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the Therapist

Magazine of the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists

CAMFT'S 52ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE
"THE FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH:

TOOLS

FOR THE THERAPIST'S TOOLBOX"
@ THE HILTON LOS ANGELES AIRPORT

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FORWARD THINKING TOOLS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS!

President's Message

The ACE in the Chalice

While enjoying lunch with my colleague, I noticed when she smiles her eyes light up. She is so beautiful, open, and warm. Surely those who share their difficult secrets with her must feel the sacredness in the gentle way she holds the healing space.

One of my teachers defined LMFTs as “a sacred chalice.” Our chalice contains our own experiences, and ample space for others to share their own filled and overflowing chalices with us. At the end of the day, we must release those painful memories, trusting the relationship between the client and ourselves will provide the needed transformational healing.

At times our own chalice is filled close to the brim. During those periods, we need help releasing our pain, pouring out some of the contents of our chalice so we have room once again for others' stories.

Do you know what your ACE score is? Are you familiar with the ACE study (acestudy.org)? This is possibly the most important study that has been done to date, and, as mental health providers, we need to be intimately familiar with this research and its startling outcomes.

ACE stands for Adverse Childhood Experiences. This 1995-97 study's principal investigators were Vincent Felitti, MD (Kaiser San Diego) and Robert Anda, MD (Centers for Disease Control). Kaiser surveyed their 17K members for ten types of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Whether an event happened once, or hundreds of times, you still just get one point on your score for that type of event, giving you a possible score ranging from zero to ten.

Give yourself one (1) point for each type of ACE you experienced:

- Physical abuse – The study did not count open-hand spanking, but hitting with a closed hand or an object (belt, paddle, etc.) counts.
- Verbal abuse – Being belittled, name-calling, or feeling threatened.
- Contact sexual abuse – They only counted actual touching, not being made to feel uncomfortable.
- Physical neglect – Being cold, dirty, hungry, etc.
- Emotional neglect – Unloved, unwanted, a feeling of not being close or supported.
- Mother treated violently – Witnessing domestic violence between mother or step-mother and a significant other.
- Household member is a problem drinker, an alcoholic, or drug user.
- Household member was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal.
- Household member is imprisoned.
- Parents who were separated or divorced.

What the ACE Study found was chilling. In a nutshell, the higher your ACE score, the worse your physical health as an adult. A person with a score of four (4) or more has a 4600% increase in the likelihood of attempting suicide than a person with a score of zero. A person with a score of six (6) has a life expectancy 20 years less than the general population!

ACE scores have been correlated with heart attacks, stroke, HIV/AIDS, kidney disease, liver disease, COPD, obesity, autoimmune disorders, disability, etc. The ACE score is correlated to the number of psychotic episodes a person experiences. The higher the ACE score, the

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- 29 CAMFT'S 52ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE "THE FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH: TOOLS FOR THE THERAPIST'S TOOLBOX"**
Registration is open for CAMFT's 52nd Annual Conference, "The Future of Mental Health: Tools for the Therapist's Toolbox," at the Hilton Los Angeles Airport in Los Angeles, CA, May 12–15, 2016. Early discount offered through March 6, 2016.
- 58 MFTs ON THE FRONT LINE**
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- 60 SINGLE-PAYER HEALTHCARE: WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?**
Two stand-alone articles explain how a single payer healthcare (SPH) system will change the current healthcare landscape in the U.S. and explore the economic and social costs and benefits.
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The Outstanding Chapter Leader Awards were presented at the Chapter Leadership Conference in San Mateo, CA on February 20, 2016.
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CAMFT's Educational Foundation is offering three scholarships and one grant. Students pursuing a degree in marriage and family therapy, MFT interns, or MFTs conducting research/pursuing advanced education are eligible to apply.
- 79 NOMINATIONS FOR CAMFT HONORS AND AWARDS**
Nominations are now being accepted by the Honors Committee for the Mary Riemersma Distinguished Clinical Member, Honorary Distinguished Member, Clark Vincent Award, and School and Agency Award.
- 82 UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF COLLATERALS IN PSYCHOTHERAPY**
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- 86 UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THE CAMFT ETHICS COMMITTEE: AN INTERVIEW WITH CAMFT ETHICS COMMITTEE CHAIR, IRVING ZAROFF, JD, LMFT**
This article offers a general overview of the function, authority, and composition of the CAMFT Ethics Committee.



