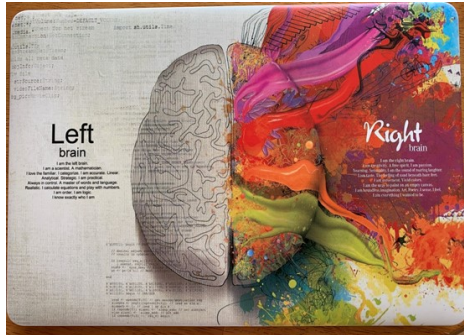


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President's Perspective

Karen J. Kietzman, PsyD, MPA
President

This is my computer cover. It seemed appropriate to publish for these times.

We have been living in a state of conflict between the left and right side

of our brains. COVID-19 has brought about fear and controversy as well as a sobering reality to our nation as a whole. But in our state, so far, this reality seems difficult to comprehend. We are doing as we are instructed, keeping our distance, following the rules. And it seems to be working here. But as the death rate continues to decline, and the numbers of active cases decline as well, we still hold our breath. The anxiety this has engendered among our population is something we are best equipped to handle. We are now the front-liners. We need to be there for each other as we go forward into this new reality.

My last "last article" is an example of what we look forward to in our future. "And then there was April." As most of you know, I love to make cards. I got a set of digital COVID-19 sayings. I will share them with you:

*"What a year this month has been",
"I am smiling behind this mask",
"I'd totally share my toilet paper with you",
"SENDING HUGS ... from a distance",
"Spread joy not germs;"
"Miss you. Hoping that staying home more things changed
than my pajamas",
"Not alone, just apart",
"you are essential to me",
"6 feet apart but still in my heart",*

and my favorite:

*"Quarantini - it's the normal martini, but you drink it at
home, ... alone".*

These echo, hopefully with humor, some of the major concerns we face as we move forward. A sense of isolation and anxiety, redefining community,

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Impact of Racism in Montana

WanndiWi Rose, PhD; MPA Diversity Coordinator

I am writing this with a heavy heart. The recent deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor have led to protests across our nation. Once again a light has exposed the racism that is still affecting so many in our country. The American Psychological Association has issued a statement regarding the mental health consequences and stated that “we are living in a racism pandemic, which is taking a heavy psychological toll on our African American citizens.” The Montana Psychological Association (MPA) strives to encourage, address, and champion diversity within our association, membership, and practice. This includes addressing racism and its psychological effects.

Living in Montana, the impact of these events may seem removed and unrelated to our everyday lives. I would like to encourage the members of MPA to take a moment and reflect on the individual and societal impact of racism. I encourage our members to consider ways in which they can broaden their worldview, share their knowledge and experience, and support those who are experiencing racism and inequality in their communities. It is my hope that we will be able to have opportunities to discuss racism and diversity issues affecting our members and clients in Montana on a more regular basis. I ask that we support one another and actively condemn racism. Thank you again for the opportunity to serve as the diversity coordinator for Montana. Take care and stay safe.

President’s Perspective (continued from page 1)

and fearing each other, infect us as we slowly move back into our daily routines. I worked out at my gym with a young trainer who did none of the protocols my girlfriend (the gym owner) has put in place to safely reopen. She even said, “we’re not afraid of germs”. The numbers in Montana tell me she’s right, but I was a bit irritated with her for not wiping down each station between people. Yes, I hand-sanitized and showered immediately upon returning home. And there were only 4 of us there. But still...

Another pet peeve - everyone is essential! The suicide rate will go up because we now define who is essential. I am dealing with that issue in my practice. Are you?

I thought this would only be a short paragraph to parrot Jack Nickelson’s creepy saying: “I’m baaack”. But seriously, I will remain at the helm until we are back on even keel, and hopefully back to our conference in the Fall. That is when I will, God willing, hand over the reins to Mary Kay Bogumill and say adieu ... again. Or at least fade into the background and help her as she navigates this whole new world. Peace and blessings to all of you. My prayers are continually with you and hope you are all staying safe and being the calm in the storms around you.

