



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A big advantage of writing this report twice a year is that it gives me the chance to pause and look at us as an organization, to see both where we have been and the emerging pathways taking us to where we are going next. This time, the large group in Conference 2005 stands out as an important marker in many ways.

First, a few words about large groups in general. Large group meetings have been brought into prominence by group analysis. Other approaches, such as social dreaming, have explored this resource as well. Pat DeMare, one of the pioneers in large group work, talks about large groups having possibilities that small groups do not because of their freedom from family transferences. In this relative freedom the large group more easily highlights societal dimensions and issues of citizenship. These issues are obscured by the family transferences that are so easily stimulated in smaller groups. (A good start for anyone interested in reading more about large groups is the article by Yvonne Agazarian and Fran Carter, *The large group and systems-centered theory*, Group, Vol. 17(4), pp 210-234.

From our very first SCT Conference, we have ended each day with a large group meeting open to all participants of the Conference. The group has worked under Yvonne's visionary leadership, assisted by the System Mentors (Claudia Byram, Fran Carter, and myself). By scheduling our large group as the last event of each day and at a time when every one attending the Conference can come, it provides a containing environment for the Conference community.

Like all SCT groups, the large group works using SCT methods. It uses functional subgrouping to explore experience, undoes defenses when needed, and weakens the restraining forces to moving through its phases of development. Each year the group, and its leadership, has developed!

This year, Yvonne oriented the large group to the goal of cross-fertilizing the work of the various training groups that were meeting within the Conference. This spurred a significant new step over the course of the week in which the large group transformed into a work group, and addressed several important issues in the development of the organization. For example, as licensing group members brought in issues related to licensing, the large group took up the issue and the task of clarifying licensing in the training curriculum and in the organization as a whole (see the System Mentors' report on page 24 of this Newsletter). As members of the diversity workshop brought in information about their work, the large group raised issues on diversity within SCT. This spawned an interest group on diversity which met three times by the end of the Conference week. And as Authority Issue Group members brought in discoveries they were making about their role in the Conference and the organization, the large group began to explore what it means to take one's member role in SCTRI. In this exploration, Holly Johnson voiced the sentiment that was emerging from the large group by paraphrasing John Kennedy's famous quote: "Rather than ask what the

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organization can do for you, ask what you can do for the organization.” This captured the developing understanding that our organization is what we make it. The challenge is then how to take up our member role to develop the kind of organization we want.

The significance of this may not come across easily in words -- but the feeling of an important shift was tangible. Reflecting on this later, I found myself thinking of another phrase that surfaced in the large group. Yvonne commented at one point that “it takes a group to raise an adult.” Maybe, what we are discovering is that it takes a large group to raise an organization. And, by the way, the large group was our largest yet – about 100 members each meeting!

– Susan Gantt

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Members,

As I write this letter, images from the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina are swirling in my mind. The physical and mental anguish of the survivors has created an emotional earthquake in our country’s psyche which hopefully will stir the currents of change in a positive direction. The failure of our government to respond quickly to the reality of this disaster and the tragic loss of life that has occurred, reminds me again that our capacity to maintain our common sense in the middle of a crisis is tenuous. From a systems perspective, the recognition that I am also part of the horrifying negligence which all levels of the government demonstrated is shattering. As a country, we must search our minds and hearts to understand what has been acted out, develop the capacity to contain those parts of ourselves and, in the future, make more conscious and responsible choices that are truly attuned to reality.

As an organization we are part of a larger effort to heal the many splits that riddle the human psyche. Unfortunately, these splits are projected into social reality and often acted out with tragic consequences. As mental health workers, organizational consultants and educators, we are each called to take leadership in creating structures to help our clients, schools and organizations contain the underlying chaos that can erupt in potentially destructive role reenactments. As we help individuals, groups and organizations to become conscious of the underlying dynamics that motivate their actions, we are also helping to create the kind of world that we want to be a part of.

This is the larger context inside of which SCTRI continues to develop and thrive as an organization. The Newsletter that you hold in your hands reflects both the intellectual rigor and compassionate values that lie at the heart of our organization. As you read these pages I invite you to listen with both your intellect and your heart to the energy which is emerging in SCTRI.

Susan Gantt, in her reflections on the large group experience at last year’s Conference, emphasizes a spirit that is emerging as central to our organization. This spirit was voiced by a member of the large group, Holly Johnson, who said, paraphrasing John Kennedy, “Rather than ask what your organization can do for you, ask what you can do for your organization.” This question highlights the shift from a self-centered perspective to a systems-centered one.

As a young organization, we have begun to achieve a solid sense of our own identity and are starting to have a professional presence in the

larger community that has some heft to it. At this point in our development, it is important to pay attention to the boundary between ourselves and the larger professional contexts that we work in. This shift is present both in the pages of this Newsletter and in the theme of this year's Conference: "Creating Links - Similarities and Differences."

In this Newsletter, some of the highlights that you have to look forward to are as follows. Yvonne and Jim Peightel have written about their discoveries concerning the similarities between SCT and current thinking in Neuroscience. Mark Johnson has contributed a piece which will help us to clarify the ways that we might think about emotion as both energy and information, and I have written a piece on the art and science of centering from a Taoist perspective. You can also read about some exciting accounts of innovative uses of SAVI and some inspiring developments in creative training

structures that members are sharing at the new SCT Summit Meeting. We also have "Reports" from all of our action groups and regional training centers, "Thumbnail Sketches" and a new section called the "Members Forum." In all of this, the pulsing flow of an organization that is responsive, alive and creative is clearly evident.

I hope that you enjoy these pages. I would like to especially thank our administrators, Jan Vadell and Kathy Lum, who, as always, have done an outstanding job in helping to organize, edit and format the text. The Newsletter work group, Fran Carter, Verena Murphy, Claudia Byram, Michael Silverstein and Jim Peightel, also deserves a great basketful of gratitude. Finally, I would like to thank each of you who wrote an article, report or letter. This Newsletter could not have been written without you. I hope that you get a chance to read everything!

– Michael Robbins

MEMBERS FORUM

Dear SCTRI Leaders and Members,

I would like to thank each of you for providing me with the opportunity to attend your Conference in Atlanta this year on a research scholarship. I felt honored to be included in the 10th anniversary year of the founding of your organization, and I congratulate you on avoiding the rocky shoals of stagnation or conversely uncontrolled growth that destroys many young organizations. As a future researcher and academician, I was intrigued by the research that has already been performed by your organization, and the honesty with which I felt your leaders and members were willing to investigate and analyze the results of the systems-centered approach to working with clients. As a future clinician, I found the concepts we discussed in the week of meetings to be interesting and enlightening. I believe that I have learned a new perspective to help me work with clients more effectively. Furthermore, as a person, I found the systems-centered concepts to be helpful in conceptualizing and dealing with my own neuroses in more effective ways.

Additionally, I was blessed with the wonderful opportunity to enjoy a leisurely lunch outing with Yvonne Agazarian. The French onion soup was the best I have ever tasted, and gave me an appreciation of her family heritage. I enjoyed learning of her childhood and early professional career, as well as discussing with her my plans and options. I found Yvonne to be extremely warm, friendly, personable, and caring. I was charmed by her candor and gentility. I was impressed that she would take time from her obviously demanding and busy schedule to ask about my family and dreams. I was convinced that your founder is an amazing woman and a boon to humanity. Additionally, I was gratified by the friendliness and welcoming attitude of each

of you towards me as a newcomer. I treasure the time I spent with you and look forward to maintaining friendships and being involved with SCTRI in the future. Thank you again. I hope to see each of you in the future.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Cox

Clinical Psychology Doctoral Candidate

Brigham Young University

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Juliet Koprowska has just completed the manuscript of a book aimed at social work students in the UK, entitled *Communication and Interpersonal Skills in Social Work*. "I've used SAVI quite a lot to help students analyze and shape their interactions with clients, to assess the climate of relationships between clients, and to respond to hostility. The SAVI Grid is included. Many thanks to Fran Carter for suggesting I do this, and to Anita Simon and Yvonne Agazarian for granting permission to reproduce the grid and supporting the idea. SCT gets a few mentions as well, of course!" The book should be out in October.

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Michael Robbins is offering a group combining systems oriented therapy, Qi-Gong, other forms of moving and still meditation and Creative Work. The group will consist of three meetings over the course of seven months. Two meetings will be residential retreats held in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, two hours from Boston, and one will be a day long retreat held in Somerville, MA. Specifics are as follows:

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Dates:

Friday, Dec, 2 (Beginning with dinner at 7:30 pm) through the afternoon of Sunday, December 4 (approximately 4 pm).
Saturday, March 11 from 9:30 am to 6:00 pm
Friday, June 16 through the afternoon of June 18. (Same hours as the weekend in December)

Cost: \$750 (includes room and board for the weekends)

Please contact Michael Robbins at michaelrobbins@rcn.com, or (617) 623 0024.

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Yvonne Agazarian has been elected as a Fellow of the American Psychological Association.

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BOOK REVIEW – BY YVONNE AGAZARIAN

McCluskey, Una (2005) *To be met as a person: The dynamics of attachment in professional encounters*. London: Karnac Books.

Founded on an in-depth knowledge of her own and related fields, competently, rigorously and impressively researched, Dr. McCluskey’s book introduces her goal-corrected, empathic attunement and offers not only significant developments in attachment theory, but also researchable measures for goal-corrected empathic attunement. For all of us who work professionally and non-professionally as helpers, her work connects our own difficulties with attachment and sustained empathy to the isomorphy between infant and adult attachment styles. She also demonstrates that it is possible to increase our goal-corrected empathic attunement so that we can become more effective care-givers.

Review

Dr. McCluskey’s major contribution to the understanding of attachment issues is the idea of “goal-corrected empathic attunement.” She defines her goal-corrected empathic

attunement as the mutually regulated interaction between people who approach each other in the roles of care-seeker and care-giver, experienced as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. She both introduces a new theory of interaction which is a significant development in attachment theory, and introduces research instruments for measuring goal-corrected empathic attunement.

This ground-breaking book offers a guide to our own difficulties with attachment and sustained empathy generated by our early attachment patterns. It also offers an in-depth understanding of the isomorphy between infant and adult attachment styles. McCluskey presents us with the sobering reality that it is only when the goals of the “care-giving” and “care-seeking” systems are met that the exploratory drive is released. It is only when affect regulations are devoid of empathy that defensive responses which inhibit exploration arise. However, attunement is the precursor to the development of empathy and her book reassures us that it is possible as adults, to increase our goal-corrected empathic attunement so that we can become more effective care-givers. It is by increasing our goal-corrected empathic attunement that we can contribute to the release of competence in ourselves and in others who seek our help.

McCluskey “trains” through videotaped observation, demonstrating goal-corrected empathic attunement as an interactive process, communicated by the vitality of affect and the emotive message taking place between two people. It is critical to observe the complete sequence of interaction to catch the “repair” of disruptions in empathy. A further contribution to the field is McCluskey’s research that demonstrates, on videotape, the different combinations of interaction patterns associated with both successful and unsuccessful care-seeking and care-giving.

A must-read book for all who wish to understand the connection between the dynamics of our current insecure interactions to our early infant attachment experience with our care-givers!

EMERGING THEORY BY YVONNE AGAZARIAN

THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

One of the goals in SCT is to make the boundary permeable between comprehension (thoughts) and apprehension (feelings and emotions).

We have for some time suggested that comprehension and apprehension use different parts of the brain. (Our “look up and look down” exercise has supported this.) Looking up and thinking about a difficult relationship has nearly always accessed our critical faculties, and feelings of annoyance and blame. Looking down on the other hand, allows us to see the relationship in context, often with an

idea about how best to approach the conflict.

