**Morris County Psychological Association**

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**May 9, 2018 Program – 9:30-10:30am**

**Fostering Psychological Flexibility and Nurturing Communities**

**Through Acceptance and Mindfulness-Based Approaches**

Presented by:

Jennifer Block-Lerner, Ph.D., Amanda Aster, Psy.D., and Paola Ricardo, B.A.

**Meeting announcements by Current President, Mike Zito:**

I. -Group voted the on the 3 items listed below:

1. Non – county members were voted via majority to be allowed to become members

2. NJPA Rep. Voted to be a member of the board going forward

3. Voted on specifics of how student member will be interviewed to become the student rep

II. -Registration deadline to be included in the Directory is June 15

-please make sure your membership is current and you have checked your profile and accuracy of your email before then because that is what goes in the directory

III. –The program planning meeting will be held immediately after the June 6th awards program right across the hall from this meeting room from about 10:45-12:45. Please join us and bring your ideas for next year if you are interested

IV. -Need NJPA rep and help for Jayne with programming.

-Jayne explained how since the CEU process has changed (and become a little more cumbersome) the Program Chair job now needs has three different facets and we are looking for a third person to help with this

-Please let any board members know if you are interested in getting involved with these.

V. -The NJPA Membership Committee is seeking volunteers for a focus group that will meet on the 3rd week of May to re-examine the NJPA membership model / dues structure with the hope of shifting to a tier model (bronze, silver, gold, platinum) that removes the focus of years practicing. We will send out related flyer

VI. -Susan summarized Awards results – had 11 school and 30 students enter, 13 teachers, 4 winners and 5 honorable mentions. New school in the winners circle = Randolph HS. Morristown asked if we could mentor their students and Tamsen Thorpe mentored one of the winners – congrats!

VII. -Upcoming MCPA Program and Breakfast: 6/6 @ 9 am (Wyndham Hamilton Park Conference Center / Florham Park) – High School Psychology Awards Meeting

VIII. -Jayne gave a full explanation of the CE process (must sign in and sign out/stay the whole time…) and confidentiality and introduced the speakers. The link to pay and then get CEU is: **http://psychologynj.org/morris-may** and then certificates are emailed 1-2 weeks after the link closes). **Link closes 5/16/18!**

***-Register for upcoming programs or see complete set of slides from today’s program on our website (***[***www.mcpanj.com)***](http://www.mcpanj.com))

**Attendees:** Randy Bressler, Jayne Schater-Walco, Sarah Dougherty, Marc Gironda, Hayley Hirschmann, Morgan Murray, Beverly Tignor, Deborah Fisch, Melissa Klika Mack, Susan Neigher, Francine Rosenberg, Nancy Sidhu, Joshua Zavin, Mike Zito, Lynn Mollick, Nathan McClelland, Carly Orentstein, Nydia Rolon, Jeff Singer, Milton Spett, Joanne VanNest, Elaine Weinman, Amit Bagga, Christine Gurriere, Phyllis Lakin, Roman Lemega, Ilana Lev-El, Aaron Welt, Kristina Golovina, Deborah Fisch, Nydia Rolon, Laura DeMarzo, Komal Dutt, (Jennifer Block-Lerner – Presenter, Amanda Aster –Presenter (plus guest), Paola Ricardo – Presenter)

**Presenter Bios:**

Jennifer Block-Lerner earned her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University at Albany and completed her clinical internship and postdoctoral training through the VA Boston Healthcare System.  She is currently an associate professor and director of the PsyD program in combined school and clinical psychology at Kean University in Union, NJ.  Along with colleague Dr. Donald Marks and a strong team of doctoral students, including Paola Ricardo, she is engaged in developing, implementing, and evaluating the value of brief mindfulness and acceptance-based stress-management and wellness-fostering workshops for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as university faculty and staff.  Jenn recently co-edited *The mindfulness-informed educator: Building acceptance and psychological flexibility in higher education* (Routledge/Taylor & Francis).  She is also part of a small private practice in Maplewood, the Center for Acceptance and Commitment of New York and New Jersey.

Dr. Amanda M. Aster, Psy.D is an associate licensed psychologist at Morris Psychological Group, in Parsippany, NJ, specializing in providing contemporary cognitive behavioral therapies integrated with mind body approaches (e.g., mindfulness, meditation, yoga) to adolescents and adults. She earned her Psy.D. in School and Clinical Psychology from Kean University and completed her internship and postdoctoral training at the Brattleboro Retreat in Brattleboro. VT, an APA-accredited psychiatric hospital specializing in the treatment of co-occurring disorders among a population of Uniformed Service Professionals. Dr. Aster is currently an Adjunct Professor in the Psy.D program in combined School and Clinical Psychology at Kean University in Union. NJ, and is part of the Board of Directors of the NYC Chapter of the Association for Contextual Behavioral Science.

Paola Ricardo is a second year doctoral student at Kean University’s Combined School and Clinical Psy.D. Program.  Prior to working on her doctoral degree, she worked in residential and out-reach settings, while working with children and families. Throughout this time, she became interested in the role behavior played on the emotional and physical health of clients and colleagues alike, and pursued her yoga teacher training. Her research interests include holistic approaches, mindfulness-based practices, yoga, stress-management, and health related topics. In terms of clinical interests, Paola is interested in working with adults in a health psychology setting.

**Overview of talk:**

Acceptance- and mindfulness-based approaches, including acceptance and commitment therapy, aim to foster processes consistent with psychological flexibility, defined as the capacity to fully contact the present moment and continue or change behavior in the service of what one cares most about. Further, grounded in functional contextualism, these approaches aim to build nurturing communities or broader contexts that foster compassion and prosociality.  Via didactics, experiential exercises, and case-based examples, this presentation will explore key elements of psychological flexibility and invite participants to develop their own related practices.

Learning Objectives - Upon completion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

* Describe components of the psychological flexibility model
* Explore ways to model and promote a therapeutic stance consistent with ACT and other mindfulness- and acceptance-based approaches
* Develop practices consistent with ACT and other mindfulness- and acceptance-based approaches that aim to foster psychological flexibility and nurturing communities with a wide range of populations

Bullet Points from Presentation:

-Psychological Flexibility (PF) (definitions and overlap with other theories/processes)

-the capacity to fully contact the present moment “just as it is” and continuing or changing behavior in the service of one’s value

-via ACT want to be able to have the “pain” and still function and “do things”

-metaphor of walking your mind on a leash as opposed to the other way around

-Shared model of Psychological Flexibility (PF) – all interconnected

-Six Crucial Questions – in slides

“defusion” – have to do with distance or space between your thoughts AND also do what matters most.

“values” – what do you want your life to be most about? What direction do we want our life to go in? (this exploration is useful and important)

-Metaphor of compass helpful here. Important with clients because want to be moving in the direction of their values and what matters most to them.

Flexibility about Flexibility

-many ways of fostering these processes

Most closely connected with acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT); overlap with mindfulness-based stress reduction, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, DBT

Exercise of Holding our emotional experiences – “The Hug Exercise”

-More info in complete slide set.

***-Again, please register for upcoming programs or see complete set of slides from today’s program on our website (www.mcpanj.com)***

**Respectfully submitted by:**

**MCPA Secretary – Hayley Hirschmann, PhD**