



Viewpoint

“The Voice of the Practitioner in Alabama”

Spring 2003

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President's Message

By Anita Neuer, MA, LPC, CRC, NCC

Hi Gang~

It's a great time to be a mental health counselor in the state of Alabama!!!

I hope that each of you appreciates the privilege you get every single day...of having people *allow* you to be a part of their own processes of change. What an honor it is to be even a small part of the cathartic process that each of our clients goes through in their own way and in their own time!! I am grateful for that opportunity, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have served as your President.

Indeed, it is with hope, joy, gratitude and confidence that I now pass the ALMHCA gavel on to my very competent colleague and friend, Mr. Gary Williams. Gary has been an amazing sounding board, office-mate, staffing consultant, and mirror to me... "genteel and gentle" as another colleague of ours would say about him, and always there, as I have come to know him. He has been invaluable as

a President-Elect, taking on responsibilities and taking risks and being willing to ask questions without feeling guarded. Gary is creative, courageous, and cares deeply about our profession. I know he will serve you well as President of ALMHCA!

The work of an organization like ours will never be finished, and our Executive Council collectively inspires the presence we need to advocate for LPCs in our state. In addition to all that Gary has done, I so appreciate the work of Jeannie Ingram, who has faithfully served as our Secretary and more importantly, our comic relief during long meetings! I'm impressed with Brian Rodgers, who created and set up our website (www.almhca.com) and has pledged to continue helping us manage that site as a volunteer. I marvel at the talent, patience, and dedication of Sandee Loew, who's work on this newsletter

has truly been amazing, and who I'm certain will serve as an invaluable assistant to Gary as President-Elect. I am grateful to Dottie Skipper, Paul Hard, and Angela Stowe.....all three of whom are new to our Board, and each of whom has made a commitment to serve in leadership roles for our association. Thank You to Patty Simpkins, who has been very faithful and precise in her continuing role as Treasurer, and to Adam Calvert for his guidance and leadership as Past-President (in charge of awards and nominations).

Continued on page 2

Inside this issue:

- ?? **Winter Workshop Report**
- ?? **Working with Marginalized Clients**
- ?? **Day on the Hill Report**
- ?? **Membership Highlights**
- ?? **CEU Opportunities**

Check out almhca.com

Notes from our 2003 Winter Workshop

Gary Williams, Ed.S., LPC

Our speaker, Dr. Clifton Mitchell (a counselor educator from East Tennessee State University) delivered as promised! He presented on his favorite topic...client resistance. He somehow managed to cover nearly his entire wonderful 42-page handout, which was full of thought-provoking concepts, clinical suggestions and many insights into the very subtle language we use with our clients that can create or reduce resistance. Dr. Mitchell was fun, informative, engaging and full of conviction for his topic. He was also approachable and ready to engage, clarify and learn from the insights of the attendees. In fact, he was ON from the minute he arrived, including breaks, during lunch and for some time following the end of the workshop. Dr. Mitchell worked hard for us and we were all appreciative. Evaluations given at the end of the day were very positive and confirmed that all enjoyed the speaker and topic. I was further pleased that our attendees represented ALL regions of our state which was of great importance to me.

I want to especially thank the following people for helping to make Winter Workshop 2003 a success:

- ?? Jeannie Ingram and the YWCA staff for again providing such a perfect environment.
- ?? Our graduate student volunteers, Leanne Sturdivant and Stephanie Elson who were invaluable with handling registrations, food setups, CEU certificates and more!
- ?? Anita Neuer for lending her knowledge from her previous year as programs chair and coaching me all along the way...(I will do the same for our next president-elect and programs chair).

Do remember to keep our winter workshop on your radar as we have been bringing in some truly top-notch presenters and, I believe, providing a great experience and having a lot of fun and fellowship in the process.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 1

Linda Foster, who just recently completed her doctoral work (congratulations, Linda!), and David Whittinghill, were kind enough to lead our government relations efforts, regardless of the personal pressures that each of them endured during this term. I am so thankful to Glenda Isenhour and Judith Harrington for serving as a mentors to me in ways they will never really know, and also thankful for their service to ALMHCA as chairs of Continuing Education and Membership (respectively). This has been an amazing group of people to work with. They've been an invaluable support to me during my term as President, which took place at a time of significant personal and professional change in my life.