The works of Daniel Siegel (*The developing mind*, 1999), Antonio Damasio (*Looking for spinoza: Joy, sorrow and the feeling brain*, 2003), Dylan Evans (*Emotion, the science of sentiment*, 2001), and Laurence Gonzales (*Deep survival*, 2003) have elaborated on neurobiology and neuroscience and have reached the same conclusions through research that we have reached through intuition.

Briefly, they say that emotions are primary processes, often out of awareness, that orient us towards sources of pleasure and away from sources of pain. Feelings are our translation into words of our awareness of emotional experience. Our thoughts, on the other hand, are our

critical faculties which allow us to judge the wisdom of acting on our feelings. (SCT also claims that thoughts generate feelings that “feel” the same, but lack the connection with our sensory world. Thus thought-generated feelings bypass the here-and-now.)

For those who are interested, all the above authors talk about two different pathways to action, one that involves the frontal cortex and one that does not. Impulsive action comes from processing emotional stimulus through the sensory thalamus straight to the amygdale, bypassing the frontal cortex. The advantage is that we can react immediately to danger. The disadvantage is that we might be reacting to false alarms. With the frontal cortex mediating between the sensory thalamus and the amygdale, we have a chance of accessing our common sense. The disadvantage is that this takes more time, and the critical moment may have already passed before we have decided how to respond.

This compatibility between neuroscience and our own interpretations of the relationship between thought, feeling and emotion is euphorically reassuring. What a marvelous world we live in!

If we think now of the SCT method of centering, maybe one of its functions is to free ourselves from our pre-conceived thoughts, and access the feelings that are connected to our emotions. We then have the opportunity to become more aware of emotions that were previously inaccessible. For example, when we notice that we have made a fist and become curious what emotion our body is expressing, we may discover the feeling of anger, which then gives us a richer understanding of our experience. In this way, we become more aware of our sensory experience and the feelings that sensory experience generates. We also gain a broader depth of understanding about ourselves and our actions, as well as becoming more attuned to others. The SCT discipline of centering then appears as an intervening variable that allows us to become more aware of the feelings that are connected to our emotions, and to “understand” them in the context of here-and-now.

AN SCT PATHOGENIC BELIEF _____

Sampson and Weiss (*Psychotherapeutic process: A research handbook*, 1986) have suggested that unconscious pathogenic beliefs fuel some of the more puzzling of our reactions. They also claim that it is not until the pathogenic belief is brought into consciousness that these reactions can be modified. Their work gives us a frame for addressing some of the puzzling ways that some of the phases that our groups, and we as individuals, go through.

The unconscious pathogenic belief that is most serious in SCT is that SCT has the answer for all human ills, even perhaps the answer to how to save the world. This belief saves us from knowing that at the core of every

system is the chaotic energy that has not yet been discriminated and integrated. The process of organizing chaos will always be with us, as will the danger of acting it out.

It is no wonder that defending against this awesome reality is the unconscious belief that SCT will save us. It is when SCT fails, and we discover that we are repeating in SCT the responses that we believed only existed outside SCT, that we become not only disappointed but also disenchanting and disillusioned. Our increasing frustration then elicits our most difficult and unsatisfying roles. As we helplessly enact these roles, we induce and are induced by others into role locks. Some groups then become a network of maladaptive role locks. Our hearts are no longer in the SCT techniques we use, and they fail too.

Those of us who have experienced this, as individuals and as groups, know what an awful and universal experience it is. We also know what a shock it is to get insight into our underlying yearning to be saved from the discipline it takes to keep living our values every day. No wonder we hang onto our unconscious pathogenic belief. It is extremely important to humanize, depathologize and legitimize our human desire to be saved from chaos, to be kept safe and secure, and to accept how angry it makes us when we have to save ourselves. SCT groups and individuals have experienced relief when they accept that this is a universal pathogenic belief.

Perhaps the best path out of this distress is to subgroup and explore the two sides of all living human systems: the underlying chaos that never goes away, and the different ways that we can develop our capacities to organize it.

Using our common sense, we know that change is always with us, that we visit and re-visit various aspects of ourselves and our groups and repeat dynamics that we had expected to grow out of. SCT is only a method for acting out less, understanding more, and using our insights in our every day lives. We must all come face to face with the frustrating reality that even with the help of the discipline that SCT offers, sometimes we will, and sometimes we won't, repeat our habitual roles. This work is with us everyday.

SUBGROUPING AS A CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUE _____

There is an important aspect of functional subgrouping that is important not to overlook. Subgrouping is a conflict resolution technique that holds both sides of the conflict while the differences can be discriminated and integrated. Once integration has taken place in the group-as-a-whole, the group does not need subgrouping. Rather, we need members to relate freely in the group as if they are one big subgroup. When this occurs, there is a functional loss of individuality as we discover that we all take part in a fundamental existential experience. This is a different

dynamic from merging, or as Earl Hopper (1995) Public Lecture, London Center for Psychotherapy would call it, “massification.”

It is a leader’s mistake, when the group-as-a-whole is integrated, to ask “which subgroup are you in?” Members

relating to the group-as-a-whole are not in subgroups. It is only when the group surfaces new differences that it is finding difficult to integrate that functional subgrouping is necessary to contain the conflicting splits.

THEORY, RESEARCH AND APPLICATION

EMOTION IN SCT

The 2005 Annual Conference concluded with a theoretical look at the recent movie “What the Bleep.” In short, the movie presents some fascinating theory and its implications for the study of emotion. Of particular interest to SCT practitioners was the co-mingling of constructs from Quantum Physics and the Psychobiology of emotion. From physics we hear of how science has uncovered the reality that particles can be in different locations simultaneously. Further, that objects, like water, have forms of consciousness that can be influenced by interactions with humans. When applying these notions to emotional realities, we get a very heuristic opening into a new theoretical understanding for the Theory of Living Human Systems.

Emotion

Emotions have proved to be a very vexing topic throughout the history of Psychology. Are they rational? Irrational? Are they innate? Learned? Controllable or irresistible? Recent advances in neurobiology have shown that different brain areas are involved in specific emotional responses. In the last 15 or more years there has been tremendous interest in both neurotransmitters and their chemical regulation. While we have certainly improved our capacity to regulate mood states with various agents, e.g., SSRIs, we are still far from a full understanding of the phenomenology of emotion. With over 100 neurotransmitters identified, it’s small wonder that theories of emotion have trouble containing the immense variability in human emotional responses.

Siegel’s recent work (*The developing mind, 1999*) points towards another reality: the system function of emotion. He persuasively points out how emotions serve a regulatory function for humans. They are both process and product of our interactions with our internal and external environments. Bridging to SCT, it’s arguable that emotions are in fact the best indicators of our capacity for self-correction, a central tenet of SCT theory.

SCT and Emotion

In SCT we see emotion as “information.” At the theoretical level, information is energy (SCT borrows this definition from Miller, *Living Systems, 1978*). Emotion is the information that comes from the sensory level or what SCT calls “apprehension.” We also have comprehensive information available to us.

A variety of emotions and the defenses that we use to manage these emotions are the centerpiece of early therapy work in SCT. As we undo anxiety, tension, depression and outrage, we develop the capacity to discriminate and integrate both the energy and the information in the underlying emotional experience. A meta view of what transpires when we undo these defenses against our emotional experience shows that what we are doing in essence is teasing apart the information (which is energy) from each emotion encountered in the service of a system correction. That correction is made possible by the discovery of novelty.

Self-Correction and Novelty

Work in the Philosophy of Science (Blachowitz, *Of Two Minds, The Nature of Inquiry, 1998*) has shown that for discovery to occur in the experience of learning, we must encounter novelty. In “What the Bleep” we saw the opposite; over-learned behavior that would drive cognition and emotion down familiar neural ruts. As the narrator informed us, “Any emotion you can’t control, you’re addicted to.” This idea stands out as a dramatic statement of the cost of not encountering novelty.

But SCT offers another path and it is precisely in this vein. We vector exploratory energy towards unpacking the information available to us from the experience of the emotion which is the energy that human systems need to self-correct, and to survive, develop and transform. If we can access the information, we are accessing energy. It is this process that facilitates self-correction. And in each case we are learning something new. A typical example from SCT’s clinical archives is the surprise our clients express when they realize that inside their anger and frustration is a great source of power and energy heretofore unrecognized as valuable as well as information about how to solve their problems!

Going Forward

At the 2006 Annual Conference, I hope to expand on these notions with some experiential work aimed at seeing how systems correction depends on a kind of “emotional intelligence.” From an SCT perspective this is the intelligence embedded in staying curious about our emotions rather than judgmental. From that vantage point we can maximize our chances of running into just the kind of novelty that the system needs to self-correct.

– Mark Johnson

SCT THEORY MEETS AND GREETS NEUROBIOLOGY

SCT training and techniques enable us to distinguish comprehension from apprehension, explore rather than explain, and vector our thoughts to the present reality. However, a question not asked or answered by SCT theory is what is happening in our body, and particularly our brain, when we apply these methods? What are the physiological processes actually occurring when we are aware of ourselves in the present, and what biological changes occur when, for example, we update our “map of reality” after checking out a mind read?

In recent years there has been a surge of interest and scientific progress in the broad field of Human Neuro-biology, and especially Neuro-physiology, which investigates the functioning systems of the brain. A few reasons for this increased curiosity and understanding are: 1) recent technological advances are now capable of recording live, real-time data on brain function; 2) there has been increased funding for brain research in the past decade; 3) a familiarity with computer concepts which make great metaphors for mental functioning; and 4) the emergence of author-scientists, or scientist-authors that have translated complex recent discoveries into highly readable popular books.

As a starting point toward building a metaphorical model to look at change processes in the brain, I would like to introduce a functional model of a single brain cell, or neuron. As we’ve all heard, the brain is made up of lots and lots of neurons (millions), and the various connections or synapses (billions), that provide a lattice of networks that enable our complex mental activities. The basic building block for this highly complex structure is the relatively simple neuron.

Imagine the neuron in this way. At one end are connections coming from other neurons, lots of them, that are chemically connected to a single neuron. They are coming from a whole bunch of places in the brain. Each is programmed to say one of two words - “yes” or “no” (the neuro-scientific words are “excitatory” or “inhibitory”). The intensity of the message from each input connection can vary, and new input connections can grow, but each connected cell can only whisper or shout their one word: “yes, fire” or “no, don’t fire” to our single neuron. The other end of the cell, its single output, is connected down the line somewhere to the next neuron, ready to utter their one word when triggered to do so.

Triggering happens like this. At the input end of our neuron, there is a tallying of information, summing up the number and volume of yes’s and no’s. If the vote is a loud enough yes, then a triggering threshold is reached and a firing message is sent electrochemically to the output end. The cell membrane functions as the connecting wire.

Another way of conceptualizing this is that the input side is analog, volume and tuning on a spectrum, and the output is digital, one of two choices fired or not. That’s it basically. The devil is in the details, with networks of cells summing up to one output, and ornate feedback loops adding to the complexity.

A behavioral analogy may help and point to how SCT interventions may actually enact change. All of us have witnessed a full-fledged angry tantrum or outrage. Once it gets triggered there is no going back, no halfway. It’s digital, not analog. But what various inputs were summed up and led to triggering that point of no return? A critical comment was made, but if one had experienced not taking things “just personally,” would the volume of that input have been less? Did a distorted and charged frame for an experience trigger an emotional input stuffing the ballot box with loud yes’s? Or was apprehensive information, that might have aided in reality testing and tempered the tally of yes’s, not listened to?

Actually imagining the complexity of this universe inside our skull is mind-boggling, but already there may be a payoff in using this simple explanatory model. Knowledge of smaller systems isomorphically nested in similar larger systems has a parallel in thinking about more complex brain systems, such as the limbic system that modulates primal emotional states, or the frontal lobe region that is involved in organizing and executive functioning.