Legislative and Council Report May 2020

Michele McKinnie, PsyD; MPA Legislative Chair & Montana's Council Representative to APA

Currently I proudly wear multiple hats for MPA so I am consolidating my reports to the membership in one article.

By the time this newsletter is published the Primary Election in MT will have taken place and you should know who is running in the General Election in November. Please do take this opportunity to connect with your representatives and develop relationships with them. Support those people you prefer by donating to their campaign, agreeing to place a sign in your yard, or any other way to make a connection. Those connections have served us well in the past and will continue to do so. Legislative or grassroots lobbying thrives with already existing relationships. Discussions with colleagues from around the country suggest that there may be an opportunity for grassroots efforts related to telehealth and insurance coverage, parity issues in reimbursement and perhaps other issues yet to unfold. At this time, we are not aware of any of these issues percolating in the MT legislative hopper, but we will stay attuned and keep you informed. Please continue to use the MPA Listserve as venue for communicating with colleagues; MPA is YOUR association and your participation makes us stronger together.

You can get involved!! Participating with the Legislative Committee is an interesting way to be involved in the profession of psychology outside the office and can expand your impact in other ways. Please reach out to me at michelecatherine@hotmail.com should you have any interest in joining us. We would greatly appreciate your participation!

On the APA front there are numerous adjustments being made in response to COVID-19. APA has mandated telework for all employees through the end of 2020 and there will be no in-person meetings through the end of 2020. This means the 2020 APA Convention is transitioning to an online format that

has yet to be determined. The summer Council Meeting is also slated to happen virtually, and the APA staff, Board of Directors, and Council Leadership Team are working to find a way to make that process meaningful and productive. As these plans take shape I will be certain MPA members are informed of the changes and of possible new ways of participating in the APA Convention that were previously unavailable.

It is with deep sadness that I share the passing of 2 former APA leaders due to COVID-19. Dr. Jean Lau Chin, a recent candidate for APA President and a highly active leader in APA Division 35 (Women), the New York Psychological Association, and a prominent Asian American feminist psychologist, died on May 13, 2020. There is an 'In Memory' page on her website: <https://www.jeanlauchinforapapresident.com/in-memory>. The second recent loss is Dr. Rachel Hare-Mustin, another active leader in the development of feminist research, literature, and political action. She served as Parliamentarian of the APA Council of Representatives for 20 years. Both women are well respected for their contributions to psychology, particularly for their advocacy for women and women of color in leadership, and warmly remembered by our colleagues on the Council listserve.

I expect that if it has not happened already, over the coming months many of us will learn of colleagues, friends or family members who are struggling to combat or who have lost the fight against COVID-19. My heart goes out to all those navigating these difficult times. May the light of their cherished ones bring the survivors comfort and may those who have passed rest in peace and power.

Reading Diverse Writers

Leslie Trumble, PsyD; MPA Board Member At Large

As I write this, horrific racist acts and longstanding systems of racial and social injustice are sparking daily protests in Montana and around the world. It is a time to listen carefully and deeply to the voices of people who have experienced oppression and violence due to the color of their skin or the origin of their ancestors. One form of listening deeply, I believe, is reading the carefully chosen words of a great writer.

Reading can be an exercise in studying lives different than our own, a portal to other worlds, and even other inner worlds. Research suggests that reading, particularly literary fiction, is related to increased empathy and mentalization. Mar, Oatley, and Peterson (2006) found that reading fiction correlates with better performance on an empathy task as well as better social support. The research of Tamir et al. (2015) implies that people who read more fiction show stronger theory of mind than those who read less.

Here is a list of ten excellent books – some fiction, some memoir, and a really long, really good poem – that have stuck with me over the last few years. These are not easy, feel-good reads, but they are important works that explore some of the complex challenges faced by Black people, indigenous people, and other people of color in the United States today.

Salvage the Bones by Jesmyn Ward, published in 2011, depicts a working-class Black family in rural Mississippi in the days leading up to Hurricane Katrina.

In *Americanah* (2013), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie writes about a woman who moves to the United States from Nigeria to attend college. As a Black African woman, she makes keen observations about the racism she encounters.