I wish to thank each one of you—each member of ALMHCA—for being a part of counselor advocacy through your membership in our organization. We have added some special member benefits over the years, and I know the next Executive Council will continue to identify new ways to assist and advocate for counselors in the state of Alabama. Remember that you will reap the rewards of such benefits to the degree you take advantage of them--so go ahead and get involved!!! Consider attending the AMHCA conference this July in Seattle. Submit a content proposal for the next ALCA conference. Make plans to attend the next "Day on the Hill" event. Write clinical articles for the *Viewpoint*. Consider organizing a group of other ALMHCA members from your local area to meet for staffing, consultation, advocacy, and/or fellowship. Keep doing the fine work that each of you does in your individual settings, and safeguard your own mental health with consistency and vigilance. Expect the best from both yourselves and your clients!

The Black Sheep Experience: How Social Psychology Can Help in Our Work with Marginalized Clients By Rhonda Bogus, MA. ALC theboguys@yahoo.com

Each of us has, at one time or another, felt left out or marginalized in some way during our lives. It is a crippling feeling that strikes at the cornerstone of our self-esteem, steals our spontaneous, authentic voice, and ultimately threatens to stunt our developmental progress. If we have been lucky, those periods in our lives have been short-lived - maybe even just momentary - and we have spent the majority of our time in more supportive environments. Those who are not so fortunate, however, must navigate the treacherous terrain of the "othered," and without education and assistance in forming proactive social networks, the deleterious effects can be severe. No one needs to remain a black sheep for long.

Clients may even be having such a "black sheep experience" and not realize that this is a fundamental source of their difficulties. For example, for the three groups that I will highlight in this article - trauma survivors, sexual minorities, and individuals with disabilities - the tendency may be to focus solely on a seemingly obvious presenting issue: rape or domestic violence, a gay or lesbian identity, or a mental or physical disability. While these issues *may* bring about intrapsychic problems for a client, it is even more likely that each of these issues brings with it opinions and reactions from one's social network that are often emotionally charged and perhaps even damaging. A counselor's failure to recognize the extrapsychic or environmental issues the client is facing, which are likely to include marginalization or even overt discrimination and harassment, may lead the client to over-focus on the self and miss opportunities for learning and connecting.

In the 1956 seminal study on group conformity by Solomon Asch, we began to learn about the enormous power of the group on the individual. In that experiment subjects actually endorsed an obviously false response in order to avoid deviating from the rest of the group. Since that time social psychology has become a field of study with voluminous research results that we can use in our practice as counselors. Although we may believe we are working with clients as individuals, it is vital to consider the social context in which clients live and act. Social psychology teaches us that our social context defines norms, shapes attitudes, and ultimately, drives behavior.

For the sake of simplicity we will only explore two social psychological phenomena in this article, but these terms will begin to help counselors understand why clients are marginalized and how to avoid further marginalization in therapy. The first of these terms is *cognitive dissonance*, an uncomfortable effect that occurs when individuals perceive private attitudes as different from normative (group) attitudes. The resulting discomfort causes individuals to resolve the discrepancy, usually by changing personal attitudes in the direction of the norm. The resolution of cognitive dissonance becomes very important when we are working with clients who seem too willing to lower their own sense of "rightness" or self-esteem in order to win a social network. We must patiently understand just how painful dissonance can be and even educate our clients about its effects if that is appropriate.

The second term I would like to introduce here is the **Just World Theory**. This repeatedly observed cognitive phenomenon is a type of survival mechanism in which people demonstrate a strong desire or need to believe that the world is an orderly, predictable, and just place, where people get what they deserve. Even in the face of contrary evidence, when bad things happen to other people we tend to find a way to attribute it to something about the person. This is a very common response to sexual assault, domestic violence, or discrimination against sexual minorities. It is easy to see how this tendency to distance ourselves from potential danger marginalizes and distances us from one another. Often clients have experienced this distancing without even realizing exactly how or why it has happened.

Continued on next page...

Marginalized Clients ...

Again, counselors may be able to articulate this common tendency and discuss its effects with clients at the proper time.