This leads us to previews of coming attractions. In future articles, I will explore other input paths from the single neuron model that we can trace back to a place where an SCT intervention would have altered the valence or intensity of that particular input path. I will also look at other new areas of Neuro-science theory and discovery, such as types of intelligences, right brain–left brain thinking, and the nature of memory. The deeper we understand what actually is occurring in the brain when we make use of an SCT method, the more attuned and empathic our interventions are likely to be.

– Jim Peightel

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF CENTERING, TAOISM AND SCT

At some point during every systems centered group or training session we are told to “center.” Once members know “how” to center, the instructions are usually no more detailed than that. In this article I would like to elaborate on the art of centering from the perspective of Taoist theory and practice. Although these remarks will be introductory, I hope they will provide you with some useful tools to deepen your understanding of what occurs during the process of centering.

The ancient Taoists made an exhaustive study of the art and science of centering. The cornerstone of their

observations revolved around their understanding of energy or “Qi” (also translated as “Chi”). They noticed that human energy has many different phases and is significantly affected by the food we eat, the air we breathe, the weather, the seasons, the architectural and spatial arrangements of the environments that we live in, and by our inner intention.

As researchers, the Taoists began their investigations with the human body. They discovered that when an individual is healthy and balanced they tend to influence their environment in the direction of harmony and vitality. You might say that ancient (and modern!) Taoists are firm believers in the principle of isomorphy which they understood as the creation of a harmonious society based on strong, centered individuals who are capable of cooperating with each other in the service of the good of the whole. In taoist terms, the micro-cosm reflects the macro-cosm and vice-versa.

In terms of the human body, the Taoists observed that there are three major centers of energy that correspond to three phases of human energy. The first is the center of the belly, which is called the lower “Dan Tien” or “lower Cauldron.” This is the center of gravity in the physical body. Energetically it is correlated with the sexual vitality of a person. This is the raw energy that we use in every physical activity. It is the most dense form of human energy and also corresponds to the bones and kidneys. If a person’s energy is weak in this Dan Tien their physical vitality and stamina is low. Someone who has cultivated their energy in this center has a powerful physical radiance and magnetism. In order to live a full physical life, the Taoists felt that it is crucial to develop this center. They developed many techniques (martial arts, meditation, Taoist sexual practice and acupuncture are a few), to cultivate human energy at this level.

The simplest technique to nourish the energy in this center is simply to bring your attention to this area of your body. If you do this right now, what do you notice in your belly, particularly your lower belly? Does it feel radiant, vibrant, weak, tense or flaccid? When you breathe, does your belly rise and fall or is there so much tension in your diaphragm that your belly hardly moves at all? Many meditative traditions focus on the rise and fall of the breath in the belly. When the diaphragm is released, the energy in our chest and belly becomes more integrated. If you feel that you have a good sense of your energy in your belly, take the next step and see if you can energetically connect the center of your belly into the center of the earth. This process is called “rooting” and in Taoist practice is crucial to create a physically and psychologically stable organism. Without a strong root, you are easily blown about by the different forces in your environment. One might say that developing a strong root is part of developing a sense of inner authority.

The next center that the Taoists study is the center of the

chest, or the middle Dan Tien. Physically, this center is related to the heart and the lungs. Energetically, the Taoists see this as the center of our emotional life. In life, one often hears that a person has “a big heart,” which we take as a description of a person’s capacity for emotional warmth and relatedness. When we are in love we feel a sense of expansion in our chest. After a painful breakup we say that we are “broken hearted.” The Taoists observed that in order for this center to function harmoniously, the breath must be open and flowing. They also observed that physically, the center of the chest must be balanced on top of the center of the belly to support an optimal flow of energy between the two centers and for good posture. When these two centers are well integrated, a person’s emotional life is stable and they have clear access both to the information that their emotions carry and the physical energy necessary to influence their environment in the direction of their goals. Their sexual and emotional energy are also balanced and harmonious.

The breath is a crucial connecting link between our physical and emotional life. It is impossible to feel any strong emotion without a corresponding change in your breathing pattern. Notice what happens when you become aroused in anger, feel strong affection or attraction to someone, or are in a deeply peaceful state. Each of these states affects your breathing in a unique way. The study of the various qualities of the breath is a profound one that is central to most meditative traditions. The next time you are asked to center in group, notice what happens to your breathing. As the group session continues, see if you can periodically check in with your breath and notice how it changes depending on what subgroup you are exploring.

The last center that the Taoists study is the head, or upper Dan Tien. In Taoist theory, this center is connected with the most refined level of human energy, which they call “Shen” or Spirit. When the center of the head is functioning well, we are connected with our most profound insights into the nature of reality. If one uses the model of an atom to understand the three levels, one could say that the lower Dan Tien corresponds to the matter of the electron, the proton and the neutrons, the middle Dan Tien corresponds to the electro-magnetic energy that holds this matter together, and the upper Dan Tien corresponds to the empty space between them. When this center is open, the mind is quiet and we are aware of the pregnant Emptiness or Void from which all manifestation springs. In systems-centered language, we sometimes call this the field of “infinite possibility.” It is at this level of energy cultivation that we begin to awaken our awareness the observing self or inner witness. Over many years of practice the awareness of the inner witness becomes more continuous and profound in every moment of life. At the highest levels of inner cultivation this Inner Witness is even alert during dreaming and deep sleep! Without some connection to the observing self it is impossible to explore

ones experience. In systems-centered practice the capacity to observe and explore experience and to deconstruct the assumptions that underlie a dysfunctional role or defense is fundamental.

A final practical suggestion. The next time you are asked to center, notice if the center of your belly is lined up with the center of your chest and the center of your head. See if you can energetically feel a channel going right through the core of your body rooting you into the center of the earth and going through the crown of your head up into heaven. Notice your breathing. Awaken the inner observer which lives in the empty space of infinite possibility. When the three centers are aligned and open, observe what experiences emerge spontaneously. See if this changes the quality and depth of your experience in group!

– Michael Robbins

Resources

Chia, M. & Chia, M. (1993). *Awaken healing light of the Tao*. Huntington, NY: Healing Tao Books.

Cohen, K. (1993). *The Way of Qi Gong*. NY: Ballentine Books.

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM MEMBERS

Agazarian, Y.M. & Gantt, S.P. (2005). The systems perspective. In S. Wheelan (Ed.), *Handbook of group research and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Gantt, S.P. & Agazarian, Y.M. (Eds.) (2005). *SCT in action: Applying the systems-centered approach in organizations*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse.

Haddock, R. (2004). Drawing the isolate into the group flow – Commentary on article by Louis R. Ormont from a systems-centered therapy perspective. *Group Analysis*, 37(1), pp.82-90.

MacNaughton, I. (Ed.) (2004). *Body, breath, & consciousness: A somatics anthology*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

McCluskey, U. (2005). *To be met as a person: The dynamics of attachment in professional encounters*. London: Karnac Books.

THUMBNAIL SKETCHES

UNDOING YES-BUTS AND NEGATIVE PREDICTIONS INSIDE ONESELF - FREEING ENERGY FOR WORK _____

Lately I have been working quite a bit with SAVI (System for Analyzing Verbal Interaction). As a systems-centered practitioner I know that one of the uses of SAVI is to simply track our internal dialogues. But recently I have been surprised by the impact of actually taking the time to both closely track and then change the SAVI patterns!

Two events captured my attention and reminded me of the power of how we talk to ourselves. The first was in a SAVI phone seminar. A member was planning to start her own business, and experienced herself as “stuck.” She noticed that her internal discussion with herself went: proposal, negative prediction, yes-but, proposal, negative prediction, etc. She decided to try an intervention with herself. Her idea was to build on her own proposal at least three times before going to a negative prediction or a yes-but. She implemented this, having her conversation with herself out loud as she went, and almost immediately noticed a change in her experience – she felt freer, more energetic and positive. All that seemed predictable. My surprise was that in the next meeting she reported having a plan, a site for her business and a date to start. She was on

her way, restraining forces reduced, driving forces freed. Wow!

The second instance was in a therapy context. My client and I had been aware of a pattern of deeply ingrained negativity about herself. This self-attack was virulent and global, and very difficult to challenge. Then came a session in which she actually experienced, briefly, a positive feeling about something she had done. Typically, she instantly rebounded to the negative. Since I had been thinking SAVI, I suddenly recognized her communication pattern: a yes-but to herself. So, instead of yes-butting her yes-but (which I now see was my usual response), I asked her to pause. Then, I asked if she would build on the positive three times before going to the negative. She struggled a little with what “building” might mean, but then was able to say three additional things from the perspective of having done something she was pleased about. To both of our surprise she relaxed, her mood shifted and she felt different. We repeated this twice more in that session. When she left we both felt something important had happened.

Both of these moments were moving to me, and are also good examples of increasing the permeability of boundaries, in this case to positive experiences, by reducing the restraining forces of yes-but, and negative predictions.

– Claudia Byram

SAVI™ - DRIVING SIGNALS AND RESTRAINING FORCES FOR SWITCHING FROM CONTENT TO PROCESS

A session with a couple that has started and is successfully running a small business together, began with the following dialogue:

Howard: You're not following the procedures laid down for the business.

Teresa: I do, but not the ones that don't make sense.

Howard: They all make sense, and if we don't follow them exactly, the staff won't either.

Teresa: But some of those procedures upset customers and staff. And I'm really not liking the way you're talking to me about this.

Howard (to me): See, she's always changing the subject. We can never resolve a problem because she changes the subject.

This couple is familiar with the SAVI grid, and so I started to work with them by looking at their communication through SAVI eyes. SAVI is based on a theory of information which, in part, says that the more "noise" there is in a communication, the less information will get transferred.

So what makes noise? Well, every message contains two components: A topic component (conveyed by the words) and a person component (conveyed by the voice tone). What makes noise in a message, thereby inhibiting the transfer of the information, is any one of the following big three:

- Ambiguity (either the topic or person part of the message is unclear).
- Contradiction (the topic and person part of the messages contradict each other)
- Redundancy (information already in the system is being put into the system, again.)

What neither Howard nor Teresa understand at this point is that their communication behaviors are noisy, and if they keep talking about their intended topic (use of business procedures), in this noisy communication pattern less and less information will get transferred.

Let's go back and look at the interaction through SAVI eyes.

Howard: You're not following the procedures laid down for the business.

This is Howard's opinion, stated as a fact. His voice tone was righteous (as if she was doing something wrong.) There are two sources of ambiguity in this message - topic (what he's thinking about that she is not

doing right is unstated), and person - the blameful voice tone is coming through, but what's generating his blameful feeling is ambiguous.

Teresa: I do, but not the ones that don't make sense
Teresa has responded with an additional noisy communication: A Yes-but which says "yes and no" at the same time- a contradiction. This is a signal that some information which could be available to the couple is not getting transferred. It's what SAVI calls an "alert" - it alerts you to trouble coming if the noise in the communication is not reduced.

Howard: They all make sense, and if we don't follow them exactly, the staff won't either.

Does Howard respond to the "alert" - the noise in the communication system? No - he keeps trying to talk about the topic "as if" what he is saying is getting through to Teresa and what she is saying is getting through to him. In addition, Howard's communication is again noisy. His voice tone was righteous and blameful - ambiguity in the person part of the message (because the "I am right and you are wrong" voice tone comes barreling thru, but the words are about "business procedures.") The result was:

Teresa: But some of those procedures upset customers and staff.

Another Yes but, and...

Teresa: And I'm really not liking the way you're talking to me about this.

Teresa has now moved into trying to talk about the way the noise in their communication system is making her feel, but she's also doing it in a "noisy" communication. Her blameful voice tone is ambiguous - and the topic part of the message is ambiguous (what she isn't liking is left vague).

Howard (to me): See, she's always changing the subject. We can never resolve a problem because she changes the subject.

I talked to them about every message having a topic and person part. A quick summary is: I introduced them to the idea that when things are going well, most of our energy is freed up to work on task because there is no ambiguity in the interpersonal relationship. Energy is not being drawn to "how's he/she feeling about me" and is freed up for work on the topic - in this case, business procedures. (For the SAVI literate this means our talk is in yellow and green in Columns 2 and 3-fact column and orienting column. We Ask Questions, Give Answers, Give Data, Opinions, Proposals, Build on other's ideas, etc.)

