

Marriage & Family TODAY!

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Texas
Association of
Marriage
and Family
Counselors

A Division of the Texas Counseling Association

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2008-2009

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Dr. Karen Linstrum

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Newsletter Spotlight

TAMFT Annual

Conference

January 29, 31, 2009

Fort Worth, TX

TAMFC

Where Professional

Unity & Wellness

Meet

President's Message

As a president, this is my second year to serve this fine association. I am truly pleased and grateful to work with a group of dedicated professional serving the board of TAMFC. More over, as we are returning from the Texas Counseling Association Annual Conference, I am even more impressed with TAMFC membership. A group of professional Marriage and Family Counselors who constantly give us the energy and fresh ideas that we need to stay on top of challenges within our organization.



I am pleased to let the membership know that we are 239 members strong. We have been able to increase our memberships by about 100 people in the past two years. Now we are one of the largest divisions with in the TCA and believe that we still have room to grow. We are planning to nominate TAMFC as the outstanding TCA division for 2009. Regardless of outcome, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for making this association what it is.

Currently we are in the process of developing our very own TAMFC web page. TAMFC Secretary, Dean Aslinia is currently collecting links and information that will be on our webpage. If you have any particular links that you think would be of use to our membership or ideas about web page, please share them with Dean by contacting him at Dean_Aslinia@tamu-commerce.edu .

For the first time, TAMFC and IAMFC are looking in to sponsoring a one day workshop for TAMFC members and other interested people in early Fall of 2009. We will keep



other interested people in early Fall of 2009. We will keep you informed as we proceed and will provide detailed information to you at a later time.

As I have mentioned before, we need to get more people involved in the everyday life of our association. One of the weaknesses that I have noticed within our association is that we historically have had a board that consists of professionals only from North East Texas. This is due to the fact that, most of the founding members of TAMFC have been from this area. I believe that in order for TAMFC to be even a more vibrant association, we need to diversify our board membership and have a broader representation. TAMFC board appreciates and welcomes any idea on how we can effectively and economically diversify the TAMFC board membership.

I am looking forward to upcoming year as I am finishing my three-year term as TAMFC president. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any suggestion that you may have on how I could serve you better.

Amir Abbassi, Ph.D., LPC, LMFT
President - TAMFC



Treasurer's Report

As of 08/31/2008
TAMFC has a balance
of \$7,596.67 .



Family Resilience: Concepts to Guide our Work with Families

by Jodie L. Elder

Resilience has been defined as the “ability to respond positively to an adverse situation and emerge from the situation feeling strengthened, more resourceful, and more confident” (Simon, Murphy, & Smith, 2005, p. 427). Therefore, two conditions must be met for the term to apply: (a) a hardship must be encountered, and (b) a positive outcome must occur in spite of this adversity.

Werner's (1993) longitudinal study of at-risk Hawaiian youth represents a seminal work in the field of resiliency. For 32 years, Werner tracked youth who were facing stressors, such as perinatal stress, poverty, parental psychopathology, and disruptions of their family unit, and identified protective factors present in the lives of those individuals who thrived despite these hardships. Individual protective factors included an easy temperament, cognitive skills, self-esteem, and an internal locus of control. Protective factors in the environment included having at least one adult role model who accepted them unconditionally, having interests and hobbies which provided solace from chaotic home lives and a sense of self-efficacy, and the opening up of opportunities through access to education at community colleges, vocational skills in military service, and active involvement in a church or religious community.

Later, family practitioners began applying the concept of resilience to families. Simon, Murphy, and Smith (2005) suggested that three factors should be considered when evaluating family resilience: length of the adverse situation, life stage during which the family encounters the challenge, and the resources the family uses to face the crisis. Short-term situations that require minor changes to the family's functioning are considered “challenges,” whereas crises are recurring situations that require major adaptations (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1988). Walsh (2006) highlighted that a family's life stage often determines the current normative stressors being faced, as well as the strengths present at any certain



time. Both of these issues significantly interact with a family's ability to remain resilient when encountering other, non-normative stressors. Lastly, the use of both internal and external sources of support impacts a family's resiliency. Simon, Murphy, and Smith (2005) pointed out that families who are willing to reach out for support from external sources, such as extended family, friends, community members, schools, churches, and mental and physical health care providers show higher levels of resilience.



Working at the Chicago Center for Family Health, Froma Walsh has become a formative figure in the field of family resiliency. Through her work, several protective factors have been identified which promote family resiliency. First of all, Walsh (2006) emphasizes the importance of a family's shared belief system, which helps members make meaning of the adversity, maintain a positive outlook, and cultivate a sense of transcendence and spirituality which sustains them. A second protective factor, family organization, involves a flexible structure, shared leadership, mutual support and connectedness, and teamwork. Families who pull together in times of crisis and who mobilize their social and economic resources are more likely to weather the storm, whatever it may be. Lastly, a family's communication processes significantly impact their resilience levels. Resilient families foster open, honest communication, send clear, consistent messages, and engage in collaborative problem solving when difficulties arise. In her book, *Strengthening Family Resilience*, Walsh (2006) reviews practical applications of these protective factors and presents research on how families remain resilient in the face of specific crises, such as loss, chronic illness, and trauma.

Legislative Report

by Karen Linstrum, Ph.D., LPC, CRC

Mental Health Parity Bills Passed.

On September 23, 2008, both houses of Congress passed bills requiring private health plan providers to not discriminate coverage for mental health and addictive disorders.

