr. Fishbane had given us a very good understanding of her work, our ICP&P colleague, Dr. Constance Cannon presented a case from her practice, beautifully demonstrating the skill needed to achieve what Dr. Fishbane had described and recommended. Dr. Cannon created a safe zone by developing a strong alliance with each partner. Over time she helped them feel safe enough and courageous enough to share their vulnerabilities with each other. This opened the way for them to grow in intimacy.

In the final part of the conference, Dr. Fishbane talked about attention to Contextual Therapy, emphasizing that we therapists not only affect our clients but also affect people around our clients, even those who are not yet born. She spoke of activating the reward centers of the brain with acceptance, gratitude and generosity.

With regard to healing intergenerational wounds, she said we have an epidemic in this country of "intergenerational estrangement." She sometimes invites clients to bring their parents in for a session and calls it "the loving update." She encourages them to tell stories about the past and let go of grudges.

The feedback from those who attended the conference was overwhelmingly positive. Thank you to Dr. Fishbane, Dr. Cannon, and all those who contributed to planning this valuable conference for our community!



## **New Member Spotlight: Alysa Ain** **By Tom Holman, PhD**

Alysa's interest in being a therapist has always been connected to her fascination with psychoanalysis, and she sees therapy as a creative, exploratory process; she joined ICP+P this spring, eager to connect with a group of similarly minded clinicians. Alysa works



with adults, and practice focuses include career issues, creativity, relationships, and spirituality. Before moving to D.C. last year with her husband and young daughter, Alysa worked at a New York City clinic, and she is looking to join a group practice here in the area. Psychotherapy is a second career for Alysa, who graduated from Harvard Law School and worked as a corporate lawyer before attending social work school. As a lawyer she found that she always wanted to know more about the emotional lives of the people she was working with, and she was frustrated by the limitations of the transactional nature of the job; she loves that psychotherapy, in contrast, “doesn’t put you in a little box.” A lifelong musician, she currently studies an approach to singing grounded in the Libero Canto school of vocal pedagogy, which prioritizes liberating the voice from excess physical, mental, and emotional tension; this practice continues to have a profound influence on her approach to therapy.



## Farewell to Editing the Newsletter By Tom Holman, PhD

After almost 3 years of editing the ICP+P newsletter, I’ve made the difficult decision to step down. My health problems have increased, and I must let go of some things in order to focus on health, exercise, and necessary appointments. In addition, my wife has health problems, and I want to have the time to help her and maximize quality time. Neither of us has any life-threatening conditions, so I’ll be around for, I hope, a long time, and continue to be part of the ICP+P community. It will be exciting to watch the community as it tries to grow and change, but I may be on the sidelines for a while. Editing the newsletter has given me a chance to be useful to the community, and a chance to get to know and work with different people. I’ll close with my sincere thanks for this opportunity. I have received at least as much as I have given.



**Tom Holman, PhD**



## Job Description: Newsletter Editor

The newsletter editor is responsible for planning, soliciting, and editing articles. These may include new member profiles, conference summaries, updates from training programs, directors’ letters, announcements, and other contributions. Editing articles includes reviewing for length, style, grammar, spelling, etc. It also includes discussing edits with authors, and ensuring that articles are ready for the monthly publication deadline. Once edited, articles are sent to the Administrator, who is responsible for layout and distribution. The newsletter appears monthly, from September through June. To learn more please contact Tom Holman ([tomholmanphd@gmail.com](mailto:tomholmanphd@gmail.com)), or Sophia Coudenhove ([sophiacoudenhove@icloud.com](mailto:sophiacoudenhove@icloud.com)).



## ICP+P Conference Anti-Racism Work Group

The anti-racism workgroup will gather for the first time on Wednesday, June 15th at 7 pm on Zoom. We are very grateful to those who have agreed to participate.

Please consider joining us.

We are a group in-the-making and very open to whatever degree of time and energy you

can offer. Our task is to develop an action plan based on some of the recommendations from Vision 4 Equity and based on what we are hearing from our community.

Please contact us to join our first meeting.

Thank-you.

Sincerely,

Ruth Migler, MA, MSW  
Director Emeritus

Naomi Nim, Ed.D., LPC, BC-DMT  
[NaomiNimTherapist@gmail.com](mailto:NaomiNimTherapist@gmail.com)  
Associate Director for Membership



## Heartfelt Thanks from ICP+P

Heartfelt thanks from all of us at ICP+P, to John Gershefski, Ruth Migler, Adrienne Simenhoff, Alison Howard, Raquel Willerman, Marya Myslinski, Julia Rosenfield and Deborah Horan, as they leave the Board. Also, to Janna Sandemeyer and Sharon Ballard who have given so much of themselves to the CAPP program, and to Shoshana Ringel for her service to the Fellowship Program. We are so excited to welcome Emilie Gomart and Naomi Nim on the board, and Adriana Couto Silva who is replacing Shoshana on the Fellowship Program.

Finally, an enormous thank you to Tom Holman, without whom we would not have had this newsletter for the last three years.