When we hit an interpersonal glitch (ambiguity or contradiction in the message), most of our energy moves to figuring out what the ambiguous person part of the message is all about, (e.g., our internal dialogue switches to finding out how the other person is feeling about me and/or

defending myself against possible attack). For the SAVI literate, the behaviors switch to the Person column, column 1. Because ambiguity brings frustration, and without training when we're frustrated, we attack or defend, the conversation is predicted to gravitate to Square 1 - the fight square, (she never follows my procedures - she's being passive aggressive; he's so arrogant; she's trying to prove I'm wrong; he's trying to control everything I do, I'm not going to put up with this).

The problem that Howard and Teresa are facing is, that although the energy is now in Column 1 (the person column), the couple (like most of us in this situation), keep trying to talk about the topic (the business procedures).

Teresa: but I'm not changing the subject - I think some of your procedures are wrong and you never listen to me.

Howard: I've spent 6 months working out this business plan - every detail of it - and we're being successful. And you're trying to thwart it. Etc., etc.

When I described how they could follow their energy by moving to column 1 and finding out what was going on (clarifying the ambiguity in the "person" part of their messages - the righteous or blameful voice tones which were lurking under the words about business procedures) he said "But that's giving up - that's changing the subject - and not going to a solution.

What reached them was an analogy - they are both driving their car to, let's say, Chicago. Half way there, the engine light comes on. It's a signal that something is wrong. They can decide to ignore the signal, not "change the subject" and keep driving to Chicago, or they can heed the signal and temporarily veer from their Chicago goal to do maintenance on their car. I asked which route - the direct, or stopping for maintenance, seemed likely to get them to their goal most efficiently. After they said their equivalent of "Duh," I asked them to talk about what analogy they saw to their own situation.

This couple is bright and SAVI literate, and saw that their "engine light" signal was the Red Light behaviors they were both using. "I think it might be a signal for feeling angry" she said, which they both resonated with and added that they had "difficulties" with anger.

Toward the end of the session, she said that she didn't like to think about the business much because when she thought about it, she felt guilty that she left all the "business management and finances to him and just wanted it to pay us well."

Teresa: I didn't realize how deeply your business plan was important to you and how deeply it is connected to our success - and how disappointed you were that I don't follow it more. Now that I know that, I'll read it.

Howard: Haven't you read it?

What surfaced is that originally, when he completed the business plan, he brought it to the office clad in a formidable thesis-binder, said what it was, laid it on his desk, and never reviewed it with her, nor the staff.

Teresa: I think I took it for granted that things were just going so well with us - because they just were. But I'm wanting to be more involved with you on understanding the business, and I think my people skills will help make the plan more workable (He nods "yes" while she is talking).

In Surprises and Learnings at the end of the session:

Howard: Well, I'm more than surprised that taking a "detour" through our feelings has started to resolve a problem that we've been fighting about for months.

Teresa: Years

Both: Laugh

Howard: And, I didn't think I had any feelings in the first place!

Teresa: Me, similar - I know I have feelings, I just never think it's useful to talk about them - and I'm very uncomfortable talking about them.

— Anita Simon

USING SAVI IN A RED LIGHT ZONE

I recently had a chance to use SAVI in a very tense situation. I was attempting to get Zoning Board approval to move the school I own, the Muscular Therapy Institute, into a commercial building located in a residential area. It was a perfect opportunity to practice using yellow and green light behaviors to turn around very intense red light reactions.

In a relatively large meeting that I had called, I told local residents about my plan for moving the school to their town. The group reacted with a mixture of questions, fear, and many negative predictions based on rumors they had heard. I responded by mirroring their concerns about having a new type of business operating seven days a week in their neighborhood, with many students and clients coming in and out of the location. I attempted to allay their fears by joining, mirroring, and answering questions with facts.

In this first meeting, a number of individuals were able to come to see my proposal in a different, more positive light, but many still appeared to be very suspicious and concerned. With much coaching from Anita, Claudia, and Susan over the next several months, I began visiting people in the neighborhood, especially those who had voiced strong misgivings.

One particularly influential woman was dead set against the idea of my school occupying the building. Several people on her street had told me that they might not be able to support us if she actively opposed the plan. I called this woman and invited her to share her concerns with me on a

one-on-one basis. We met at her home. As we sat in her kitchen, I was able to join her in her apprehensions and mirror her negative predictions. For an hour or more I mirrored her thoughts and feelings. After this personal meeting she never again opposed us.

I held several similar meetings with other neighbors in parks, on street corners, and in people's homes. I joined them in their strong aversion to a radical increase in traffic and to people parking randomly and illegally, possibly blocking residents' driveways. One neighbor told me, "I don't want noise and rowdy students in the neighborhood late at night." I joined her by saying, "I agree. I would not like noisy students disturbing my neighborhood. I would find that very upsetting." After our conversation she appeared to be less apprehensive about this issue.

As I continued to use SAVI skills to negotiate this tense situation, I began to see a gradual shift in the neighborhood's perspective. In the end, more than 95% of the community either actively supported us or remained neutral. Many of the neighbors testified in our favor at several zoning hearings, which often ran very late into the night. After six months of using my SAVI skills in communicating with neighbors, making presentations, and answering questions in Zoning Board hearings, we gained approval to move into the building. To maintain an open dialogue between the school and the surrounding community, I created a Neighborhood Advisory Committee. Our meetings thus far have been extremely productive and satisfying.

The unexpected challenges associated with this project were intense and constant. Undoing my own anxiety, negative predictions, and mind reads became almost a daily affair. For many years I have been a reasonably good communicator, but I'm not sure that I would have been successful in this endeavor without my SAVI skills and the SCT support I received. I survived the pressure and uncertainty, developed new relationships, skills, and sources of support, and transformed a daunting challenge into a win/win situation for everyone. Continually undoing my negative predictions and having that potentially bound energy available to problem solve, meet with neighbors, and create positive relationships enabled me to bring this process to a successful conclusion.

– Ben Benjamin

“ARE YOU CENTERED?”

There is a big difference between centering with the energy vectored in a self-centered direction and centering with the energy vectored into relationship with the group. Today in our SCT training group, I experienced the difference.

As a practitioner of mindfulness meditation, I have extensive practice in centering in my body and focusing my awareness on the arising body sensations, mental images

and internal talk of the self-centered system. When centered in mindfulness meditation, I am also keenly aware of the environment with its subtle nuances of external light, temperature and sound. It is an easy transfer of skill for me to be centered in an SCT group. I know how to sit with the body's center of gravity weighted into my chair, feet flat on the floor, muscles relaxed and still, and my focused awareness on internal and external information simultaneously. This kind of centering of the self is a functional organizational structure for the neurophysiology of the body, so that as an SCT group member I can have the fullest capacity to vector my energy into the group. "Self-centering is in itself a healing process...Centering in the SCT group first takes place when members learn how to sit centered. This is followed by learning how to stay centered and contain, how to be "ready" to discover what in the self is being defended against. This is the aim of self-centering containment." (Agazarian, Y.M. (1997) *Systems-centered therapy for groups.*)

What I discovered today is that centering requires not only vectoring energy away from the defenses and back into the self-centering awareness, it also requires active vectoring of energy into the group (and subgroup) while still staying centered. If the energy is not continually vectored into the group, the centering posture can become an "as if" centering, while the boundaries for taking in information become impermeable. The body looks centered, but no information is coming in and the boundary between apprehensive and comprehensive processing also becomes impermeable.

This happened to me today when Yvonne was actively training a member, and I was having a response of relapsing into an early childhood role of defending against fear, danger and chaos. In an attempt to contain my complex feelings and myriad thoughts, I focused on physically grounding and centering myself with great seriousness. I centered as if it were "the law," and I lost "the spirit of the law" of centering. I lost connection with myself, the group and with my subgroup, and actually moved into a barrier experience. I was alone in a self-"centered" place. Containing in this way did not allow for information to come in, nor did it allow for the discrimination and integration of differences. It only allowed me to bind up my energy inside myself, get very quiet, and "hunker down" until the external chaos subsided.

"SCT containing and centering are both similar to and different from the discipline of meditation." (Agazarian, Y.M. (1997) *Systems-centered therapy for groups.*) The SCT centering experience brings awareness of the self-centered system into the systems-centered context of the group and the subgroup. Communicating across the boundary from "self-centeredness" into the space of "relational-centeredness" is the key.

– Irene McHenry

SYSTEMS-CENTERED® TRAINING PROGRAM

SCT TRAINING OVERVIEW

There are a wide variety of training opportunities at the four levels of training described below, as well as specialty trainings with SAVI (a communications model) and with SCT applied to couples and organizations.

Systems-centered training combines group work practicum (where you learn by working as a member of a group), and theoretical and technical training. You can learn about SCT by attending training events at the level that matches your interest and resources, i.e. time, energy and money. These training tracks range from exploring SCT to making a commitment to formal training. The approach to training is functional, with less emphasis on “checking off” certain experiences and more on mastering the theory, methods and techniques at each level of training.

LEVELS OF SCT TRAINING: Exploration, Foundation Training, Intermediate Training, Advanced Training.

EXPLORING SCT: FOR CURIOUS PEOPLE

In exploring SCT you can attend foundation or specialized training events once or as many times as you find useful. Some find the training group valuable for their own development; others want to learn the theoretical approach well enough to compare it to their own; others use elements of theory and technique in their current practical applications. At this level of participation, you are your own guide, sipping or drinking deeply as your interests and resources permit.

FOUNDATION TRAINING: FOR LEARNING SCT

Some people discover enough value in SCT theory and practice to consider making SCT a primary orientation to their work. The Foundation training emphasizes learning to use SCT methods with one's self and gaining the personal development and training that comes from working in an ongoing training group with sufficient intensity to explore and contain one's issues with authority. At a minimum, a training group and some work with theory are foundations to further work in SCT. If you find yourself exploring this shift into more structured training, you should make contact with an SCT Mentor to find out more about the training process.

INTERMEDIATE TRAINING

Intermediate training is for those interested in using SCT as their major theoretical orientation and works toward the goal of becoming a licensed systems-centered practitioner. Members apply for Intermediate training experience after having learned to use SCT as a training group member, to understand basic SCT theory, and to understand and contain the dynamics of their own authority issue. The Intermediate level of training introduces more focus on theory, on the technical skills of SCT, on managing role boundaries, and on containing the dynamics of a system. Intermediate training includes the Intermediate Skills Training, the Intermediate Mentor Training, and the Authority Issue Group. The Skills Training focuses on the technical skills of defense modification in Modules I and II. The Intermediate Mentor Training focuses on the management of oneself in relation to changing roles and contexts. The Authority Issue Group is a training group working the issues of Module III in depth. At the Intermediate level, participants also work in a Theory group and in an ongoing Consultation group in addition to their ongoing training group.

ADVANCED TRAINING

Advanced training activities emphasize integrating comprehensive and apprehensive knowledge in role, and relating to goal and context in application settings. One major advanced training track is working as a member of a peer licensing group to build a working group, developing criteria for assessment and implementing a peer assessment process. Joining the Management group is another context for advanced training. An advanced training track is also offered at the annual conference for post-Authority group members and a special advanced training group is offered each summer. Advanced members also work with mentors to develop training opportunities.

NOTICE BOARD UPDATES

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Systems-Centered® Training and Research Institute Membership Application/Membership Renewal

Membership Benefits:

- Bi-Annual SCTRI Newsletter
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- Peer Mentorship and Consultation
- Lower Fees for Training Groups
- Monthly Drop-In Study Group on the Phone

One must be an active member in the Systems-Centered Training and Research Institute to:

- move to Intermediate level of training
- participate in the SCTRI Work Groups
- apply for a license to use the SCT trademark
- be eligible for work exchange program

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Fall 2005 Update

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ATLANTA

MONTHLY TRAINING GROUP

with Susan Gantt

Monthly SCT group with group practicum, theory and supervision.