There tends to be a common progression experienced when one is part of a minority group living within a dominant group, and the process is explained well by current Minority Identity Development Models. The one cited here is by Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1983):

- 1. Conformity > 2. Dissonance > 3. Resistance & Immersion > 4. Introspection >**
- 5. Synergetic Articulation & Awareness**

When clients are dealing with an issue that marginalizes them, for any reason, counselors should assist them in moving through the process of reorganizing their identity, with an ongoing awareness of the stages of this developmental process. The main points to keep in mind when working with these clients are:

- 1.) Learn the statistics and issues concerning your client's particular concern**
- 2.) Learn (ask!) about your client's culture and social networks**
- 3.) Understand at all times where they are in the acculturation process**
- 4.) When the client is ready, introduce them to available and appropriate proactive social change network works**

Let's look specifically at the three groups mentioned earlier in the article. First, sexual assault and domestic violence survivors are marginalized from family and community because they are often not believed and are labeled or blamed for their own victimization. There is little legal justice for these survivors and the process is often scary, intimidating, and protracted. These individuals have likely suffered loss of privacy and insensitive treatment if they have pursued legal recourse, and they may have faced the hard truth of the "no win" situation - that fighting back results in more sympathy and a better legal defense but usually results in severe injury during the attack/s. It doesn't take long before even supportive people become tired of listening, even when survivors are experiencing ongoing flashbacks, nightmares, panic attacks, and other common problems. Intimacy is often injured, and therefore the closest relationships may suffer the most. Tragically, even well-educated community workers seem to be often ill-informed in the statistics of rape and domestic violence.

Cognitive dissonance may prompt sexual assault and domestic violence survivors to stall in their development in the "conformity" phase. These clients may relentlessly blame themselves because the overwhelming wave of majority opinion blames them in subtle and not so subtle ways. Clients may believe the Just World Theory explanations they hear: "If only I hadn't stopped to get gas at 10 p.m./If only I hadn't made him so angry" - blaming themselves, the victim, rather than the perpetrator. We as counselors must educate our clients and our communities accurately about the true nature of sexual assault and domestic violence and about the damaging effects of marginalizing the victims in our communities, which include creating an environment where perpetrators are not held accountable and where victims are reluctant to seek out support. Fortunately, there are now countless sources of educational information available. Most areas have a rape crisis center nearby, and all areas have access to the internet: see www.acar.org (Alabama Coalition Against Rape) and www.acadv.org (Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence). When clients are ready, introduce them to opportunities for advocacy so that the healing, education, and empowerment can multiply.

Other individuals obviously marginalized often by their broad culture, communities, school affiliations, religious groups, and family members are individuals who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered (referred to in shorthand hereafter as GLBT individuals). When GLBT individuals are making the decision to come out, they must face numerous challenges, often within every sphere of social interaction. They may be unable to have or keep their children, may be denied their religious affiliation, and may lose family relationships. They may face open discrimination and/or harassment at school, the workplace, and in their neighborhoods. Many social leaders, including political and judicial officials, openly disparage GLBT individuals, and the typical rights given to mixed gender individuals in long-term relationships are not granted.

Marginalized Clients...

The shift from being a member of the dominant culture to becoming a member of a minority may involve a radical restructuring of one's entire social network. What may look like intrapsychic problems due to a GLBT identity may in reality be the consequences of dealing with the pandemic oppression present in the language, laws, assumptions, and actions of the society.

Cognitive dissonance may produce a sort of "internalized homophobia" that leads to reduced self-esteem. When GLBT individuals experience harassment and even violence, justification by means of the Just World Theory - even if unconscious - results in an apathetic public. To avoid marginalizing clients ourselves, counselors should never assume heterosexuality and should be careful to use gender neutral language until the nature of relationships is established by the client. As always, become informed about the statistics and issues and thoroughly investigate supportive groups in your local area. A good informational web site for those working with youth is www.glsen.org (Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network), and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force website at www.nglftf.org has statistical, legal, and issue-oriented information designed to increase advocacy.

The final group discussed in this article will be individuals coping with mental or physical disabilities. Regardless of the specific nature of the disability, several factors will be broadly applicable. Clients will likely experience some degree of social isolation as they navigate the developmental process of an emerging identity. Along with physical, emotional, behavioral, and/or cognitive differences or changes, clients may find that old friends are no longer available and that new support systems must be found. Understandably, clients may be more comfortable for a period of time in groups that consist of individuals very similar to themselves. This preference could reflect the client's journey into the developmental stage of resistance and immersion, and may evolve in time to accommodate a wider range of social contacts.