The voting was overwhelming for the end of the discriminatory practices. The House voted 376 for and 47 against the bill. The Senate voted 93 for and only 2 opposed.

Despite being recognized by private sector health plans, licensed professional counselors have yet to be recognized under Medicare. When a client turns 65, counselors lose both their business and their income, and too many counselors are denied hospital jobs because they cannot bill Medicare. This issue affects the recognition of and respect for the counseling professions throughout the country—from rehabilitation counseling to professional counseling.

Covering roughly 38 million older Americans (65 and older) and 5 million Americans with disabilities, Medicare currently is the nation's largest health insurance program; in the next 20 years, the program will nearly double in size as the baby-boomers retire.

S.921

Title: A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of marriage and family therapist services and mental health counselor services under part B of the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Senator Thomas Greig [WY] (introduced 3/20/2007)

Related Bills: [H.R.1588](#)

Latest Major Action: 3/20/2007 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance.

COSPONSORS(9), ALPHABETICAL

Sen Barrasso, John [WY] - 9/20/2007
Sen Brown, Sherrod [OH] - 5/15/2007
Sen Boxer, Barbara [CA] - 3/27/2007
Sen Durbin, Richard [IL] - 5/23/2007
Sen Johnson, Tim [SD] - 9/21/2007
Sen Inouye, Daniel K. [HI] - 9/11/2008
Sen Landrieu, Mary L. [LA] - 7/10/2007
Sen Lieberman, Joseph I. [CT] - 5/11/2007
Sen Lincoln, Blanche L. [AR] - 3/20/2007



SAMPLE TALKING POINTS To your Representatives
Medicare recipients need better access to quality mental health care.
Seniors have the highest suicide rate of any demographic.
Over 70% having seen their physician within a month of committing suicide.
The current system is not working.

Report on Texas Medical Association's lawsuit against the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists **By Amir Abbassi, Ph.D.**

Dear TAMFC member,

As you may have been aware by now, Texas Medical Association (TMA) has filed a lawsuit against Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists, stating the TSBEMFT should not be using the words "diagnosis" and "treatments" in their vocabulary. This litigation is for the Sate Board of Examiner of Marriage and Family Therapists (SBEMFT) and does not apply to the Sate Board of Examiner for Professional Counselor (SBEPCC), evidently because the language in the LPC statute clearly establishes an exception for physical diagnosis that the LPC Board may not be subject to litigation. Section 503.003(b)4) defines "Counseling treatment intervention means the application of cognitive, affective, behavioral, psychodynamic, and systemic counseling strategies, including strategies for development, wellness, and psychological dysfunction that reflect a pluralistic society. The term does not permit or include diagnosis or treatment of a physical condition or disorder..." The MFT statute apparently does not include this language.



Senator's Report **By Angela Corrigan, Ph.D.**

2008 is almost over and TAMFC has made much progress. We've welcomed new officers Dean Aslinia and Jodie Elder, who are proving to be wonderful additions to the TAMFC team. This year we have created and introduced our new brochures. This project was long overdue and we are thrilled with the outcome. Maintaining a professional division within TCA can be challenging. All of the officers volunteer their time and energy with little reward. TAMFC strives to recognize and appreciate our members and officers. One worthy recipient of our honor is former TAMFC president Elise Douglas. Although maintaining a private practice, marriage and family, Elise managed to give many years of dedicated service to TAMFC. Her pleasant attitude, creative ideas, willingness to work hard, and consistent follow

pleasant attitude, creative ideas, willingness to work hard, and consistent follow through made her an effective leader and friend within our organization. We look forward to many more years of collaborative work with Elise. Another step of progress TAMFC has accomplished this year is the addition of a TAMFC webpage through TCA. As other divisions may know, maintaining a website independently is a challenge. Financial limits and changing leadership create difficulties hard to overcome in this area. We would like to express gratitude to TCA for providing this valuable link. Please visit the TCA/TAMFC webpage to stay updated about TAMFC events and opportunities. The webpage will also provide opportunity for your voice to be heard within TAMFC. Covering the entire state of Texas, the issues that face our members are numerous and broad. We want to know your thoughts, ideas, and concerns relevant to TAMFC.



As Senator, I am privileged to represent the TAMFC membership at the TCA Senate meetings, held twice a year. These meetings, held in June and November, follow the TCA Board meetings and are the venue in which the TCA Board suggests policy and procedure changes. The Senate takes a vote and change is made.

This is also the venue in which information is shared. One such important piece of information shared by TAMFC is regarding the lawsuit recently initiated by the Texas Medical Association against the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists. The TSBEMFT Rules can be found at: [http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=3&ti=22&pt=35](http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=3&ti=22&pt=35).

One issue that was brought up by several of our members at the TCA conference is the difficulty in becoming a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. This Licensure is most easily acquired during your educational process. Information about the specific requirements can be found at http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mft/mft_apply.shtm. To work with couples and families, you must have some training in this area. However, licensure is not required. LPCs and other mental health professionals and clergy are exempt from additional licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist. However, currently LMFTs are eligible to work with military personnel and receive reimbursement where LPCs are not. In addition, having a license as a Marriage and Family Therapist provides your clientele some assurance and faith in your abilities to work with this special population.

This newsletter was designed and edited by S. Dean Aslinia, TAMFC Secretary for comments, suggestions and feedback please write to Dean_Aslinia@tamu-commrece.edu

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**The Executive Board of the Texas
Association of Marriage and**

Family Counselors wishes you and
your family a wonderful holiday
season and a prosperous New Year!