Claudia Rankine's book-length poem, *Citizen:*

An American Lyric (2014), places microaggressions in the spotlight as she writes about racism she has experienced or witnessed in personal and public spheres.

Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015) is a non-fiction work in the form of a letter to Coates's teenage son, in which he discusses his experiences in a world that is too often unsafe for Black men.

In *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body* (2017), Roxane Gay explores her experience of trauma, how it changed her relationship to her body, and her experiences of discrimination due to both body size and race.

Terese Marie Mailhot, a First Nations woman, shares her accounts of intergenerational and personal trauma, psychological turmoil, relationships, motherhood, and creativity in her emotionally raw and beautifully written *Heart Berries: A Memoir* (2018).

Friday Black (2018), Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah's debut collection of short stories, brings themes of race and capitalism to life in a brutal, near-future world that seems to be just a slightly hyperbolic version of our own.

Tommy Orange weaves together the diverse stories of several Native American characters living in and around Oakland, California in *There There* (2018).

In *Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen* (2018), Jose Antonio Vargas describes his experience arriving in the U.S. to live with family when he was 12, discovering his immigration status when he goes to get his driver's license at 16, and navigating the complex legal system around immigration as an adult.

Kiese Laymon's 2018 book *Heavy: An American Memoir* addresses issues of race, body, family, and identity as he unflinchingly chronicles his life as a Black man, beginning with a confusing and traumatic childhood.

(References on page 7)

Motivational Interviewing: learning to dance during a global pandemic

Ari Silverman, MA; MPA Student Member

Serving as a scientist-practitioner during a global pandemic was not on the original list of opportunities offered by my graduate training program.

Nonetheless, the professors, clinical supervisors, and advisors quickly and efficiently shifted course this spring to allow students to adapt to learning, practicing therapy, and conducting research amidst these unprecedented times. I feel incredibly fortunate to have been able to attend class virtually, conduct psychotherapy remotely, and work on my research from the safety of my own home. With the exception of the extra trips into the kitchen (I never knew I could snack so many times in one day), I was able to maintain some semblance of normalcy in my daily functioning and my progress toward long-term goals (e.g. graduation).

Throughout the unfolding of the pandemic, many of my clients were less fortunate in maintaining consistency in their daily routines. Several of them began to face new challenges with motivation, often related to self-management behaviors. One client, who had become a regular gym attendee, found it difficult to recreate his circuit training regimen at home, so decided not to exercise. Another noticed her sleep schedule swinging dramatically in either direction, but did not set bedtimes or wake times for herself. A third was ambivalent about showering and dressing in a workplace-appropriate outfit to start his day of working from home, but found it challenging to re-enter his work mindset. They all shared the experience of feeling sluggish and unmotivated.

Timing could not have been better to be enrolled in semester-long Motivational Interviewing (MI) class, front loaded with a two day intensive workshop. Prior

to this course, my understanding of MI was rudimentary at best. I had been instructed in the transtheoretical model of health behavior change (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997). Additionally, I had briefly come into contact with some of the MI catchphrases, such as “roll with resistance” or “elicit change talk,” but was largely unfamiliar with the specific skills, or how to apply them in the clinical setting. Through classroom discussion, readings, watching film, and recording experiential role plays with partners and coding of these videos, I received an excellent foundation for developing and honing my MI skillset.

Research indicates that two-day, workshop-style training in MI alone (without feedback and coaching) leads clinicians to feel as if they have acquired MI skillfulness. However, follow-up performance review of videotaped client sessions demonstrates only modest changes in practice, and no significant differences in clinicians’ ability to elicit client change talk within session (Miller & Mount, 2001). Conversely, clinicians who receive feedback and coaching over a longer time period (beyond a two-day workshop) demonstrate improved use of MI skills, greater demonstration of MI spirit and empathy, and elicit significantly more client change talk in recorded sessions (Miller et al., 2004). My personal experience echoed these findings, as video review and coding of my first attempts at using MI following the workshop demonstrated plenty of room for improved MI adherence.

