



Southern
California
Counseling
Center

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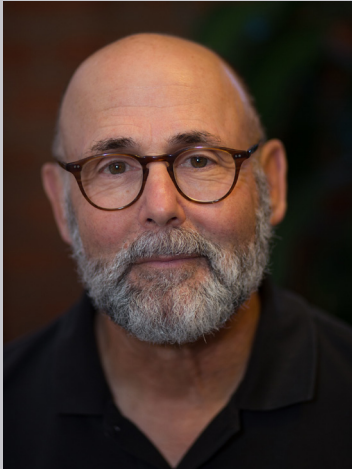
Fall 2017

A publication for supporters of the
Southern California Counseling Center

**Lucy
Sloninsky
MD Joins
SCCC**



Realizing Many Possibilities



Robert Mendelsohn
Clinical Director

We have seen a year of possibilities realized, and we look ahead to so many opportunities to explore as a community in the months to come. Just this past month we welcomed Lucy Sloninsky, MD, our second consulting psychiatrist, who joins Dr. Eleanor Curry and brings a second full day of services that greatly reduces wait times for our clients. This fall three Spanish-fluent counselors join us to be

supervised by a Spanish-fluent supervisor. Program directors Marianne Diaz and Kim Cookson have combined their Outreach and Trauma programs not only to provide services to upwards of 1,500 clients in South Los Angeles but to create groundbreaking ways of bringing these life-saving services to underserved communities of color. Twenty-plus counselors

began providing therapy online through our HIPAA-compliant web portal WeCounsel. Next year the entire incoming new counselor cohort will be trained to do so. And this year Outreach Programs workshopped our first-ever, all-day LGBTQIA counselor training. Starting next year every new counselor will receive it. If all of that isn't enough, we imagine two new training tracks within Outreach: One for counselors who wish to specialize in services to underserved communities; and another for counselors seeking an LGBTQIA focus.

I could go on, for instance describing Mojgan Farazian's revitalization of the TAPP program, which now has eight counselor facilitators and is experimenting with exciting new techniques, such as offering anger management tools not only to participating clients but to their children at home as well. But I will leave you with the observation and deepest wish that our community continues to co-create this vital and groundbreaking work together.

So welcome to all our new counselors this autumn; we hope your experiences at SCCC will be deep and meaningful. Welcome back to all returning interns as well as to our volunteer supervisors. May we all grow rich with possibilities and learning.

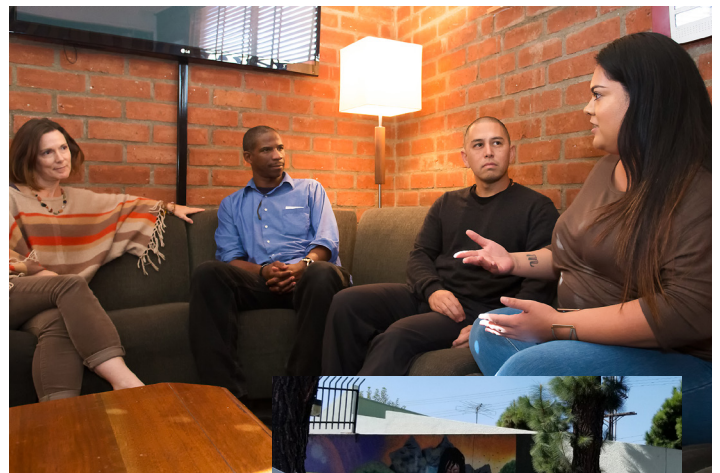
True Community Counseling

Donors help bring SCCC paraprofessional training home to a community in need

It was 2013 when SCCC took its first steps toward addressing mental health needs in Watts, a greatly underserved community. Director of Outreach Services Marianne Diaz in collaboration with the Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC) brought her team of Outreach counselors to deliver services that empower individuals and strengthen the community as a whole.

These strategies began with Violence Prevention group counseling, helping those court-ordered to receive services that develop effective new coping skills and better means of managing stress, reactivity and rage that all too often lead to violence. These groups have grown and additional services were added, such as individual counseling, parenting classes in English and Spanish and, most recently, paraprofessional training that enables interested community members to undergo training to address critical needs where they live. In total, SCCC's efforts in the area reach upwards of 1,500 clients annually.

"The contributions of everyone involved are having a profound impact," said Marianne Diaz, "Our thanks to all of them."



[Top] Outreach counselors meet each week for training and supervision. They include [left to right] Michelle Sargent, Damani Attiba, Matthew Shima and Raquel Serrano.

[Middle] Services are provided at WLCAC in the heart of South Los Angeles.

[Left] Outreach Director Marianne Diaz coordinates all training and services.

Doubling Our Capacity

Key foundations make significant gifts that enable our Psychiatry Services Program to grow dramatically



Eleanor Curry, MD, blazed the trail for the then-new SCCC Psychiatric Services program in 2014.