- **Where:** 18A Lenox Pointe, NE, Atlanta
- **When:** 12:15-5:30 PM, One Friday a month (\$150)
12:15-1:15 Theory and Leadership alternating months (\$45)
1:20-2:30 Consultation (\$45)
2:35-5:30 Training Group with Review (\$80)
- **Dates:** Dec. 9, Jan. 20, Feb. 10, Mar. 3, Apr. 14, May 19, Jun. 16, Aug. 25, Oct. 6, Nov. 10, Dec. 8
- **Contact:** Susan Gantt (404) 261-5559 x1 or sgantt@systemscentered.com

ONGOING TRAINING GROUP

with Susan Gantt

- **Where:** 18A Lenox Pointe, NE, Atlanta
- **When:** 4:00-5:20 PM, Every other Monday (call for dates)
- **Registration:** \$40 per meeting.
- **Contact:** Susan Gantt (404) 261-5559 x1 or sgantt@systemscentered.com

AUSTIN

MONDAY INTERMEDIATE TRAINING GROUP

with Rich Armington & Susan Cassano

Group practicum, theory and skill building.

- **Where:** 2525 Wallingwood Drive, Suite #701, Austin
- **When:** 12:00-1:30 PM
- **Contact:** Rich Armington (512) 306-0166 or armington@gmail.com or Susan Cassano (512) 327-4170 or susancassano@sbcglobal.net

TUESDAY FOUNDATION TRAINING GROUP

with Rich Armington

Group practicum, theory and force field work.

- **Where:** 2525 Wallingwood Drive, Suite #701, Austin
- **When:** 4:00-5:30 PM
- **Contact:** Rich Armington (512) 306-0166 or armington@gmail.com

WEDNESDAY CONSULTATION GROUP

with Rich Armington & Susan Cassano

Applications of the Theory of Living Human Systems to work settings.

- **Where:** 2525 Wallingwood Drive, Suite #701, Austin
- **When:** 9:00-10:00 AM, 1st & 3rd Wednesdays
- **Contact:** Rich Armington (512) 306-0166 or armington@gmail.com or Susan Cassano (512) 327-4170 or susancassano@sbcglobal.net

WEDNESDAY FOUNDATION TRAINING GROUP

with Linda Scott Solomon & Sydnor Sikes

- **Where:** 508 Deep Eddy, Suite 1-A, Austin
- **When:** 2:00-3:30 PM
- **Contact:** Linda Scott Solomon (512) 327-3408 or lscott1244@yahoo.com or Sydnor Sikes (512) 469-0582 or sydnorsikes@earthlink.net

THURSDAY FOUNDATION TRAINING GROUP

with Sydnor Sikes & Joy Luther

Weekly 90 minute sessions to include didactic and group practicum.

- **Where:** 508 Deep Eddy, Suite 1-A, Austin
- **When:** 12:30-2:00 PM
- **Contact:** Sydnor Sikes (512) 469-0582 or sydnorsikes@earthlink.net or Joy Luther (512) 343-9609 or joyluthersoffice@aol.com

BOSTON

FOUNDATION TRAINING GROUP

with Fran Carter

- **Where:** 86 Boston Ave., West Medford
- **When:** 9:00-12:00 noon, First Sunday of each month
- **Registration:** \$80 per meeting
- **Contact:** Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com

ONGOING TRAINING GROUP

with Fran Carter & Steve Weinstein

Group practicum with lecture.

- **Where:** 86 Boston Ave., West Medford
- **When:** 1:45-4:45 PM, First Sunday of each month
- **Registration:** \$80 per meeting
- **Contact:** Steve Weinstein (781) 488-3613 or sweinst949@aol.com

CONSULTATION GROUP

with Fran Carter

Begins in October!

- **Where:** 86 Boston Ave., West Medford
- **When:** 12:15-1:30 PM, First Sunday of each month
- **Registration:** \$35 per meeting
- **Contact:** Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com

SCTRI CONFERENCE 2006

- **Where:** Holiday Inn, Brookline, MA
- **When:** Institute Mar. 25-26, Conference Mar. 27-31
- **Registration Nov. 1-Feb. 28:** Members: Institute \$375, Conference \$575 Non-members: Institute \$400, Conference \$600
- **Hotel Accommodations:** Discounted rate \$119 until Feb. 28. Reservations: (617) 277-1200
- **Contact:** Robert Hartford (202) 299-9410 or rghartford@aol.com or Verena Murphy (330) 995-3576 or vmch99@yahoo.com

ENGLAND

EUROPEAN TRAINING GROUP

with Ray Haddock

- **Where:** Near Kings Cross Station, London
- **When:** 09:00-17:00, Fridays
- **Dates:** Dec. 2, Jan. 27, Mar. 10, Apr. 28, June. 9
- **Registration:** £130 per meeting
- **Contact:** Ray Haddock +44 (0) 114 271 6894 or ray.haddock@sct.nhs.uk

YORK SAVI WORKSHOP

with Fran Carter

- **Where:** Derwent College, University of York
- **When:** Dec. 8, 2005
- **Registration:** £75
- **Contact:** Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com or Liza Bingley Miller +44 (0) 1904 633 417 or liza.miller@btinternet.com

YORK SCT WORKSHOP

with Fran Carter

- **Where:** Derwent College, University of York
- **When:** Dec. 9-10, 2005
- **Registration:** £150
- **Contact:** Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com or Liza Bingley Miller +44 (0) 1904 633 417 or liza.miller@btinternet.com

NEW YORK

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH: INTERMEDIATE TRAINING

with Yvonne Agazarian & Fran Carter

- **Where:** Washington Square Institute, 41 E. 11th, 4th floor, NYC 10003
- **When:** Theory: 10:00-11:45 AM Consultation Group: 12:15-1:55 PM Group Practicum (invitation only): 2:00-4:00 PM Groups meet the first Wednesday of each month except Aug. & Sept.
- **Registration:** Fees are based on rate of \$50/hour with a 10% discount for members. Fall Semester: Dec. 7 Winter Semester: Jan. 4, Feb. 1, Mar. 1, Apr. 5 Spring Semester: May 3, Jun. 7, Jul. 5
- **Contact:** Yvonne Agazarian (215) 561-7428 or agazarian@aol.com or Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com

FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH: FOUNDATION LEVEL TRAINING

with Yvonne Agazarian & Fran Carter

- **Where:** Washington Square Institute, 41 E. 11th, 4th floor, NYC 10003
- **When:** Group Practicum: 8:30-12:30 PM Leadership Practicum: 1:00-2:45 PM Consultation: 3:00-4:45 PM Groups meet on the first Thursday of the month (after the first Wednesday) except Aug. & Sept.
- **Registration:** Fees are based on rate of \$50/hour with a 10% discount for members. Fall Semester: Dec. 8 Winter Semester: Jan. 5, Feb. 2, Mar. 2, Apr. 6 Spring Semester: May 4, Jun. 8, Jul. 6
- **Contact:** Yvonne Agazarian (215) 561-7428 or agazarian@aol.com or Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com

FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH: TRAINING GROUP

with Yvonne Agazarian

This is a closed training group.

- **Where:** Washington Square Institute, 41 E. 11th, 4th floor, NYC 10003
- **When:** Group meets on the first Friday of the month (after the first Wednesday) except Aug. & Sept.
- **Contact:** Yvonne Agazarian (215) 561-7428 or agazarian@aol.com

Notice Board Updates on the web
www.systemscentered.com

FRIDAY ONGOING FOUNDATION TRAINING GROUP

with Fran Carter

- **Where:** 144 East 55th St., NYC
- **When:** 2:00-5:00 PM, one Friday each month except Aug. & Sept.
- **Registration:** \$110 per meeting
- **Contact:** Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com

PHILADELPHIA

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH: SAMPLING SCT

with Yvonne Agazarian

Everybody is welcome to attend an introductory "explaining and exploring" of the SCT experience. Container Role training available for experienced SCT members.

- **Where:** Philadelphia County Medical Society, 21st & Spring Garden Streets (On-site parking)
- **When:** 6:00-9:00 PM, First Monday of each month except for Aug. & Sept. (if holiday, 2nd Monday).
- **Registration:** \$50 per meeting
- **Contact:** Yvonne Agazarian (215) 561-7428 or agazarian@aol.com

MONDAY ONGOING GROUP PRACTICUM

with Yvonne Agazarian

- **Where:** Philadelphia County Medical Society, 21st & Spring Garden Streets (On-site parking)
- **When:** 6:00-7:30 PM, Every Monday (First Monday optional)
- **Registration:** \$150 per month members, \$175 per month non-members
- **Contact:** Yvonne Agazarian (215) 561-7428 or agazarian@aol.com

MONDAY TRAINING GROUPS

- **Where:** Philadelphia County Medical Society, 21st & Spring Garden Streets (On-site parking)
- **When:** 4:30-5:45 PM, Every Monday except August (First Monday optional)
Second Monday: Theory with Fran Carter
Third Monday: Leadership Practicum with Yvonne Agazarian
Fourth Monday: Consultation with Yvonne Agazarian
Fifth Monday: SAVI with Anita Simon
- **Registration:** \$25 per meeting
- **Contact:** Yvonne Agazarian (215) 561-7428 or agazarian@aol.com

LAST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH: TRAINING GROUP

with Yvonne Agazarian

- Membership in an ongoing training group. Skill training in SCT techniques of functional subgrouping, boundarying, and the hierarchy of defense modification.
- **Where:** 1831 Chestnut Street, Ste. 801
- **When:** 6:00-8:30 PM, Last Wednesday of the month except Aug.
- **Registration:** \$62.50 members, \$75 non-members
- **Contact:** Yvonne Agazarian (215) 561-7428 or agazarian@aol.com

LAST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH: TRAINING MORNING

with Claudia Byram, Fran Carter & Jeff Eiberson

- **Where:** Friends Hospital, 4641 Roosevelt Blvd. (On-site parking)
- **When:** Theory Seminar 9:00-10:30 AM, and Group Practicum 10:30-12:30 PM; Last Wednesday of the month except Aug. & Sept. These courses can be taken separately or together.
- **Registration:** \$40 for single course, \$70 for both
- **Contact:** Claudia Byram (215) 561-0341 or claudia.byram@verizon.net, Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com or Jeff Eiberson (215) 546-1767 or jledoc@aol.com

WEDNESDAY FOUNDATION TRAINING GROUP

with Fran Carter & Dorothy Gibbons

- **Where:** 1831 Chestnut Street, Ste. 801
- **When:** 3:30-7:30 PM, Third Wednesday of the month
- **Registration:** \$100 per meeting
- **Contact:** Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com or Dorothy Gibbons (215) 288-6219 or dorothygibbons@earthlink.net

THURSDAY TRAINING GROUP

with Claudia Byram

- **Where:** 1831 Chestnut Street, Ste. 801
- **When:** 8:00-9:30 AM, 2nd & 4th Thursdays
- **Registration:** \$70 per month members, \$80 per month non-members
- **Contact:** Claudia Byram (215) 561-0341 or claudia.byram@verizon.net

LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH: INTERMEDIATE TRAINING DAY

with Yvonne Agazarian

- **Where:** 1831 Chestnut Street, Ste. 801
- **When:** Theory Group: 12:00-1:15 PM
Consultation: 1:30-2:40 PM
Leadership Practicum: 2:45-4:05 PM
Ongoing Group Practicum (by invitation only): 4:15-5:45 PM
Does not meet in Jan. or Aug.
- **Registration:** \$25 per hour members, \$30 per hour non-members, full day \$125
- **Contact:** Yvonne Agazarian (215) 561-7428 or agazarian@aol.com

SAN FRANCISCO TRAINING GROUP

with Susan Gantt

- **Where:** Fort Mason Center, Rm. C-230
- **When:** 3:00-6:00 PM, Thursdays
- **Dates:** Dec. 1, Jan. 26, Mar. 9, May 4, June 8, Aug. 17, Sept. 21, Nov. 2, Nov. 30
- **Contact:** Susan Gantt (404) 261-5559 x1 or sgantt@systemscentered.com

TRAINING DAY

with Susan Gantt

Group practicum, leadership, consultation.

