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www.knoxvilleareapsychology.org*

A word from Your President...

He Shot People Because He Was Very Disturbed

**By: Joshua Williams, Ph.D.,
President Knoxville Area Psychological Association**

Last week my wife and I visited Boston to attend the marriage of a dear old friend. To pass some time we walked a short way from our hotel to Harvard. As we walked between Thayer and University Halls on the Yard we came upon the spot where moments before 35-year-old Mitchell Heisman had placed a silver revolver to his temple and ended his life. We lingered long enough to watch as the police put up yellow tape and begin their post-incident routine. The sun was shining and birds could be heard above the city sounds. Later that evening we learned that Heisman had left a voluminous online treatise that concluded with a chapter entitled: "Experimental Elimination of Self-Preservation."

The likelihood of our proximity to this event can be measured statistically. It was not a random event. Gun violence and suicide are not rare events in our country. Nonetheless standing next to someone who is killing themselves certainly seems a bit out of the ordinary. A group of tourists had been standing next to this individual posing for a photograph on the steps of Memorial Church even as he killed himself.

My interest and involvement in journalism extends back to a time even before my work as editor of my college newspaper in the early 70's. Since entering the professional community as a psychologist I have been called upon by print and broadcast media to provide psychologically-minded commentary on breaking events. With the exceptions of rare natural disasters (e.g. 50 tornadoes landing in a neighboring town) counseling people on how to survive otherwise festive events (e.g. the holiday season, or the start of school) or human misfortune (e.g. the Clinton impeachment, the Challenger Space Shuttle disaster) I am most frequently asked to comment on abhorrent human behaviors. Thus included among the stories I have been asked to discuss are the massacres at Columbine High School, Virginia Tech, Oklahoma City, the Branch Davidians of Waco, and the events of Nov. 11, 2001.

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Closer to home I have helped to explain the seemingly endless series of shootings by teachers, students, parents and other deeply troubled people. I have been asked to discuss abuses of power by teachers, doctors, and politicians. As a hospital based practitioner I am occasionally drawn into the actual dramas before I am asked for comment. In many cases I appear live on the evening news. Other times I appear in taped interviews.

Over the years the questions have become very predictable: “What can parents look for in teachers that will help them suspect that a teacher might be a sexual predator?” “What can we look for in people to predict that they might do something so horrific?” “What could lead a person to do something like this?” “Why don’t the authorities intercede before these things happen?”

These questions have been repeated so often that they have become a litany. Over the years I have tried to explain pathology even as I sought to reassure and comfort the audience. Broadcast media measures air time in nanoseconds. One is compelled to answer reporter's questions in language that is more clipped than haiku poetry. “He shot people because he was very disturbed.”

Recently I have been working a different tact. Before participating in an interview I try to engage the reporter in a discussion that places the story into a broader context. Sometimes this helps to shape the story and provides more meaningful content. Knoxville has seen a spate of gun related violence in recent years. Following the shooting at the Unitarian Church as well as at Parkwest Hospital and Inskip Elementary School I began trying to re-frame the questions posed by the events. Interestingly the news directors have allowed this shift.

I have begun to point out that in every incident (including all those mentioned here) the perpetrators have been well-known to their respective communities. I always acknowledge and mourn for the victims as well as the suffering of their survivors. Recently I have tried to take it a step further. I say that we have failed the perpetrators. We, the community, have failed the kids at Columbine, the boy in Campbell County who shot his principal, the teacher at Inskip, the student at Virginia Tech. Despite all of the policies and procedures we have put in place – people with profound problems and ready access to firearms are routinely passed over, dropped from care, ignored, or given inadequate treatment. There is sufficient blame for us all.



How we fail these people is too large to consider in a KAPA newsletter. I am writing to share my weariness with the community's tendency to seek commentary on events that is limited to comfort, easy explanations and avoids examination of their more profound meanings.