It was an audacious plan: To make affordable, easily accessible psychiatric services available to the clients of the Southern California Counseling Center. Too many clients had drifted away from counseling over the years, due to the fact that they struggled with ongoing psychiatric issues such as bipolar illness or depression that seriously impeded their ability to maintain counseling and make meaningful change in their lives.

The first major steps took place in 2014 when Eleanor Curry, MD,

joined the SCCC team to provide onsite psychiatric assessment and medication management one day a week. The program was an immediate success. But it wasn't long before a waiting list for services grew and put pressure on the program to expand. A search for an additional psychiatrist began in earnest. Just this July, Lucy Sloninsky, MD, came on board providing the program with an additional full day each week. These efforts double the capacity of the program, enabling SCCC to address the needs of

approximately 250 psychiatric clients annually.

"These developments have fundamentally changed how we deliver quality mental health services," said Clinical Director Robert Mendelsohn. "With two physicians available onsite to address these important needs, we believe we are fulfilling our mission more completely."

Dr. Sloninsky received her medical degree from Sackler School of Medicine in Tel Aviv. She trained at Cedars Sinai and UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute. Dr. Curry graduated from the UCLA School of Medicine and completed residencies and training at UCLA and the Los Angeles VA.

"It's important to acknowledge the role our funders and donors have played in making this all possible," said Executive Director Gail Wilburn. "Our heartfelt thanks to The Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation of California, the QueensCare Charitable Foundation, Cedars Sinai Medical Center, and all donors who have given so generously. This transformation would not be possible without all of you."



**Clinical Client Coordinator
Arezou Yashoua**

SCCC makes it possible for me to bring meaningful change to the clients I work with.

— Counselor Christine Mourad



It's been so gratifying for me as a supervisor to help new counselors learn and grow.

— Supervisor Carol Kaye

The Value of SCCC

One Board Member's Point of View



Jesse Lanier-Vos

I found out about SCCC from my friend, Charlotte Spiegelman, a longtime SCCC supervisor and trainer, who I met at Pilates. I overheard her talking about something therapy-related and I introduced myself as a fellow LCSW. Immediately, she told me about SCCC and suggested that I volunteer as a clinical supervisor. As soon as Bob and Gail gave me a tour of SCCC, I knew I had stumbled across a very unique place. While most of the therapists at SCCC are trained as Marriage and Family Therapists, for me, SCCC truly embodies social work values. The breaking down of financial barriers to counseling, the importance and centrality of human relations, and the focus on the dignity and worth of the individual are central to the work at SCCC. Whether it's working with counselors, interacting with Board Members, or participating in staff-led meetings, I am inspired by the passion and commitment to these ideals.



TAPP: The Abuse Prevention Program Finds Fresh Footing and Thrives



Counselor Larisa Villa [above, left] role-plays a new client in The Abuse Prevention Program (TAPP) with program director Mojgan Farazian.

A familiar picture hangs on the wall of Room 14 where many groups from The Abuse Prevention Program (TAPP) meet. It's in remembrance of the program's founder, George Thomas, who created the program over 35 years ago.

Since then, TAPP has continued to offer essential skills, tools and support for those who are court-ordered, as well as those who self-refer, for intimate partner violence or anger manage-

ment assistance. We estimate the program has served thousands of men and women, both primary aggressors and survivors, since it began. TAPP also provides training and group counseling experience for SCCC counselors. Currently, 10 counselors are in training this year.

In 2017, the TAPP program developed a renewed outlook, thanks in large measure to the program's current director, Mojgan Farazian, LMFT, who graduated from SCCC's training programs and found a passion for working with those who seek guidance and help for dealing with anger and relationship issues.



Program Director Mojgan Farazian, LMFT

This work goes to the heart of what we do as mental health professionals.

"It's great to see so many SCCC counselors committed to addressing the realities of anger and violence in our communities," said Moj. "I do this work because it goes to the very heart of what we do as mental health professionals."

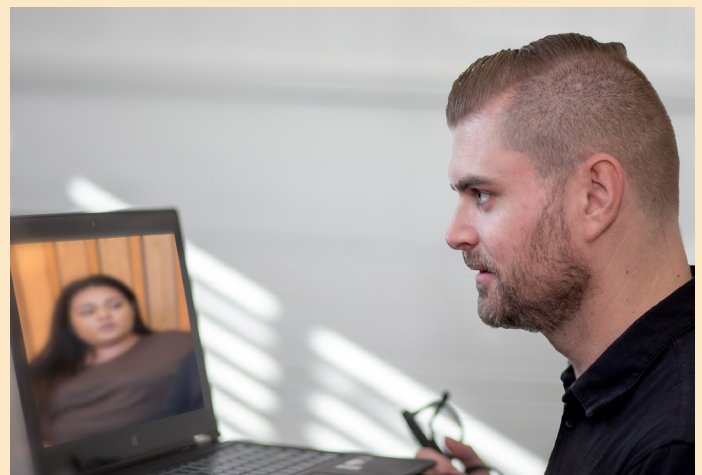
Bringing Counseling Online

Social media, streaming, smart phones and tablets have changed the way many people manage their lives. It was inevitable that counseling too would find expression through these applications, particularly for people who for various reasons cannot travel to the Center. SCCC has been most fortunate that Board member Peter Smuts came forward to spearhead the development of the WeCounsel online portal.