- **When:** 9:00-5:00 PM, Fridays
- **Dates:** Dec. 2, Jan. 27, Mar. 10, May 5, June 9, Aug. 18, Sept. 22, Nov. 3, Dec. 1
- **Contact:** Peter Bernhardt (510) 526-5727 or biosa@mindspring.com

BAY AREA PHONE STUDY/ EXPLORATION GROUP

with Fran Carter & Susan Gantt

- **When:** 8:00-9:00 AM PT, 2nd Friday each month. Meetings are on the SCTRI tele phone bridge. Call 1-641-793-7018 PIN 181505# at the appointed time. (You pay your own long distance charges.)
- **Contact:** John Straznickas (415) 522-9700 or john.straznickas@med.va.gov

FUNCTIONAL ROLE-TAKING: APPLYING THE SYSTEMS-CENTERED APPROACH TO ORGANIZATIONS

with Susan Gantt

Learning to Talk From Role and Stay on Goal Co-hosted by the Harm Reduction Therapy Center & the San Francisco AIDS Foundation.

- **Where:** San Francisco AIDS Foundation, 995 Market St.
- **When:** Dec. 5
- **Registration:** \$110 per person, \$80 per person for 3+ from same organization
- **Contact:** Susan Gantt (404) 261-5559 x1 or sgantt@systemscentered.com or Darice Jones at HRTC (510) 251-1131

SWEDEN

SYSTEMS-CENTERED THERAPY TRAINING GROUP

with Ray Haddock & Anna-Lena Sundlin

- **Where:** IOGT-NTO Gärdén, Klara Södra Kyrkogata 20
- **When:** 08:30-17:00, One Friday every 2 months
- **Dates:** Jan. 20, Mar. 17, May 12
- **Registration:** 2000 Swedish Kronor (£155) per meeting
- **Contact:** Ray Haddock +44 (0) 114 271 6894 or ray.haddock@sct.nhs.uk or Anna-Lena Sundlin +46 (0) 70 9522 448 or anna-lena.sundlin@sandahls.se

SYSTEMS-CENTERED TRAINING WORKSHOP

with Susan Gantt & Ray Haddock

- **Where:** Stockholm
- **When:** Feb. 6, 2006: Functional Role-Taking for Managers, Consultants & Curious People
Feb. 7-8, 2006: Building a Systems-Centered Group: Foundation & Intermediate Training
- **Registration:** By Dec. 31: 1 day workshop – 2000 SEK, 2 day workshop – 3500 SEK; After Dec. 31: 1 day workshop – 2300 SEK, 2 day workshop – 4025 SEK. 10% discount for attending both workshops.
- **Contact:** Susan Gantt (404) 261-5559 x1 or sgantt@systemscentered.com or Erica Ekedahl Steinholtz +46 (0) 8 795 4350 or ees@humannature.se

SAVI WORKSHOPS

MONTHLY SAVI APPLICATIONS SEMINARS

with Anita Simon & Claudia Byram

- **When:** 10:00-11:30 AM ET, One Friday each month. Advance sign-up not required.
- **Dates:** Dec. 16, Jan. 20, Feb. 17, Mar. 17, Apr. 21, May 19, June 16, July 21 Meetings are on SCTRI telephone bridge. Call 1-641-793-7018 PIN 181505# at the appointed time. (You pay your own long distance charges.)
- **Registration:** \$45 per meeting
- **Contact:** Claudia Byram (215) 561-0341 or claudia.byram@verizon.net

YORK SAVI WORKSHOP

with Fran Carter

- **Where:** Derwent College, University of York
- **When:** Dec. 8, 2005
- **Registration:** £75
- **Contact:** Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com or Liza Bingley Miller +44 (0) 1904 633 417 or liza.miller@btinternet.com

SCT PHONE SEMINARS

For seminars on the SCTRI phone bridge line, call 1-641-793-7018 PIN 181505# at the appointed time. You pay your own long distance charges.

ADVANCED SEMINAR

with Yvonne Agazarian

A new group beginning in February! For members who are licensed or in the Authority or Licensing groups.

- **When:** 2nd Thursday each month (unless otherwise noted)
Series 1: 8:00-9:15 AM ET "Theory of Living Human Systems"
Series 2: 9:20-10:35 AM ET "Systems-Centered Practice"
- **Dates:** Feb. 9, Mar. 9, Apr. 13, May 11, Jun. 1, Jul. 6, Oct. 19, Nov. 9, Dec. 14 Call 1-641-793-7018 PIN 181505#
- **Registration:** \$350 per series, paid in advance. 15% discount for taking both. (You pay your own long distance charges.) Send check payable to Yvonne Agazarian, 553 Judson St., Philadelphia, PA 19130 US
- **Contact:** Yvonne Agazarian (215) 561-7428 or agazarian@aol.com

THEORY GROUP

with Fran Carter & Susan Gantt

- **When:** 9:00-10:00 AM ET, 2nd Wednesday each month
Call 1-641-793-7018 PIN 181505#
- **Registration:** 35 per meeting. (You pay your own long distance charges.) Send check payable to Susan Gantt, 18 Lenox Pointe NE, Atlanta, GA 30324 US
- **Contact:** Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com or Susan Gantt (404) 261-5559 x1 or sgantt@systemscentered.com

FOUNDATION THEORY GROUP

with Fran Carter & Susan Gantt

- **When:** 10:05-11:00 AM ET, 2nd Wednesday each month
Call 1-641-793-7018 PIN 181505#
- **Registration:** \$35 per meeting. (You pay your own long distance charges.) Send check payable to Susan Gantt, 18 Lenox Pointe NE, Atlanta, GA 30324 US
- **Contact:** Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com or Susan Gantt (404) 261-5559 x1 or sgantt@systemscentered.com

DROP-IN STUDY GROUP

- **When:** 12:00-1:00 PM ET, 3rd Friday each month. Call 1-641-793-7018 PIN 181505#
- Any member can come, any time, as a benefit of membership. The only cost is your phone connection.
- The Study Group is a place where members can interact around questions, ideas, curiosities, areas of interest about the Theory of Living Human Systems and Systems-Centered methods & techniques. A licensed or license-qualified SCT member will attend each meeting to convene & mentor the group.

APPLICATIONS GROUP FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CONSULTANTS AND EDUCATORS

with Susan Gantt

- **When:** 12:00-1:00 PM ET, One Monday each month
Call 1-641-793-7018 PIN 181505#
- **Dates:** Dec. 5, Jan. 9, Feb. 13, Mar. 13, Apr. 3, May 8, Jun. 12, Jul. 10, Aug. 7, Sep. 18, Oct. 9, Nov. 6, Dec. 11
- Using the theory and methods of SCT, the group explores specific applications and examples from members' experiences. The group works with the issues that are surfaced by the group, such as assessing the work that is appropriate to the context and the goal of the context or integrating the SCT methods with the language of the context.
- **Registration:** \$30 per meeting. (You pay your own long distance charges.) Send check payable to Susan Gantt, 18 Lenox Pointe NE, Atlanta, GA 30324 US
- **Contact:** Susan Gantt (404) 261-5559 x1 or sgantt@systemscentered.com

EUROPEAN CONSULTATION GROUP

with Susan Gantt

- **When:** 8PM GMT, 2nd & 4th Tuesday each month
Call 1-641-793-7018 PIN 181505#
- **Registration:** £25 (€36 or \$44) per meeting. (You pay your own long distance charges.) Send payment to Susan Gantt, 18 Lenox Pointe NE, Atlanta, GA 30324 US
- **Contact:** Susan Gantt (404) 261-5559 x1 or sgantt@systemscentered.com

MONTHLY SAVI APPLICATION SEMINARS

See listing under SAVI.

BAY AREA PHONE STUDY/ EXPLORATION GROUP

See listing under San Francisco.

SCTRI

MANAGEMENT GROUP

SCT MANAGEMENT GROUP MEMBERS ONLY

with Yvonne Agazarian & Kenneth Eisold

- **Spring:** April 20-23, 2006
- **Fall:** Oct. 12-15, 2006
- **Where:** The Racquet Club of Philadelphia, 215 S. 16th St.
- **Contact:** Eileen Jones (212) 673-4968 or pershore@aol.com

All fees listed for training groups are for members of the Systems-Centered® Training and Research Institute. Non-member fees are:

- 90 minute training groups are an additional \$5.
- Half-day or Full-day events are an additional \$25.

Note: Psychology guidelines suggest we substitute the word "consultation" for "supervision". Supervision is reserved for supervisors who are taking legal responsibility for the supervisee's cases.

**SCTRI Telephone Bridge
1-641-793-7018
PIN 181505#**

**MARK YOUR CALENDERS
NOW FOR CONFERENCE 2006!**

BOSTON, MA

Pre-Conference Institutes:

March 25-26, 2006

5-Day Conference:

March 27-31, 2006

All levels of training offered.

SCT PROGRAM NOTES

This section contains official information about the evolving SCT training program. In this issue we are focusing on the Advanced level of SCT training.

OVERVIEW OF ADVANCED LEVEL TRAINING

Members enter Advanced training when they have completed the Authority Issue Group and all the Intermediate level pre-requisites. (See the SCTRI Newsletter, Summer 2004, Vol. 12 #2, for a description of Intermediate level training.)

Advanced training activities emphasize integrating a comprehensive knowledge of SCT theory and practice and relating this knowledge to role, goal and context in application settings.

- **Theory** – Advanced training focuses on a comprehensive and apprehensive understanding of theory, methods and techniques and the ability to use the theory in clinical, educational and organizational contexts. Advanced trainees work with an ongoing integration of theory and methods and apply them to the task of building working systems-centered group contexts. They also focus on understanding the similarities and differences between SCT and other models.
- **Experiential Learning** – Experiential learning at this level focuses on an in-depth understanding of taking up the member role in context and how this role changes in different contexts. There is ongoing work to identify more complex restraining forces to taking up functional roles in context and a continued exploration of the work phase of system development. There is also ongoing work to free up creative energy and direct it into a functional context.
- **Technical Skill Building** – Technical skill building focuses on the ability to use SCT theory and methods to build working systems and task groups. Advanced trainees also develop an increased ability to discriminate between innovation and drift. There is continued cultivation of one's understanding of group-as-a-whole dynamics and its impact on a developing system, as well as the ability to adapt SCT methods and techniques to different contexts.
- **Research** – Research focuses on the ability to observe, recognize and code the context of interventions and the methods of intervention. The capacity to design and implement research that tests

SCT hypotheses is developed. There is also ongoing development of the capacity to observe system process and identify core issues, and plan intervention strategies informed by TLHS and SCT methodology.

ONGOING TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

Advanced members are expected to maintain membership and participation in training contexts that will continue to enhance their ongoing development and transformation while keeping abreast of developments in theory, methods and practical applications of TLHS and SCT.

TRAINING CONTEXTS:

Management Group: SCTRI as an organization is a living experiment in the application of the Theory of Living Human Systems to an organizational context. The Management Group provides members with an opportunity to practice applying their SCT skills in a task-oriented context that supports the norms and values of SCT. Each successive Authority Issue Group contributes the most recently trained and developmentally advanced group of new members to the management of our organization.

The structure of the Management Group reflects our theoretical understanding of systems dynamics. During the first two days of the meeting, we explore the underlying dynamics of our system-in subgroups, of course-to discover and explore the driving and restraining forces that are currently affecting our ability to work. After freeing up our energy for work, we spend the next day and a half attending to the business of the organization: reviewing the progress of the various work groups and regional training centers, focusing on developmental plans for the organization, and making policy decisions.