It is my firm belief that psychologists possess some of the tools to help citizens tolerate the ambiguities created by reflection rather than reaction. Last Spring a man arrived at Parkwest Hospital in search of a doctor he believed had implanted a tracking device under his skin. As he approached the emergency room entrance he fired a silver revolver wounding one individual and killing a hospital social worker. That evening on live television I told the news anchor that the man who fired the gun was probably well-known to others (he was) and then voiced the opinion that we had failed him as well as his victims. Imagine my surprise when the anchor replied: “So tell us Dr. Williams, what should we do about this? Would it help to contact our people in government?” Delighted I replied: “Yes of course! We should all *represent* for mental health. We should speak with our legislators and tell them that we want more support for our psychologists, mental health services and centers. There is so much more that we can do!”

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KAPA's new President-elect...

Dr. Malcolm Spica has been elected President-elect of KAPA.. He is a clinical neuropsychologist working out of Fort Sanders West. Please join in welcoming him to the KAPA Board and in thanking him for his willingness to serve.

Malcolm Spica, Ph.D. received his doctorate and masters degrees in clinical psychology from Michigan State University. He also gained clinical neuropsychology training from the Battle Creek Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC), the University of Michigan Neuropsychology Program, and the Ann Arbor VAMC. Dr. Spica completed a clinical neuropsychology internship at the Long Island Jewish Medical Center-Hillside Hospital in New York City. Dr. Spica has been in clinical practice for more than eighteen years, served as Director of Neurobehavioral Associates, and was the Chief Psychologist at The Montcalm Center for Behavioral Health (Montcalm County Community Mental Health). His academic work includes serving as a preceptor and lecturer for the Michigan State University (MSU) College of Human Medicine, lecturer for the MSU Clinical Psychology Department. Dr. Spica is also an Adjunct Lecturer in the MSU Department of Psychiatry (Neuropsychology Seminar). His current research efforts include investigations in memory dysfunction, human motivation, and attentional disorders.

Welcome to the following psychologists who have joined KAPA recently.

Dr. Linda L. Dreke

Dr. Vickie J. Dwyer

Dr. Susan M. Ryan

Please remember to keep us informed of any changes to your email address, business contact information, or website listing. Contact the administrative assistant at ltoney5017@comcast.net to make changes.



Holiday Gathering: TBA

KAPA is interested in fostering greater contact and interaction within the psychological community. In this spirit plans are in the works for a holiday gathering.

Find us on Facebook.



Search for Knoxville Area Psychological Association.

Continuing Education Opportunities Outside of KAPA

October 13	Emotional Manipulation Understanding Manipulators and Helping Their Victims	Holiday Inn Select Downtown 525 Henley St.
October 15	Neuroscience Made Simple	Crowne Plaza 400 W. Summit Hill
November 10	Trauma, PTSD & Grief	Crowne Plaza 400 W. Summit Hill
November 12	Early Developmental Disorders Resulting from Abuse	Holiday Inn Select Downtown 525 Henley St.

Mark Your Calendar ...



13th FALL

PSYCHIATRIC

SYMPOSIUM

THURSDAY, December 2, 2010

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

&

FRIDAY, December 3, 2010

8:00 AM – 2:30 PM

KNOXVILLE MARRIOTT

KNOXVILLE, TN

KAPA in conjunction with the Mental Health Association of East Tennessee will provide CE credit. KAPA has designated up to 10.5 CE credits for attendees of the Symposium: 6 CE credits for December 2nd attendance and 4.5 CE credits for attending December 3rd. **No CE credits will be awarded for partial attendance at either program.** Non-KAPA attendees will pay an additional surcharge to receive CE credits.

KAPA PROGRAM

Monday October 25, 2010

Sleep Psychology

East Tennessee Children's Hospital

Presented By:

Steven C. Plenzler, Ph.D., D. ABSM, FAASM
Clinical Director
Mercy Sleep Centers

Introduction to Dr. Plenzler's Program:

The role of sleep in health and well-being has received increased attention in recent years. In addition, a wealth of scientific data has been published that supports the important role of proper, undisturbed sleep in maintaining optimal health. Sleep apnea, a condition characterized by repetitive cessations in breathing during sleep, has been associated with cardiovascular disease and hypertension as well as depression, poor quality of life, and severe sleepiness. While sleep apnea is a somewhat dramatic illustration of poor, interrupted sleep, recent research also indicates that chronic sleep restriction and poor sleep habits can also have negative effects on health. At the cellular level, reductions in sleep have been linked to alterations in hormones responsible for appetite generation and suppression, an increase in inflammatory markers, and reduced effectiveness of the immune system. At the clinical level, sleep restriction has been linked to sleepiness, an increased risk of accidents, and poor mood as well as hypertension, obesity, and risk of developing diabetes. In children, behavioral problems, including ADHD, have been linked to reduced and disturbed sleep and the risk of obesity extends to children who are chronically sleep deprived as well.