"Peter has made such a huge difference in SCCC's ability to utilize new technology to safely and



Many thanks to Board member Peter Smuts [above] who has done so much to help develop and implement SCCC's WeCounsel online portal.



Counselor Syd Peterson [above] tries out the WeCounsel web portal, which enables counselors to provide services from home.

confidentially deliver services," said Board chair Margo Peck. "This advance enables us to take a real leadership position in the digital mental health community." Currently 20 counselors provide online services through the portal. Next year all counselors will be trained to do so.

Train-the-Trainer Takes on Trauma

Now in its fourth year, the SCCC Trauma and Resiliency Training program sprouts wings to share its skills more broadly.



[Above] Counselors Renee Rousselot [left] and Christine Mourad demonstrate the use of specialized tools that have been shown to resolve trauma and increase client resiliency.

The SCCC Trauma and Resiliency Training Program is pleased to announce that it will offer a Community Resiliency Model (CRM) Train-the-Trainer for 12 Outreach Counselors. This training is being conducted by the Trauma Resource Institute (TRI), which has provided a number of foundational trainings for the program in the past. Over a four-day training, counselors will receive specialized consultation and guidance that will help facilitate



Kim Cookson, PsyD, has directed the growth of the Trauma and Resiliency Training Program since 2012.

teaching CRM in various community settings. To be certified, all counselors will be required to be observed teaching the CRM model and resiliency skills by a master trainer. The types of settings where they

would provide trainings include: teacher and/or student training in schools, community centers, hospital/nursing home settings, churches, synagogues, mosques and senior centers. Having SCCC CRM Certified Trainers will enable the Counseling Center to broaden the reach of Outreach Services into surrounding communities. The CRM model promotes a solid understanding of trauma and its effect on the human nervous system, as well as teaches tools for effective self-regulation as a means to achieve recovery and resilience. Our new certified counselor trainers will have the capacity to impact large numbers of people, young and old, from all walks of life.

Upcoming Events

October 21 Fall Retreat

All SCCC counselors, alumni, staff and board members are invited to attend. This year we are proud to welcome renowned psychologist and author of several books on neuroscience and psychotherapy **Louis Cozolino, Ph.D.**, who will present “Why Therapy Works” from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. In this workshop, Dr. Cozolino will explain how the brain’s evolution into a social organ impacts how we learn, unlearn, and relearn on our way towards creating lasting change. Join us at the Great Hall in Plummer Park in West Hollywood for a day of learning, socializing, delicious food, and fun and games.

October 29

Continuing Education: Law & Ethics, 9 am - 4 pm

Chuck Moshontz will offer this six-hour refresher that will clarify changes to rules governing our professional work. Specific attention will be given to requirements for supervision, technology-assisted services, and record-keeping, as well as recent changes to the AAMFT Code of Ethics and proposed changes to California’s MFT licensure requirements. Chuck has taught law and ethics continuing education courses for psychotherapists throughout California since 2002. Free to current SCCC supervisors; SCCC Alumni receive a 20% discount.

November-December 2017

Outreach Holiday Food and Gift Drives

SCCC Outreach Services will once again sponsor gift and food drives for clients in need this holiday season. Announcements will appear online and in the Thursday bulletin. Your help and support will be most appreciated.

February 2018

Upcoming Film – They Call Us Monsters by Ben Lear

SCCC will be hosting a special film screening for the SCCC community. Over the course of two years, the son of writer/producer Norman Lear followed the lives of three young men incarcerated for murder and attempted murder at the juvenile justice detention center in Sylmar. “They Call Us Monsters” asks vital questions about humane treatment when it comes to legislation regarding youth incarceration. More details as to the time and place for the screening will be available in the new year.

SCCC’s Online Alumni Referral Portal is Live!

This brand new online tool built for SCCC alumni will allow potential clients to easily find Center-trained counselors through the SCCC website. SCCC alumni will be able to list their specialties, modalities, contact info and more. Best of all: it’s free! For more info, contact nfisher@sccc-la.org.



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Eleanor Curry, MD, Consulting Psychiatrist

Marianne Diaz, Director, Outreach Services

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