The Management Group offers a rich training experience in a collegial atmosphere for members who are interested in continuing to develop their skills in consulting to organizations, in contributing their resources to SCTRI work groups, or in using their SCT skills in their own work situations.

Experiential Groups: Advanced trainees participate in ongoing leading edge exploration at the person, member, subgroup and group-as-a-whole levels. The current training context for this work is in ongoing advanced training groups, an annual weekend workshop that is offered each summer and a five morning experiential training group at

the Conference. Advanced members also work with mentors to develop training opportunities.

Theory Groups: Advanced trainees participate in ongoing exploration of innovations, leading edge thinking and amplification of different aspects of TLHS and SCT. Advanced members continue their development in this area by forming peer groups or by working in existing theory groups.

Consultation: This training context is arranged independently by each member. Advanced trainees use TLHS and SCT in clinical, educational and organizational contexts and work in consultation to training.

Research: This training context is arranged independently by each member. Advanced trainees use TLHS and SCT in clinical, educational and organizational contexts and work in consultation to training

Licensed and Licensing Groups: One major advanced training opportunity is membership in a peer licensing

group. In this context, trainees build a working SCT task group, develop the criteria for assessing and the method to implement a peer assessment. This process results in licensing members as SCT Practitioners. SCT Practitioners take on the responsibility of representing SCT values through the practice of SCT in the larger environment while also contributing to the ongoing development of SCT, SCTR and its members. It is in the re-licensing process that members focus on the discrimination between innovation and drift.

If you would like to talk with someone about your interest in systems-centered training, contact Kathy Lum, Administrator (404-378-5709), who can connect you with someone in your area. Or check out the website at www.systemscentered.com.

– Claudia Byram

Continuing Education Credits (CE's) for SCT Training

SCTR currently offers CE's for psychologists for the Annual Conference, and for non-conference Core Training (currently the Authority Issue, Skills and Mentor Training Groups). We also seek CE's on a local basis for social workers, mental health counselors, and marriage and family therapists in the area in which the Annual Conference is held. Trainers may also provide APA CE's for training events they do.

Certificates of attendance can also be obtained for Core Trainings and through individual trainers, with the member submitting these to their professional organization for possible acceptance as CE's.

SCTR is interested in providing CE's for other professions if members are willing to provide the time, energy, and resources (emergent energy) to obtain provider status for offering such credits. If you are interested in further information about obtaining CE's, please contact Dick Ganley, CE Group Coordinator, at dickganley@aol.com or at (610) 664-5730. Some trainers and local groups provide additional CE's. Check with individual trainers.

USE OF THE SCT® TRADEMARK

Only licensed practitioners of SCT can call themselves **Systems-Centered** anything!

All others call themselves **systems-oriented** and MUST

be careful not to link that nomenclature to SCT or Systems-Centered.

Anyone who wants to use SCT materials or the terms SCT, Systems-Centered or Systems-Centered

Therapy, and who is not licensed, must apply for a project license by contacting the trademark holders, Yvonne Agazarian or Susan Gantt (in SCTR Director role).

Systems-Centered[®] Training

An Innovative Approach to Change

Boston, MA • March 25-31, 2006

“Creating Links: Similarities and Differences”

Pre-Conference Institute:
March 25-26

Five-Day Conference:
March 27-31



SCT[®] Conference 2006

- **Organizational Applications**
- **Large Group Applying SCT[®] Methods**
- **SAVI: A Communication Map for Change**
- **Individual, Couples & Group Psychotherapy**
- **Research and Theory Related to SCT[®] Practice**
- **Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced Training Groups**

www.systemscentered.com

For more information, contact:

Robert Hartford 202-299-9410 rghartford@aol.com • Verena Murphy 330-995-3576 vmch99@hotmail.com

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Register Now And Save

Register by February 1, 2006 and Save!

Registration Fees		
	SCT®RI Members	Non Members*
5-Day Conference	\$575	\$600
2-Day Institute	\$375	\$400
7-Day Package	\$950	\$1000

Program will be available in January 2006

Name: _____ Degrees: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

*Join SCT®RI now and save up to \$150 on registration fees
Sign me up as a member for 2006

- \$100 new member discount rate \$150 membership renewal
 (more if you can, less if not)

I'd like to make a tax-deductible contribution to SCT®RI

2-Day Institute	\$	_____
5-Day Conference	\$	_____
7-Day Package	\$	_____
CE's (Add \$15.00)	\$	_____
Monday Dinner (Add \$35.00)	\$	_____
Membership	\$	_____
Contribution	\$	_____
Total Enclosed	\$	_____

Send registration and payment to:
SCT®RI
PO Box 2118
Decatur, GA 30031

or fax to 404-378-8970

Check enclosed (payable to SCTRI)

Charge to my credit card:

- Visa MasterCard American Express

Account Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____

SCT®RI REPORTS AND UPDATES

SCT®RI IN A NUTSHELL: THE ORGANIZATION

SCT®RI is a volunteer organization. All roles (except Administrators) are filled with volunteer members who have time, energy and resources for the tasks. Working in an SCTRI work group is a learning environment for applying SCT in the service of task goals.

Management Group: Sets policy, oversees organizational direction, structure and function. This group meets twice yearly; selects, supports and guides the Director; and is made up of members at the advanced training level and beyond.

Director: Carries the organizational vision and values, oversees implementation, represents the organization to the larger world.

Steering Group: Implements policies and links work groups. Selected by and acts with the authority of the Management Group between its semi-annual meetings; meets weekly.

System Mentors: Keep an eye on the overall functioning of SCTRI and system-centered training with the goal of maintaining the spirit and values of SCT. Mentors consult to members and work groups as needed, and hold the final authority for accepting recommendations for licensing individual members as SCT Practitioners.

Work Groups: Small groups of members carrying out specific aspects of the work of SCTRI.

Currently:

- Annual Conference
- Continuing Education
- Curriculum Development
- Electronic Communications/Web
- Membership
- Newsletter
- Public Relations/Marketing
- Research
- Trainers

Administrators: Carry out organizational tasks under the supervision of the Director and the Steering Group.

MANAGEMENT GROUP

The Management Group met in March to continue the process of managing, developing and refining the structure of SCTRI. During the first two days the group worked experientially, with Yvonne as our consultant, to explore the underlying dynamics that impede our capacity to function in our role as Management Group members. We identified ways that old roles and stereotyped behavior perpetuate our

distorted world view and induce responses in others that seem to confirm our distortions. We also identified an underlying belief that SCT will somehow change or save the world, and the deep disappointment related to giving up this fantasy. We were relieved to discover that SCT is a structure that can contain and organize the chaos of the world, even if it will never heal it. Continuing our work from the last Management Group, we also became even more curious about the way volunteers “get paid” for their work, and identified belonging, affiliation, influence and training as possible “currency.”

The two-day management portion of the group with our consultant, Ken Eisold, began by orienting ourselves to the fact that we are in our 10th year as an organization!

We spent some time formally clarifying the role of the System Mentors and officially authorized them to manage SCTRI's 10% share of the trademark, something they were already doing informally. Ken had us pause to take in how this small structural formality was in fact monumental in the development of the organization. We also realized we don't have a structure for formally authorizing the Director and that we have developed a role, contrary to our norm, in which someone is working alone. Our next step will be for Susan, our current Director, to make a proposal about how to authorize herself and to think about how to develop a Director subsystem.

The group then reviewed our progress in efficiently managing the resources necessary for the administration of our organization. Jan Vadell, who recently joined us as a part-time administrator, has already taken up work related to the Newsletter and found a location for Conference '06 in Boston. Kathy Lum continues to meet and exceed our expectations. She is also delighted to have Jan's help! The Steering Group is looking into hiring consultants for developing the website's content and PR materials. The licensing process continues with both current licensing groups moving forward, assisted in various ways by consultation from the System Mentors and from licensed members.

Noting that the organization did not have any volunteers for the role of Conference Coordinator for '06, the Management Group redesigned the position, and created a new role of Conference Director(s). The role of the Conference Director(s) will be to coordinate the work of a team of members who will take up specific tasks that were previously housed in the Conference Coordinator role. A number of tasks will be funneled to the organization's administrators. We identified persons interested in certain functions such as vision, program planning, social events and fundraising. We are happy to announce that this year's Conference now has Co-Directors, Robert Hartford and

Verena Murphy, and that they are now working with an enthusiastic and well-trained team!

The group ended with some excitement and curiosity, inspired by our consultant, who reminded us that SCTRI is a non-hierarchical organization and that we are continually finding creative ways to structure ourselves, to reward volunteer energy, and to make necessary self-corrections as we build the type of organization we want to live in.

– Jim Peightel and Joy Luther

STEERING GROUP

The Steering Group has experienced an exciting period of change and innovation in the past few months. Through these changes, we have made progress towards our goals of following the emergent energy of our organization and creating links among work groups.

In March, Rich O’Neill decided to leave the Steering Group in order to free up his time and energy to take up leadership in the organization’s research function. As the organization is ready to put more of its resources into research, Rich’s decision to offer his expertise as a resource to the organization is both timely and valuable. We want to thank Rich for the energy and commitment that he brought to his work on the Steering Group, and we are grateful that he is now willing to channel this energy into the vision and implementation of SCT research.

Joy Luther has joined the Steering Group as a new member. We are doubly fortunate with this addition to our group. Joy brings both her own valuable resources to our meetings, and her experience as a board member of SCTRI-Austin. With this organizational experience, Joy is both a resource to the Steering Group, and a link to the Austin Board. This link will benefit both groups.

We are putting energy and financial resources into the research function of our organization and, as a result, have authorized funding additional roles to support the Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) replication study in Philadelphia. We are pleased to announce that Larry Ladden, our GAD Project Coordinator, has hired Faith Gordon as Project Manager to oversee the logistics of this project. Larry has also hired a consultant, familiar with GAD research, to help refine the methodology and to integrate comments from the reviewers of the article on the results of the GAD study in Austin. We are optimistic that with these additional resources the study can start this Fall! We continue to consider the structure, roles and resources that are necessary to fully integrate research into our system and look forward to continuing this work at the Management Group meeting this October.

As members of the Steering Group, we are in a unique position to feel the flow of work energy and to notice shifts in energy throughout the organization. Within the last year or so, there seems to have been a swell of energy as new people take up leadership and membership roles in work

groups and as work groups bring in innovative ideas for the development of the organization. From our perspective, this is an exciting time to be part of SCTRI and we are deeply appreciative of the energy, talent, and commitment that so many members bring to the organization. Thank you for making our job so exciting.

– Susan Gantt, Dorothy Gibbons, Joy Luther,
Jon McCormick

SYSTEM MENTOR REPORT

The norm for developing systems-centered training has been to “travel the road and then lay down the paths.” Work in the two current licensing groups and in the large group at the 2005 Conference in Atlanta clarified a section of “road” for all of us -- the section that leads to licensing as an SCT Practitioner. First, we clarified that licensing groups are task groups, not process groups. As a system, we have provided ample experience of process groups as part of training, and it is understandable that this norm carried into the work of the licensing groups. However, in the context of the task goal of setting criteria and assessing each other for sufficient mastery to be licensed as SCT Practitioners, “process” skills are only useful to reduce restraining forces to the task work. SCTRI work groups provide opportunities to learn task group skills, and are clearly (now, in retrospect) important learning resources for members moving toward licensing.

We also recognized that living out conflicts about joining in the licensing process by joining and then bringing ambivalence about being there into the group was a major restraining force to the group. This boundary was clarified: conflicts around entering or continuing the licensing process is a member (not task group) issue. Members need to process these conflicts in settings appropriate for process: experiential training, consultation, 10 minute consults, by forming a process group of peers, or by hiring a trainer to work with the group in exploring its conflicts.