A common problem encountered in the Sleep Center is that people often underestimate the importance and necessity of adequate sleep. In many instances, we all tend to see sleep as expendable or time that can be best spent engaging in other activities. These beliefs center around a basic misunderstanding about sleep and what we can do to make sleep as refreshing and beneficial as possible. Many patients with diverse medical and psychiatric diagnoses commonly report poor sleep as an element of their condition. In many cases, even the medication being taken to aid one condition is seriously affecting sleep and undermining a positive outcome. For the clinician, it is very important to know the signs and symptoms of sleep problems, to understand the impact of poor sleep on their patients' condition, and to identify treatment or referral to a sleep specialist.

Dr. Plenzler is the Regional Coordinator for the Sleep Disorders Centers, a part of the Mercy Health System.

Program Objectives:

1. Define normal sleep, sleep loss, sleep fragmentation, and sleep deprivation and examine the effects of sleep loss and sleep fragmentation on mood, cognitive functioning, performance, alertness, and accidents.
 2. Explain sleep disorders diagnosis and treatment as well as common comorbidities. Discuss the effects of various medications on sleep.
 3. Discuss efficacy of cognitive-behavioral treatment for insomnia and other sleep disorders.
 4. Discuss referral mechanisms for further sleep evaluation.
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Continuing Education and Fees:

This program is appropriate for psychologists and other mental health professionals and 1.5 hours of Continuing Education will be available for attendees. The social hour and business meeting is from 6-6:30 pm and the presentation starts promptly at 6:30 pm and will go until 8:00 pm. Current KAPA members can attend for no charge. Non-KAPA members will be charged \$20.00 to obtain CE credit. However, if you are not a member of KAPA and you do not want CE credit, this program is free of charge. KAPA is approved by the American Psychological Association to provide continuing education to psychologists and maintains responsibility for this program.

Pre-registration for KAPA programs:

To pre-register for this program please email Victor W. Barr, Ph.D. at vbarr@utk.edu with a **subject line of "KAPA Program registration"**, or phone 865-974-2196. Make sure you include the following information when you pre-register: Please mention if you want a vegetarian meal.

1. Your Name & Degree
2. Professional Discipline
3. Your phone number

Important for KAPA Members:

A meal will be provided specifically for those KAPA members who have **pre-registered** for this program. If you plan to attend this meeting, please pre-register in order to secure your meal. Please mention if you want a vegetarian meal.

Pre-registration will end Thursday 10/21/2010 at 12:00 noon, to finalize the registrant list and order the food.

Please Note!! Late registrants are very welcome to attend the program and can sign in at the door on Monday night.

Directions to East Tennessee Children's Hospital

2018 W. Clinch Avenue Knoxville, TN 37916. Schmid AB Conference room

From the East: Take I-40E to Exit 387 (Western Ave/17th Street).
Exit Right onto 17th Street.
Take Right on Cumberland Ave.
Take Right at 22nd Street
Right onto White Street

From the West: Take I-40W to Exit 387 (Western Ave/17th Street).
Exit Left onto 17th Street.
Take Right on Cumberland Ave.
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Right onto White Street

KAPA Classifieds

A nicely decorated office in a prime location of West Knoxville is available for part time or full time rent. The price is quite reasonable and I would welcome anyone interested to come by and look it over. Please contact Lee Whitaker at 384-1007 for more information.

Did You Know?

One of the many benefits of KAPA membership is free advertising in the KAPA Classifieds! Please contact Shana Hamilton-Lockwood, KAPA Secretary, at DrShanaPhD@yahoo.com for more details on how you can advertise in our next newsletter.
