

President's Address

John Thoburn, Ph.D., ABPP

Family Psychology: *Moving Into the Next 25 Years*



Last year we celebrated 25 years of excellence in the field of family psychology. We honored the movers and shakers, including the past presidents of the Society for Family Psychology. This year we focus on the future of the discipline, especially the students and early career family psychologists, as well as those family psychologists in their prime who are moving the field forward. This is an unprecedented time of transition in our country as the population continues to grow more diverse, as the population ages, as healthcare is slowly but surely reinterpreted and reinvented, as wealth is harder to come by for all, as politics are in flux, as education is revolutionized by the world wide web, as medicine and psychology are challenged to assimilate and adapt to unprecedented advances in biology and neuroscience, and as we become more globalized. Transitions are the best time to shake up systems, the bread and butter of family psychologists. We are likely to see changes in how psychology is conducted with more emphasis on treatment teams, we'll see more focus on family gerontology and more focus

on a systems approach to organizational consultation. Private practitioners are likely to operate more interpersonally irrespective of their theoretical orientations. A more sophisticated understanding of the reciprocal, organismic, and ecological relationship between nature and nurture will change how we practice.

The Society for Family Psychology has, in the past couple of years, been sought to contribute substantively to the dialogue of change in the field. Your Board has been hard at work this year gearing up for the changes ahead:

- The Society has participated in a task force spearheaded by the Family Psychology Specialty Council under the leadership of Michele Harway, Ph.D., ABPP to consider whether to pursue accreditation for family psychology educational programs or to simply find ways to enhance family psychology's specialty status. The task force, overseen by Terry Patterson Ph.D., ABPP has made recommendations to the FPSC who has currently assigned smaller task forces to investigate family

psychology programs further and to investigate ways to enhance the specialty of family psychology.

- Largely through the efforts of Tom Sexton Ph.D., ABPP, the website is almost ready to debut. It will definitely be up and running by the APA Convention in August. Erika Lawrence, Ph.D., VP for Science, and her committee; Barb Fiese, Ph.D., VP for Education, and her committee; Ruth Morehouse, Ph.D., VP for Practice; and James Dobbins, Ph.D., VP for Diversity have all contributed to the content of the website. The website will offer resources on evidence based research and practice, continuing education, discussion forums, resources for students and prospective students in family psychology, and resources for practitioners and academics.
- The Society is excited to offer a continuing education palette through the new website. The website will offer courses from respected family psychologists that will meet CEU state

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requirements (through APA). Barb Fiese Ph.D., working with a task force spearheaded by Chris Tobey, Ph.D., ABPP, has worked hard to develop this program.

- The Board has recognized the great job that Deborah Cox Ph.D., ABPP has done as editor of *The Family Psychologist*. The newsletter is really close to being a peer reviewed level entity. Therefore, the board has entertained the idea of converting TFP to a subscription journal that would fill a hole in the journal offerings by a) being theme driven b) offering an anchor article that could be substantially longer than those accepted by other journals – then offering related smaller dialogue articles around the same theme c) offering a place for publication of qualitative studies d) offering a place that would focus on promoting the identity of a family psychologist and e) offer a venue for emphasizing the practice of family psychology. The Society Board convened a task force to study the feasibility and advisability of making such a transition. The task force includes Tom Sexton, Ph.D., ABPP, Susan McDaniel, Ph.D., ABPP, Marianne Celano, Ph.D., ABPP, and George Hong, Ph.D., ABPP. The task force has just recently sent a proposal to APA.
- For the first time, all of the boards of family psychology met for a joint mid-winter meeting: The Society for Family Psychology (John Thoburn, Ph.D., ABPP, President), the Family Psychology Specialty Council (Michele Harway, Ph.D., ABPP, President), The American Academy of Couple and Family Psychology (Melton Strozier, Ph.D., ABPP, President) and the American Board of Couple and Family Psychology (Rodney Nurse, Ph.D., ABPP, President). The boards held their meetings separately, then came together around family psychology issues common to them all, including the issues of APA accreditation of family psychology programs and the relationship between the Society and the American Board of Professional Psychology. A great deal was accomplished at this meeting and despite logistical challenges it was deemed an overall success.

- Committees and Representatives

- * The International Committee, chaired by Florence Kaslow, Ph.D., ABPP has been very active. The IC will offer a symposium this summer featuring international work in areas as diverse as South Africa and Haiti.
- * The Human Sexuality Committee, chaired by Ruth Morehouse, Ph.D. is just getting off the ground. Dr. Morehouse has recruited a committee membership of some of the top researchers and practitioners in the field of human sexuality today. The HSC is also working with the American Board of Couple and Family Psychology as it deliberates on adding a human sexuality sub-specialty.
- * The Membership Committee, chaired by Stephen Cheung, Ph.D. has continued its aggressive push for growth, especially among the student demographic, in cooperation with Kendra Jones, M.A. student representative. The committee has seen growth every year since Dr. Cheung has been its chair.
- * The Society for Family Psychology has reclaimed its second representative on APA's Council of Representatives. The Society lost the seat in 2009, but reclaimed it this year, a direct result of the membership's commitment to cast their votes for the Society's nominees. A second seat has been vital for maintaining a family psychology perspective in APA leadership deliberations and decisions.

This is a representative sampling of what the Society for Family Psychology has been doing this past year. We truly are a Society on the move. Join us this August at the APA Convention during the Family Psychology Social hour and President's Reception on Friday evening as we celebrate those who are making a difference today as practitioners, researchers, academics, supervisors and consultants in the field of family psychology, along with the leaders of tomorrow – students and early career psychologists. We'll make history together, so that 25 years from now people will say, "that second 25 years of the Society was something else!" ■

—John Thoburn Ph.D., ABPP
President