Even disabilities that may not be visible can cause an individual numerous social problems. For example, children with learning disabilities have trouble understanding rules of conversation, playing with peers, modulating their voice, and understanding how to play age-appropriate games. Similarly, adults with learning disabilities may have trouble getting along with peers or co-workers, may have difficulty understanding jokes that are subtle or sarcastic, may make inappropriate remarks, and may have a hard time following directions. Certainly these characteristics will tend to marginalize an individual from peers, cause embarrassment and discouragement, and eventually cause performance problems at school or work, resulting in a spiral of frustration and discouragement. Educating these clients about the nature of their disability could help reduce self-blame and feelings of worthlessness that contribute to this spiral of isolation and underachievement. More information about learning disabilities is available at www.nclld.org, and an excellent website for general information on a wide range of disabilities is www.disabilityresources.org. The process of education may ideally lead to involvement in an active community group specific to your client's needs. Fortunately, numerous groups do exist, and most have been started, or can be started, by concerned, involved individuals like those with whom we work.

By applying some of the principles of social psychology to our clients' problems, we can see how the experience of feeling like a black sheep can be quite detrimental to mental health. Cognitive dissonance can lead to self-loathing, and the irrational application of the Just World Theory as a defense mechanism isolates us from one another in our most vulnerable moments. On the other hand, the black sheep experience can also lead to some powerful developmental work, and the opportunities for enlightenment and advocacy can synergistically empower clients and educate the broader culture. As counselors, it is certainly our responsibility to remain educated advocates ourselves - for the benefit of our clients and for the building of community.

Asch, S.E. (1956). Studies of independence and conformity: A minority of one against a unanimous majority. *Psychological Monographs*, 70 (9), 1 - 70.

Atkinson, D.R., Morten, G., & Sue, D.W. (1983). Proposed minority identity development model. In D.R. Atkinson, G. Morten, & D.W. Sue (Eds.), *Counseling American Minorities: A Cross-cultural Perspective* (pp. 191-200). Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown.

ALMHCA BOARD NOMINEES

(Please refer to the election ballot found on the last page of this *Viewpoint*)

PRESIDENT-ELECT NOMINEE

Sandee Loew is a Counselor Educator at the University of North Alabama and has a private practice in Florence. She moved to Alabama from Virginia in 1998 and is a Licensed Professional Counselor in Alabama and Virginia, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in Virginia, and a National Certified Counselor. Sandee earned an M.Ed. in Counseling, an Ed.S. in Professional Counseling, and a Ph.D. in Counselor Education from The College of William and Mary in Virginia. While a graduate student, she became a charter member of the Omega Mu chapter of Chi Sigma Iota and was inducted into Kappa Delta Pi as well.

Sandee is the newsletter editor for ALMHCA and previously served as Member-at-Large. She is a member of a number of professional organizations including the American Counseling Association, American Mental Health Counselors Association, International Association of Marriage & Family Counselors, and ALCA. Her areas of specialty and interest include couples and family counseling, children and adolescents, and the interactions and impacts of systems. She received the Outstanding Counselor of the Year Award from the Upsilon Nu Alpha Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota in 2001.

SECRETARY NOMINEE

Angela Stowe is an Associate Licensed Counselor under the supervision of Dr. Glenda Elliott and works as a counselor and intern supervisor for the Counseling & Wellness Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She also teaches courses for the graduate counseling program at UAB. After completing her master's degree in Counseling from the University of Montevallo, she attended Auburn University and completed her Ph.D. in Counselor Education in August of 2002. Since beginning her graduate career in 1997, Dr. Stowe has been actively involved in Chi Sigma Iota International Counseling and Professional Honor Society and the Southern Association for Counselor Education & Supervision. Her areas of specialty and interest include multicultural counseling competencies, clinical supervision, using experiential education approaches in counselor education, and counseling in higher education settings. She has facilitated over 25 professional presentations and workshops on the local, state, regional, and national levels. Currently, Dr. Stowe serves on the Executive Board of the UAB Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota and serves the coordinating committee for the UAB Safe Zone program.

FYI...

