



# OSPA TODAY

Volume 33 Issue III

Fall/Winter

## NASP NEWS!

This is an excerpt of a letter, by NASP's president Patti Harrison, that was sent out to state leaders of School Psychologist on the latest news about the status of APA's proposed Model Licensure Act.

"APA has kept the status of MLA under wraps for several months, and we now have received the following news:

- During fall 2009, APA's MLA Task Force prepared its final report and its proposed MLA, which were submitted to the APA Board of Directors for its December 2009 meeting. The APA Board of Directors accepted the Task Force's materials for inclusion on the agenda for the next APA Council of Representatives Meeting (February 19-21, 2010).
- In the MLA proposed for adoption by APA's Council of Representatives, language regarding the school psychologist exemption at the doctoral level is comparable to language included in the spring 2009 public comment draft: restriction of the use of the title *school psychologist* or *certified school psychologist* to only those individuals who have a doctoral degree in psychology, are certified by the state education agency, and are using the terms only during their practice in the public schools. This restriction of the title to only those at the doctoral level is, of course, unacceptable to us.
- In addition, the proposed MLA includes language that unlicensed individuals who have been certified in the area of school psychology by the state education agency or other statutory provisions (that is, specialist-level school psychologists)

would be permitted to use the terms "psychology" and "psychological" in their title but not "school psychologist." Again, this restriction of "school psychologist" is unacceptable.

- The proposed MLA language notes that these individuals are restricted in their practice to those settings under the purview of the state education agency and that these provisions become effective in five years following the MLA's adoption.

**Thus, the proposed MLA attempts to limit the title exemption to only those holding a doctoral degree and does NOT reflect the position of NASP and other school psychology organizations that specialist and doctoral level school psychologists may use the title "school psychologist" and engage in a wide range of school psychology practices for which they are credentialed and well-qualified.** APA's removal of the MLA exemption for use of the title "school psychologist" by those at the specialist level would be an unfortunate and costly distraction for everyone, should the MLA be adopted by APA's Council of Representative. As you know, if the MLA in this form is adopted by APA's Council of Representatives, it is expected to be introduced in states and the title of school psychologist and our needed services will be at risk. This will result in state by state battles to retain our title and practice.

**There is no doubt that NASP opposes the restrictive language of the school psychologist exemption in APA's proposed MLA and stands ready to respond to any attempts to impact credentialing, title, and/or practice of school psychologists**

**and access of children to our services.** Our position is that the title "SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST" may be used at the specialist and doctoral levels and that school psychologists may engage in practices for which they are credentialed and well-qualified. Further, **NASP continues to support the authority of all state education agencies** to credential and provide oversight for professionals who provide services in schools, including the right to use the title "school psychologist" in the SEA credential, regulate school-based practice by school psychologists, and establish standards regarding who may provide school psychological services.

As you know, NASP has been actively engaged in an effort to convince the APA MLA Task Force to retain the exemption for school psychologists credentialed by their state education agencies, which carries a 40+ year precedent and a long history of successfully serving the needs of children, families, and schools. We have been joined by other organizations in the school psychology community, virtually every major education organization at the national level, and many state organizations, including state boards of education. APA's MLA Task Force received comments in support of retaining the school psychologist exemption from about 10,000 individuals and organizations during a 2007 public comment period and about 19,000 individuals and organizations during a 2009 public comment period. Our hope has been that APA will genuinely take into account the extensive public comments they requested and have received. However, NASP has prepared all along for the possibility that APA's MLA Task Force might not acknowledge the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## President's Message



Happy 2010! It's hard to believe that the school year is at its midpoint. Don't forget to take the time to consider all that you have accomplished since school began. Screenings, intervention plans, consulting with teachers and parents, and all of the other things you have done to improve the lives of others.

The OSPA Fall conference was well attended and provided great training in a variety of areas. I began receiving positive feedback soon after the event. I hope that you enjoyed hearing Randy Allison and the other wonderful speakers. If you have any ideas for future

conferences please let myself or another OSPA board member know.

The Spring conference details are near completion. The conference is scheduled for Friday, April, 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010 with an ethics workshop the evening prior. The conference is to be held at the Oklahoma City Marriott, 3233 Northwest Expressway. Our NASP delegate, Dr. Candis Hogan, has arranged for NASP President, Patti Harrison, to provide the conference opening address, as well as, an ethics and professional standards pre-conference workshop. The pre-conference workshop meets the new NCSP professional development standards for ethics.

Dr. Jeanne Golden will be the principal speaker for the spring conference. Dr. Golden will be speaking on the assessment and treatment of internalizing behavior problems. She will discuss problems and solutions for measuring such behaviors, as well, as intervention

methods that not only address behaviors within structured settings but also provide for maintenance and generalization in more typical settings. Be sure to save the date for this great conference, and look for the brochure in the very near future.

As we move into the New Year be sure to promote the profession. In times of economic hardship, it is especially important for all to know just how important school psychology is to the academic and behavioral health of students. Consider sending out a description of the services that school psychologists provide. A survey can also be a useful tool to education and see what is of interest to those who use our services such as teachers, administrators, parents and students. Don't forget legislators. Let them know how school psychologists are impacting student's lives across the state.