## Join the 2023-2024 Couples Program

*The ICP&P Couples Program is in the process of taking applicants for the 2023-24 class. If you're interested in getting more information about the program please contact Michael Wannon, Ph.D. at [menaw1@aol.com](mailto:menaw1@aol.com) or 301-325-1840.*

Many therapists who provide couple therapy know that it can be a transformative modality of treatment and feel engaged and energized by the work. At the same time, couple therapy can be particularly challenging and complex. As the couple's issues around communication, sex, past trauma, affairs, rage and hopelessness unfold in the therapist's office, the work can feel taxing and overwhelming, often deskillling the most seasoned therapist.

ICP+P's Couples Therapy Training Program focuses on integrating psychodynamic theory and specific clinical skills, so that clinicians can feel effective in therapeutically addressing the challenges of this work. The program consists of weekly three-hour meetings, divided between didactic learning and group supervision on active couples cases.

The program focuses on:

1. Contemporary Psychodynamic Theories as they apply to Couples Therapy
2. Addressing specific challenges for couples, including sexual impasses, high conflict, distant and cut-off forms of relating
3. The challenges inherent in collaborative work between couples and individual therapists

4. The exploration of countertransference reactions as a tool to effective intervention
5. Incorporating the contributions of neuroscience and control-mastery to a psychodynamically oriented approach
6. Specific interventional techniques that facilitate growth and effective couples treatment

Many graduates of the program continue to collaborate and work together on clinical cases long after the program is completed. The program also offers graduates many ongoing professional and social events, and the opportunity to belong to a warm professional community. We actively and thoughtfully work to instill the values of diversity, equity and inclusion in our cases/reading/discussion/professional identities.

*The program is for licensed therapists from all disciplines, and runs from September-May. Classes are held each Wednesday from 11:30 am-2:30 pm. To request more information or set up an informational meeting, please contact Dr. Michael Wannon at 301-325-1840.*

**Click here to learn more about the program...**



## Fellowship Program 2023-2024

### Now Accepting Applications!

We welcome applications for the 2023-2024

**Fellowship Program in Contemporary Psychoanalysis. The Fellowship Program introduces participants to the ways psychoanalysis has evolved as a relevant clinical practice for the 21st century.**

[More Information](#)

[Apply Here](#)

#### ***Who should apply?***

The program is designed for practicing clinicians, residents, interns, and advanced graduate students from mental health fields including psychology, psychiatry, social work, counseling, and nursing. The Fellowship gives participants a feel for the types of learning experiences available in ICP+P's training programs and professional community.

#### ***What do Fellows do?***

Fellows participate in monthly Saturday afternoon seminars throughout the academic year. The seminars feature presentations on selected psychoanalytic topics by faculty and graduates of ICP+P's Psychoanalytic Training Program, as well as other invited speakers. Readings are provided in advance of the meetings. Seminars draw from a variety of contemporary psychoanalytic perspectives, including self psychology, relational theory, intersubjective systems theory, motivational systems theory, attachment theory, and findings from infant studies.

#### ***What topics will be covered? Presentations include:***

- History and Evolution of Contemporary Psychoanalytic Theory
- Early Attachment and Traumatic Loss
- Relational Analytic Process
- Contemporary Models of Transference and Countertransference
- Race, Culture, Whiteness and their Impact on Theory and Practice

#### ***Questions? Who to Contact:***

For further information, contact the Co-Chairs of the Fellowship Program:

- Adriana Couto Silva, MS, MA, LCPC, [contact@asilvapsychotherapy.com](mailto:contact@asilvapsychotherapy.com) or 301-204-1608

- Eileen Boyle, PhD, [dreileenboyle@gmail.com](mailto:dreileenboyle@gmail.com) or 301-529-2825

[Click here to learn more about the program...](#)



## Call for Volunteers

Please contact Sophia Coudenhove ([sophiacoudenhove@icloud.com](mailto:sophiacoudenhove@icloud.com)) or Martha Gibbons ([martha@marthagibbons.com](mailto:martha@marthagibbons.com)), if you are curious about volunteering in any capacity, on or off the board. We welcome members old and new. The following two-year board positions will be open from September:

- Associate Director for DEI
- Associate Director for Conferences
- Associate Director for Administration and Communication
- Coordinator for Short Courses

Our hope is that most of these positions will have back-up in the form of member support and committees. Thank you!



## News & Notes

Tom Holman, Ph.D. received an award from the Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration (SEPI), for most successful committee of 2023, the Regional Network Committee, which coordinates SEPI's regional networks around the world. Tom is Co-chairperson of the committee with Macarena Espinoza, Ph.D.

Sunny, 10x14 F-T office with window available in lovely, 3-office suite in Downtown Bethesda with congenial colleagues, waiting room/kitchenette, shared closet, bathrooms in suite and in hall, temperature control in each room, and free WiFi for subtenant and guests. On-site paid parking available for subtenant; some free parking for patients; near public and private garages and Metro. For more information or to schedule a tour, please contact Jonathan Lebolt's co-tenant, Faith Weidler, LCSW- at [FaithWeidler@msn.com](mailto:FaithWeidler@msn.com).



### We love hearing from you!

Please send articles, announcements, artwork, etc. to  
Nilou Mostofi, ICP+P Administrator, at [icppeast@km-direct.com](mailto:icppeast@km-direct.com)

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