Contact Numbers and e-mail addresses

President:	Anita Neuer	205-807-1850	anitaneuer@att.net
President-Elect:	Gary Williams	205-410-3582	garywill@hiwaay.net
Newsletter:	Sandee Loew	256-766-5318	saloew@una.edu

American Mental Health Counseling Association Annual Conference

The AMHCA annual conference will be held July 24-26 in SEATTLE! Early bird registration is available until May 31. The theme this year is "Body Mind and Spirit: The Practice of Mental Health Counseling." I attended my first AMHCA conference last year in Atlanta and I could not have been more impressed. For me and my personal counseling interests and needs, I found the focus of content sessions, quality of presenters and overall conference organization and offerings to be unmatched to any other "major" conference I had attended. As Gail Adams, AMHCA President-Elect stated, "It's very focused – it's the only national conference given by and for mental health counselors." I encourage you to consider visiting Seattle and giving the AMHCA annual conference a try. For more information, visit their website at www.amhca.org or find a link on our very own website at www.almhca.com!

Gary Williams, Ed.S., LPC

CALENDAR OF CONTINUING EDUCATION EVENTS

by Judith Harrington, Ph.D., LPC

ALMHCA does not necessarily endorse or guarantee the quality of the following CEU opportunities.

DATE	LOCATION	SEMINAR	CONTACT INFORMATION
4/29/03	Montgomery, AL	Two Video Approaches to Therapy co-sponsored by ALAMFC & ALAMCD	dxthree.nd@att.net OR 334-286-5980 mpmack21@bellsouth.net
5/1-2/03	Tuscaloosa, AL	Interventions for Acute Trauma	http://pmdp.ccs.ua.edu 205-348-3000
5/2/03	Birmingham, AL	Treating Children with Behavioral Problems in Child's Play: Tools in Play Therapy	205-987-1600
5/2-3/03	Birmingham, AL	ALAMFT Conf. Featuring Harry Aponte	205-934-6095 or cvl@uab.edu or www.alamft.org
5/5-9/03	Washington, D.C.	National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children (Certification & Training)	www.tlcinstitute.org Other dates in San Diego, Detroit, Dallas
5/6/03	Birmingham, AL	How to Talk to Kids About Death	www.crosscountryuniversity.com 800-397-0180
5/7/03	Huntsville, AL	How to Talk to Kids About Death	www.crosscountryuniversity.com 800-397-0180
5/8-9/03	Jacksonville, FL	Across the Spectrum: Autism, Asperger's Disorder & ADHD Research & Tx	www.naceonline.com 866-266-6223
5/12/03	Knoxville, TN	Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders: Challenges & Solutions.	www.crosscountryuniversity.com 800-397-0180
5/13/03	Chattanooga, TN	Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders: Challenges & Solutions.	www.crosscountryuniversity.com 800-397-0180
5/14/03	Atlanta, GA	Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders: Challenges & Solutions.	www.crosscountryuniversity.com 800-397-0180
5/16/03	Tuscaloosa, AL	Mental Wellness in a Chaotic World	http://pmdp.ccs.ua.edu 205-248-6225
5/15-19/03	Silver Spring, MD	NLP Practitioner Certification Training	aims@erols.com 800-343-9915
5/28/03	Nashville, TN	ADHD Coaching: Proven Component to Successful Treatment (also tba in Chattanooga, Atlanta, Macon, Birmingham)	www.crosscountryuniversity.com 800-397-0180
6/6/03	Birmingham, AL	Advanced HIPPA Issues in Alabama	www.lorman.com 715-833-3940
6/19/03	Birmingham, AL	Children's Records Law in Alabama	www.lorman.com 715-833-3959
6/25-27/03	New Orleans, LA	Co-Occurring Mental & Substance Related Disorders	863-452-6818 mfc@strato.net
6/27/03	Birmingham, AL	ADHD Coaching: Proven Component to Successful Treatment	www.crosscountryuniversity.com 800-397-0180
7/24-26/03	Seattle, WA	AMHCA Annual Conference	www.AMHCA.org
7/24-27/03	Jacksonville, AL	Appalachian School for Alcohol & Other Drug Studies	www.apsads.org 800-634-7199
9/11/03	Tuscaloosa, AL	Overview of Death, Dying & Bereavement:	205-348-3000 http://bama.ua.edu/~pmdp.html
9/12/03	Tuscaloosa, AL	Death Notification/Organ Donation/ Care for Caregiver	205-348-3000 http://bama.ua.edu/~pmdp.html
10/16-17/03	Tuscaloosa, AL	Assessing & Treating Traum'zed Children	205-348-3000 http://bama.ua.edu/~pmdp.html
11/5/03	Tuscaloosa, AL	Ministerial Perspectives on Death & Grief	205-348-3000 http://bama.ua.edu/~pmdp.html
11/13/03	Tuscaloosa, AL	Cultural Differences in Grief Responses	205-348-3000 or http://bama.ua.edu/~pmdp.html
11/13/03	Tuscaloosa, AL	20 th Annual Grief & Bereavement Seminar	205-348-3000 or http://bama.ua.edu/~pmdp.html
11/17-19/03	Tuscaloosa, AL	Therapeutic Approaches to Tx'ing Trauma	205-348-3000 http://bama.ua.edu/~pmdp.html
11/21/2003	Atlanta, GA	Promoting Change: Trauma & Intimacy	800-598-2040 www.riveroakshospital.com
2/25-27/04	Tuscaloosa, AL	Overview of Post Traumatic Stress	205-348-3000 http://bama.ua.edu/~pmdp.html
4/12/04	Tuscaloosa, AL	Gender Issues in Response to Loss	205-348-3000 http://bama.ua.edu/~pmdp.html
4/13/04	Tuscaloosa, AL	Childhood Response to Loss	205-348-3000 http://bama.ua.edu/~pmdp.html
4/14/04	Tuscaloosa, AL	Sudden, Unexpected Loss	205-348-3000 http://bama.ua.edu/~pmdp.html
4/15/04	Tuscaloosa, AL	Anticipatory Grief & Complicated Grief	205-348-3000 http://bama.ua.edu/~pmdp.html
4/22-23/04	Tuscaloosa, AL	Interventions for Acute Trauma	205-348-3000 http://bama.ua.edu/~pmdp.html