CAMFTivities

Board of Directors Meetings

June 4-5, 2016

San Diego Marriott Del Mar
San Diego, CA

September 24-25, 2016

Hyatt Fisherman's Wharf
San Francisco, CA

December 2-3, 2016

Marriott Riverside
Riverside, CA

Annual Membership Meeting

May 14, 2016

Hilton Los Angeles Airport
Los Angeles, CA

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DEADLINES

April 18, 2016

Call for Volunteers

See "Learn, Connect, Volunteer, with CAMFT" on page 24

June 1, 2016

Display ad orders for the
July/August 2016 edition of *The Therapist*

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June 1, 2016

Article submissions for the
July/August 2016 edition of *The Therapist*

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Annual Conference

"The Future of Mental Health:
Tools for the Therapist's Toolbox"

May 12-15, 2016

Hilton Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA

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Chapter Workshops Legal & Ethical Presentations

April 8, 2016

San Gabriel Valley Chapter

April 15, 2016

San Diego North County Chapter

April 22, 2016

Ventura County Chapter

May 20, 2016

Valley Sierra Chapter

June 10, 2016

Delta-Stockton Chapter

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The Therapist is dedicated to providing information relevant to our profession and serves as a forum for ideas, trends, and commentary pertinent to marriage and family therapy.

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(President's Message continued from page 2.)

lower your job satisfaction. Many other studies have sprung from the initial data correlating ACEs with numerous physical health problems as an adult.

This study was a sampling of middle-class America, and from it we learned 22% of all American children experience unwanted sexual touch. As you might expect, higher ACE scores are correlated to substance abuse and addiction.

Dr. Felitti said Adverse Childhood Experiences are "...the leading determinant of what happens to the health and social well-being of a nation's population." He says we need to do a much better job educating parents about the serious long-term health consequences of exposing their child to ACEs.

A Stanford study of 701 children at the Bayview-Hunter's Point Clinic found children with an ACE score of four (4) or more were 30 times more likely to have a learning or behavioral disorder! They were two (2) times as likely to be obese.

In 2009, my former Stanford supervisor Victor Carrion, MD, was the principal investigator of a study which made international headlines when it demonstrated trauma changes the shape of a young child's growing brain. Using functional MRI, they found the hippocampus has lower activity in these children giving them poorer memory function. He also found abnormalities in the prefrontal cortex, the seat of our executive functioning. These children are acting more on instinct and impulse, less able to access their logic and reasoning.

The United Nations established the Convention on the Rights of a Child in 1989. This human rights treaty lays out appropriate treatment of children including economic, social, health, political, civil, and cultural rights. Currently 196 nations have signed onto this treaty including every member of the United Nations except one—ours.


As California's healers of those who suffer with the effects of ACEs, we have an obligation to speak out adamantly: we **must** advocate for our nation's children to insure they do not needlessly suffer adverse childhood experiences. I believe parents would choose not to use harsh

corporal punishment against their children, if they knew the dire consequences. Reasonable parents would never do something which might potentially lead to their child having physical health problems as an adult.

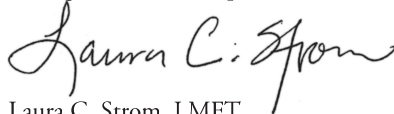
Many of us know or have treated people with very high ACE scores, including colleagues—our field is filled with wounded healers. Mysteriously, the love of even one person provides resilience to some with high ACEs. We must continue to destigmatize mental health services which are well-known to help mitigate the harmful effects of ACEs, particularly when seeking services for ourselves.

My beautiful, open and warm colleague, with the smile that lit up her eyes, ended her life in mid-January, leaving those of us who knew her in a state of shock and deep grief. As her chalice ruptured, I wonder, as a community of healers, how can we best assist each other to avoid similar tragedies? Her husband shared she had a single ACE point. He sees her choice as a call to the importance of the support of our communities.

Each of us is a sacred chalice. For some the chalice is filled to the brim with ACEs, making it difficult, but essential we engage in deeply loving self-care. Each of us has an important role to play as the healers of those in our communities.

I continue to be filled with pride and humbled by my colleagues. Thank you for your loving, sacred work. 

With gratitude and respect,



Laura C. Strom, LMFT
CAMFT President

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE

**Saturday, May 14, 2016
8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**

Hilton Los Angeles Airport
5711 West Century Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90045

This meeting will be held during the CAMFT Annual Conference. If you wish to attend only the Annual Membership Meeting, please call CAMFT to register: (888) 892-2638. There is no charge to attend the Annual Membership Meeting.

AGENDA

(Please hold questions until all reports are completed.)

- I. Welcome
- II. Introduction of the 2015-2016 Board of Directors and the 2016-2017 Board of Directors
- III. Approval of the 2015 Annual Membership Meeting minutes¹
- IV. Report from the President (2015-2016 board year)
- V. Report from the Executive Director (2015 fiscal year)
- VI. Report from the Chief Financial Officer (2015 fiscal year)
- VII. Report from the Executive Officer, Board of Behavioral Sciences
- VIII. Presentation of CAMFT Educational Foundation 2016 Scholarship & Grant Winners and Honors Awards & Outstanding School/Agency
- IX. Receive and Record Member Comments²
- X. Adjourn

¹ Per CAMFT Bylaws Article V, Section F, action may only be taken on a noticed item if there is a quorum of 1% or 180 of the Clinical Members in attendance.

² Per California Corporations Code Section 7512, action on non-noticed items may only be taken if 1/3 or 60/10 of the total Clinical Membership are in attendance.