Have a great second half of the school year!

## Veteran Support Groups

By Rich Putnam and Thom Balmer

Veterans are notoriously reluctant to seek diagnosis and/or treatment for emotional issues related to military service. Many veterans prefer to discuss such issues with other veterans in informal settings. Additionally, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) sanctioned treatment programs for emotional issues related to military service that may not be conventionally scheduled or located for veterans who do not reside near a VA medical facility. With these considerations in mind, the leadership of American Legion Post

72 in Ada, Oklahoma took action. An informal opportunity was organized for area veterans to meet at the post on a weekly basis to discuss issues of common concern. Scheduling the meetings at the Post 72 facility provided a convenient gathering place for veterans living in Ada as well as veterans living in near-by communities. The post is completely non-alcoholic and hosts such activities as bingo, bazaars, fellowships, dinners, and awards ceremonies. One large room in the building is designated as non-smoking. It was

determined that the groups would meet in the non-smoking room and that the meetings would be smoke free. The group meetings were scheduled for one evening weekly with Wednesday being determined as the best choice of day. The meetings were led by two Post 72 members who were both Vietnam Veterans and both credentialed counselors. It was made clear that the group discussions were not considered therapy by the group leaders who emphasized that they were fellow veterans and participated freely in the group discussions.

Group membership was mixed in terms of age, era of service, and degree of emotional involvement. Discussion participants included veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (OIF and OEF), Gulf War Veterans, and Vietnam veterans. Some members were engaged in combat operations while other served in various support roles. All branches of military service were represented.

The two designated leaders of the support group alternated weeks of facilitating the group. This allowed for a wider range of experiences for group members. In practice, some members only attend groups lead by one facilitator and other members attended only when the other facilitator was present. This was an interesting phenomenon and may support the premise of group theory that groups form around group leadership styles (Corey & Corey, 2002).

Some important aspects of the group involved the military speak that occurred during the meetings. Some veterans commented that they had forgotten how comfortable it was to speak with other veterans who understood the nuances of military language. The use of abbreviations, acronyms, and military labels were common and enhanced the cohesive nature of the group.

In one group, the group facilitator brought a legal pad and a pen to the group. Comments were made by group members that

names and diagnosis were going to be made and that the "crazies" were going to be shipped off. The group facilitator assured the group that it was only to make brief notes, but the note pad was not used and did not return to the group. This response may be typical for many veterans who have trust issues and are concerned about seeking formal treatment through government resources. It was agreed that record would not be kept of group discussions.

A common group experience involved members talking about activities in the military that were less than pleasant. This included long deployments away from family, the loss of friends and comrades due to accidents or enemy actions, the viewing of deceased civilians, cleaning up after military accidents, or entering towns and villages with the certainty of being engaged by enemy forces. This brought heaviness to the group, and yet also a quiet resolve. Members listened intensely to one another; they carried each others suffering for those brief moments. They made brief eye contact, sat forward in their chairs, and become eerily quiet while each other shared. Then, just as quickly as the heaviness had occurred, it was usually gone. The group began to share the funny and bazaar things that occur with deployments and being stationed with others on ships, in barracks, in tents or around aircraft. Generally, when groups dispersed following meetings there was no special good bye acknowledged,

no hugs given or received, just a new found respect that they were more alike than different.

The weekly group meetings have continued uninterrupted. Most of the original group members attended four to six sessions regularly, then a few meetings inconsistently before dropping out. One original member has attended almost every group meeting. As group members dropped out they were replaced by new members as word of the group spread. A low point in group attendance occurred during the Christmas holidays as student veterans at the local university left campus and veterans' family holiday activities took precedence over group participation. No group meetings were cancelled and more active participation resumed after the holidays. The meetings will continue as long as area veterans request them.

#### References

Corey, M.S., & Corey, G. (2002). *Groups: Process and Practice (6<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing.



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importance of these issues to the public good, or the profession of school psychology and school psychologists' services report, NASP will communicate with the APA Council of Representatives through our contacts prior to their vote and reiterate our position and that of the entire education community. It appears that there is no formal opportunity for individuals or groups to send comments to the Council. We will let you know if we learn something different.

We wanted to immediately share this basic news with you. A NASP working group is carefully considering this as fast as we can, so please stay tuned for more information. We are planning communications and next steps and are prepared for strong and for children. Given the Board of Directors' acceptance of the MLA Task Force comprehensive activities that mobilize NASP members and coordinate with your state association to implement state-level advocacy. Together, our strong national and state networks will facilitate implementation of strategic and effective outcomes.

We will keep you updated as the news and plans develop in the next few weeks."

### Dates To Remember

NASP 2010 Annual Convention  
March 2-6; Chicago, IL

OSPA Spring Conference,  
April 1-2; Oklahoma City, Ok

NASP 2010 Summer Conferences  
July 12-14; Denver, Co  
July 26-28; Nashville, Tn

*We're on the Web!!*  
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### Deadline For Newsletter Submissions

Spring. . . . . May, 30,2010  
Summer. . . . . August 30, 2010  
Fall/Winter. . . . . December 31, 2010

Keri Chaffin: editor/publisher

### Submissions:

Please submit articles as e-mail attachments in Word or PDF format to the editor at

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