More on next page...

CEU Opportunities continued...

Also of interest. . . Home study options for ceu credit, Websites and OnLine Education

Alabama Alcohol & Drug Abuse Association		aadaa.com
American Counseling Association OnLine courses	800-347-6647	www.counseling.org
American Hypnosis Training Academy	800-343-9915	
American Mental Health Counselors Association	800-326-2642	www.amhca.org
American Schools Association NBCC credit	800-230-2263	www.asaceu@hotmail.com
Appalachian School for Alcohol & Other Drug Studies	800-634-7199	www.apsads.org
CE Calendar - National/International Mental Health Cont. Ed.		athealth.com
CPE Continuing Psychology Education NBCC credit	800-281-5068	www.texcpe.com
Clinical Skills & Practice Skills Update NBCC credit	800-795-9213	www.pdresources.org
CCE National Counselor Exam for Licensure	1-877-PREP-4 NCE	
CMR Home Study NBCC credit	1-818-706-1671	cmrhomestudy@cmrhomestudy.com
Continuing Education Calendar online at		fpn@athealth.com
Directions in Mental Health Counseling NBCC credit	1-800-367-2550	www.hatherleigh.com
The Fielding Institute		www.fielding.edu/ce/online
GROW Counseling & Resources NBCC credit	800-700-GROW	home study on practice development
Hazelden Distance Learning	1-800-328-9000	www.dlcas.com, or
Center for Addiction Studies		graduateschool@hazelden.org or
		www.hazelden.org
International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc.	410-750-9600	www.icisf.org
Jacksonville State University Office of Continuing Edn	800-634-7199	jsucc.jus.edu
Laban's Training Approved Home Study NBCC credit	1-800-795-5278	www.last-homestudy.com
Lorman Education Services	715-833-3940	www.lorman.com
Medical Educational Services NBCC credit	715-836-9900	www.meds-pdn.com
Mountain View Hospital CEU Schedule	800-245-3645	www.mtnviewhospital.com or
		mtnview@internetpro.net
NCE Exam Preparation Guide for NBCC and LPC	1-800-451-1923	
Professional CEU Online Continuing Education		www.professionalCEU.com

MEMBERSHIP HIGHLIGHT

By **Glenda E. Isenhour**

In this newsletter, we are highlighting the membership of Linda Servey who lives in Montgomery. Linda has been an LPC since 1978 and a member of ALMHCA since its inception. She notes that she has always appreciated ALMHCA's voice and actions on behalf of private practitioners and others in clinical practice. She also finds ALMHCA's topics at conferences and workshops interesting and helpful in her varied professional positions.