Taking a therapeutic skills class while simultaneously providing psychotherapy lends itself to a wonderful learning opportunity. All of a sudden, I was detecting change versus sustain talk in many of my

Motivational Interviewing: learning to dance during a global pandemic (cont.)

Ari Silverman, MA; MPA Student Member

conversations with clients. Perhaps it was a result of confirmation bias, but I regularly found opportunities to practice the same MI skills I was learning in class with my clients in therapy. The whole scientist-practitioner model was really paying off!

Although providing an overview of MI is beyond the scope of this article, I will share a couple of pieces of the practice that resonate with me. One element of MI that was striking was that several core MI skills are rooted in the most basic and earliest skills we learn in counseling. Take, for example, the acronym OARS, which stands for asking Open questions, Affirming (validating), Reflecting, and Summarizing. OARS are the backbone of MI, and are the same core communication skills I learned in my first semester clinical interviewing class. Despite their simplicity, these techniques are empirically supported in helping clients engage in change talk. Importantly, saying something out loud can be a very different experience than thinking that same thought. This simple distinction lies at the heart of the mechanism of MI, that it facilitates change talk (versus sustain talk), and that change talk predicts behavior change (Miller & Rose, 2009). I witnessed the effectiveness of OARS in evoking change talk in one memorable exchange with a client. In this instance, I used an amplified reflection to respond to a client's challenge with eating healthier:

Client: "I just can't seem to eat healthier. What I've tried has not worked."

Therapist: "You feel like there is *nothing* you can do at this point that would help you eat healthier."

Client: "Weeeell, not nothing. I could...

[change talk, change talk, or change talk].

Therapist: (thinking to myself: Nailed it!)

Another element that stands out is what's referred to as the *Spirit of MI*, or the underlying perspective under which one practices it. The four main elements of the MI spirit are partnership, evocation, acceptance, and compassion (Miller and Rollnick, 2013). Partnership refers to the idea that clinician and client are equals, and that MI is carried out as an active collaboration between the two. We've all had the experience of another person believing they know what is best for us, and despite positive intentions, *they just don't get it*. MI spirit curtails this type of interaction by striving for an equal partnership in achieving a common, client-driven goal. Evocation, which dovetails with partnership, is the idea that clients already have much of what it takes to change within themselves, we just need to help call this forth, to bring it to the surface. Many of us have witnessed how our clients' reasons for change are more powerful than others' insistence on change (e.g., "I want to be sober when I interact with my children" versus "My wife wants me to quit drinking"). By helping our clients to bring forth these personal reasons, we often see a shift in motivation.

According to Miller and Rollnick (2013), acceptance of what the client brings to session includes recognizing each individual's inherent worth and potential (absolute worth), empathic perspective taking (accurate empathy), honoring autonomy and self-determination (e.g. Deci & Ryan, 1985), and validating an individual's strengths and efforts (affirmation). Several of these elements have roots in client-centered counseling (e.g. Rogers, 1965), and serve to place the client's perspective in the spotlight,

Motivational Interviewing: learning to dance during a global pandemic (cont.)

Ari Silverman, MA; MPA Student Member

honoring the individual. Compassion, a fourth MI spirit element added in the 3rd edition of the book, is a commitment to pursue the best interests of our clients, an intentionality that echoes our ethical principle of beneficence.

To me, the spirit of MI signifies an ethos of equanimity in our work with clients, that we agree to walk with them through the process of change no matter how messy and multidirectional it may be. In the words of my professor, the spirit of MI is embracing the notion that MI is like dancing: client and therapist mutually moving together towards a common goal. Sometimes the movement resembles a graceful waltz, other times it resembles a clumsy attempt at synchronized choreography, but it is a back-and-forth, toward change and away from it, towards commitment and away from it.

Learning MI during this global pandemic has provided a much needed outlet to focus on developing a new therapeutic skillset. Practicing how to metaphorically dance with clients has been an enriching experience and will continue to influence my approach to treatment. Now if I could just learn to use it on myself to cut down on snacking...

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Reading Diverse Writers (continued from page 4)

Leslie Trumble, PsyD; MPA Board Member At Large

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