Linda is a Counselor and Consultant at Lifecraft, her private practice. She is also a supervisor and adjunct professor at Auburn University Montgomery and Auburn University. She cares for herself by reading, being with friends and family, two cats and two dogs, traveling, and fixing up a retirement home in Colorado.

She anticipates having a workshop available within a year on life crafting – what human beings do to create, achieve, maintain and regain lives worth living. Her greatest rewards as a counselor are helping clients replace self-destructive beliefs and behaviors with life-affirming, positive ones that promote health and happiness.

AMHCA has named May 4-11, 2003 "National Mental Health Counseling Week"

This year's theme: **MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS**

What will you do to promote Mental Health Awareness in YOUR community???

Check our website www.almhca.com for more ideas from AMHCA

REMINDERS...

?? **Vote!**

?? Call or e-mail Gary to tell him how you would like to serve ALMHCA next year

?? Check out **www.almhca.com**

EDITOR'S NOTE

I have truly enjoyed serving as editor of the Viewpoint for the last year. I have had the opportunity to work with and get to know a superb group of people, and learned something about putting together a newsletter too! This is your newsletter - without your contributions, there is nothing. So I thank each of you for your contributions and hope you will continue to support the next editor with your wonderful articles.

ALCA's Day on the Hill

ALMHCA Executive Council members Anita Neuer, Dottie Skipper and Gary Williams were among those attending the 4th annual Day on the Hill. Organizer Joanne Schrantz did a wonderful job of lining up speakers, facilities, lunch and activities for the day.

We heard from Senator Wendell Mitchell, who helped us all appreciate that most legislators are easy to engage and that we should never feel intimidated by the process of voicing our concerns. State Treasurer Kay Ivey voiced her opinions regarding politics, the state treasury and the responsibility of the constituency to monitor state government. Dave Stewart, Policy Director for Governor Riley, discussed issues affecting the Governor's office. Donald Gibson and Thelma Braswell of the Alabama Legislative Reading & Research Service educated us regarding how one locates and interprets information being generated by the legislative process.

Each of us was then sent to the State House with a mission! We each carried a short written statement about the ALCA and the work settings of counselors along with an ALCA tote bag (the ones we received at ALCA 2002 annual conference) to the Legislators to whom we were assigned to visit. This proved to be an enjoyable experience, as the representatives who were available did take some time to speak with many of us. In fact, through this process, I (Gary) learned that my House Representative lives right down the street from me (I see a cook-out in the future)!

We had a fine lunch with an address by Lieutenant Governor Lucy Baxley. Following lunch, attendees were invited to tour either the State Capitol and Senate and House Chambers or the Governor's Mansion. Those of us who toured the Capitol were greeted by State Auditor Beth Chapman (5th in line from the Governor), who informed us that she had a strong interest in the counseling profession as she had received her Master's degree in Counseling before taking on other endeavors.

Of possible interest to our ALMHCA membership, we found that some key political issues affecting many clinical counselors, like mental health parity, was not known to most legislators. They had simply not been told much about the issues. Something we all had already appreciated became ever more clear ... legislators are interested in knowing about what interests their constituency as that knowledge base is the only thing that gives them purpose or votes. But the burden of delivering the message and delivering it with enough passion to start the political process lies with *us*. ALMHCA will be working to put mental health and mental health counseling issues on the State Legislative radar soon. We will also be encouraging LPC's within and outside our membership to participate in this process.

Last, we cannot say enough about the tireless effort and vision of Joanne Schrantz. She has worked hard to open doors wide while educating and exposing us to the political process. More than anything, we appreciated her final remarks of the afternoon. She slowly and succinctly pointed out that it was important for all to remember that the ALCA is made up of many different kinds of counselors who have similar and sometimes dissimilar interests. Thanks Joanne. You are providing a much needed service for the ALCA.

Gary Williams, Ed.S., LPC & Anita Neuer, MA, LPC

ALMHCA ELECTION BALLOT

Please vote for the nominee recommended by the Board or write in a candidate for either office. Indicate with an "X" in the appropriate box and fax by 5/10/03.

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Sandee Loew

Or write in _____

SECRETARY

Angela Stowe

Or write in _____

**Complete and fax to:
Anita Neuer,
President
205-328-1930
BY
5/10/03**

**Alabama Mental Health
Counselors Association
(ALMHCA)**

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