Third, we clarified that the Authority Issue Group (a major segment of Intermediate training) is for members who are intending to enter the licensing process. This group is a major investment of system resources, both for members and leaders, and is not for personal growth per se, although this is often a significant byproduct. The Authority Issue Group is the major training in preparation for joining a licensing group and working toward becoming licensed as an SCT Practitioner.

We also clarified that the Authority Issue Group is only one context for ongoing training. For those members not interested in the licensing track, there are other contexts for training and contribution to the development of SCT and SCTRI. The SCTRI Management Group is one significant working context and new workshops, training groups, consultation contexts and theory groups are forming as the

interest and energy emerges. (See Overview of Advanced Training, Pg. 13)

– Yvonne Agazarian, Claudia Byram,
Fran Carter, Susan Gantt

CONFERENCE 2006, BOSTON _____

Boston, here we come!

We, Robert Hartford and Verena Murphy, want to introduce ourselves as Co-Directors of the upcoming 2006 Conference in Boston, March 25th – 31st. We have taken up our roles with excitement and curious anticipation, and the knowledge that Conference 2005 is a tough act to follow! It is great for SCTR I to have the opportunity to travel to Boston and we look forward to making new SCT connections in the Northeast. Moving with emergent energy from the Program Vision Coordinators, Fran Carter and Michael Robbins, the theme of our Conference is “Creating Links: Similarities and Differences,”

We are aiming for an exciting Conference 2006! Our plan is to get there by working to build a productive SCT work group that has a good time, a sense of good will and a commitment to high quality work. (If you are reading this and find that these are also your goals, please contact Verena at vmch99@hotmail.com or Bob at rghartford@aol.com. We look forward to talking with you about your ideas and interests.)

Together with the administrative team, Kathy Lum and Jan Vadell, and the Steering Group, we have developed a new role structure for the Conference coordinating team. This structure is evolving and so far is as follows:

Co-Directors: Verena Murphy and Robert Hartford

Administrative Coordinator: Kathy Lum

Site Coordinator: Jan Vadell

Local Planning Coordinator: Julie Siegelman

Hospitality Coordinator: Elaine Pratt

Public Relations Coordinator: Ken Frontman

On-Site Staff Coordinator: Jan Quirl

Program Vision Coordinators: Fran Carter and Michael Robbins

CE Coordinator: Jan Quirl

Brochure Coordinator: Mary Alice Hubbard

We are looking for people with energy to contribute in local PR planning, so give us a call!

Thanks to Jan Vadell’s terrific work, we already have a signed contract with the Holiday Inn in Brookline, which is located in the midst of restaurants, shops, and interesting sights to visit, all within walking distance! Also, thanks to Steve Weinstein, we have planned a great night of dinner and dancing on Monday at Marino’s Italian restaurant. Marino’s is known for their organically grown meats and vegetables, much of which come directly from their own farm. So register early and mark the date: Saturday, March 25 to Friday, March 31, 2006. See you there!

– Robert Hartford and Verena Murphy

MORE ON THE 2006 CONFERENCE PROGRAM _____

The last Conference is still fresh in the minds of many of us. It was a wonderful time to renew old connections, make new ones, and most especially to deepen our understanding and skill as therapists and consultants. If you were there, I think that you will agree - it was extraordinary!

This year, Fran Carter and I (Michael Robbins) are in charge of planning the program. Our vision is to develop a group of afternoon workshops and weekend institutes around the theme of comparing, contrasting and integrating systems-centered theory and practice with other approaches. Towards this end, we have titled the Conference: “Creating Links: Similarities and Differences.”

As SCT has become more of a defined discipline, it is appropriate that we look outward again. In doing this, we hope that we will both deepen our understanding of why we do what we do and build bridges with other disciplines that may have similar goals, but different methods and ways of thinking about those goals.

SCT is very fortunate to have a membership of mature practitioners who have a background in a variety of therapeutic and organizational development approaches. In this Conference we will mine the rich ore that is sitting in our own backyard. Some of the topics that are emerging for the Conference are “SCT and Creativity,” “SCT and Spiritual Practice,” “SCT and Attachment Theory,” “SCT and Diversity Training,” “SCT and Interpersonal Neurobiology,” and many more! We will also have several presentations on the results of a variety of research projects that SCTR I has been supporting and/or sponsoring. As you can see, the list is both wide and deep! We are also very excited that Anne Alonso has accepted an invitation to work with Yvonne on the Friday afternoon presentation. Seeing these two giants in the field of group work rediscover their similarities and differences will be a fabulous learning opportunity for all of us!

This will be an exciting time to deepen our learning and share with each other the variety of ways that we have integrated or are in the process of integrating SCT into our clinical and organizational work. Most of our core morning offerings will remain the same. There will still be an Authority Issue Group, Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced training groups, Drop-ins, and a Large Group experience at the end of the day.

The electric ripple of excitement that is running through the emerging program is palpable! We are very much looking forward to soaring high and diving deep with you. Hope to see you in March at our beautiful new site in Boston!

– Michael Robbins and Fran Carter

SAYING GOODBYE TO CONFERENCE '05

*"It is good to have an end to journey towards,
But it is the journey that matters in the end."*

Ursula Le Guin

A little over a year ago, neither of us was willing to consider coordinating Conference 2005. However, in our enthusiasm for nominating each other, we discovered that alone, neither of us was willing, yet together, both of us were enthusiastic. Our enthusiasm for the role emerged as we discovered our curiosity about our leading edges and our shared dedication to create an environment in which every aspect of the Conference planning was an opportunity for training. In other words, we decided to put the theory - and ourselves - to the test.

From the start, we employed SCT tools and values, taking the time to identify - in a subgroup of course - the driving and restraining forces to taking up the role, and vowing to consider all our experiences in our Conference Coordinator system as potential energy and information for our developing conference system. We decided to experiment with the question that, if we developed an SCT work group in our system of two from the start, would this phase of development continue to manifest in each developing subsystem of conference planning and implementation during the year, and eventually, in the environment of the conference itself? From the feedback and evaluations we have received, the answer is a resounding "Yes!" What an experiment! What a testament to the Theory of Living Human Systems!

Several guidelines were helpful to us in creating our Conference Coordinator system. First, and foremost, we insisted on subgrouping - not always an easy thing to do in a group of two. However, by holding ourselves to this standard, we created a system rich with resources, constantly surprising ourselves as we discovered ideas and solutions that were beyond our reach as individuals or even when we put our two "heads" together.

Secondly, we agreed to frame this journey as a training for ourselves and all those we worked with, keeping a keen eye on role locks and person system reactions, recognizing that these "spots" had information for our system so long as we didn't react personally to their sudden appearance. We reminded ourselves that "mistakes," unexpected changes, and turbulent reactions to our decisions identified the leading edges of our system, and provided us with opportunities to use our SCT skills to train ourselves and our work team to sit at the edge with curiosity until the next step towards our goal emerged. We had an abundance of such opportunities!

Finally, when the going got tough, we would return to our motto: "Let's have a good time," a motto that served to remind us that we do have a choice about creating

environments of good will and that, on the road to Atlanta, getting there was half the fun.

The most common response to the Conference was about its positive climate from the moment participants approached the registration desk until our final good-bye in the Large Group. We attribute the positive climate to the containment and creativity of the Conference planning team (remember the purple badges?) who maintained the structure of SCT norms throughout the entire week, constantly responding with good will and common sense to the "small emergencies" of participants, presenters, and hotel staff. After handing the Conference into the competent hands of Jan Quirl, our On-Site Coordinator, and the rest of the On-Site Group on Friday, we had the privilege of stepping back and basking in the reflected glory of this true SCT work group for seven days.

During Conference '05, we celebrated the achievement of ten years of survival, development and transformation as an organization. Our program reflected many of SCTRI's leading edges as we expanded our offerings for members at different levels of training, and introduced a number of innovative workshops. We are particularly delighted at the participants' response to the issues of racial and cultural identity, and the spontaneous and enthusiastic formation of a subgroup to continue to explore the many dimensions of diversity in our system. We hope the energy and initial plans that emerged will continue to be nurtured by finding an ongoing place in the structure of our annual Conference. On the lighter side, at the Thursday Night Party, the Systems-Centered Players regaled us with an often hilarious rendition of the key concepts and methods that help us grow. (By the way, for those of you who are interested [or terrified!], we do not plan on offering copies of the performance for use as training tools.) We reached new levels of donations and scholarship fund-raising, including the advent of gift certificates and a live auction. And again this year, we packed the restaurant (which added 30 seats after last year) for the Monday Night Dinner and dancing. It is wonderful to note that as we grow and develop, we continue to honor and enjoy all that is spontaneous, generous and connecting.

We want to thank all of you who volunteered your time, energy and expertise to create Conference '05. We also want to thank all of you who came to the Conference with such good-spirited intentions to help us create a systems-centered environment in which to learn, work and play. As Conference coordinators, we started out as two individuals who were not sure we wanted to take on the job. However, by creating a systems-centered work group, we discovered a vein of energy, resources and excitement that made the work meaningful and satisfying and that provided us with an opportunity to integrate our SCT skills into our professional and personal lives. We cherish the journey we took, and we encourage other members to find ways of taking similar journeys.

*- Dorothy Gibbons and Jon McCormick
Fall 2005 - Systems-Centered News*

CONTINUING EDUCATION GROUP _____

There are grassroots efforts afoot to provide continuing education credits (CE's) for medical professionals and pastoral counselors at the SCT annual Conference. After following many forks in the road in the effort to obtain CMEs, the CE group, along with Norma Safransky, has finally discovered one that appears to be viable if there is enough interest among the membership. There is a \$1,500 accreditation fee, and if members are willing to participate in coming up with the fee, as psychologists did a number of years ago, there appears to be real potential for reaching this goal.

For pastoral counselors, there are similar efforts in the works, although not as detailed yet. The good news here is that these CE's may be free, or very inexpensive, because the organization granting them doesn't charge a fee.

We'll keep you informed as both of these areas develop. We wait at the edge of the unknown with positive energy and anticipation. If you would like further information, contact Fran Rapoport (franrap@comcast.net), whose role is to facilitate members' efforts to get CE's in new areas, or Norma Safransky (ssafransky@nc.rr.com), who is spearheading the CME efforts.

– Dick Ganley

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT GROUP

We are making progress! We have written a draft of the entire systems-centered training process, compiled it, and are in the editing phase. We hope to have a draft up on the SCTRI website early in the fall. This will provide information to those of you who are interested, as well as give you a chance to give us feedback. One of the things we have been impressed with is how well-developed our training program is, and also how trying to write it all out has challenged us to clarify the relevant boundaries and pathways for ourselves, and for you. We will send you all an announcement on the listserv when we are up and running!

– Claudia Byram, Fran Carter, Susan Gantt,
Dorothy Gibbons, Eileen Jones

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS GROUP _____

Our work group keeps an eye on the “electronic communications” of SCTRI – the e-mail listserv, the phone bridge (which enables so many of our groups to “virtually” meet), and the website. The first two are well settled and competently managed by the SCTRI administrative staff.

Our big project right now is re-vamping the SCTRI website. Under the technical leadership of Cathrine Brown we have moved the site to a more functional and flexible platform, as well as to a new hosting service. Cathrine has

worked on our website since the beginning, carrying the vast load of programming, maintenance and trouble-shooting. Cathrine's new work responsibilities are taking more of her time, so sadly, she is leaving our work group. We want to say a very public “thank you” to Cathrine! Everyone in the organization should know how vital Cathrine's role has been in making it possible for us to have a website at all, and in keeping it up and running all these years. Thank you so much Cathrine!

And, onward! The new platform opens the way for developing the site itself – the information in it, how it is organized, how it looks and what it does.

As a group we have growing resources and energy for this project – hooray! We are newly joined by Rowena Davis (England), Roelof Langman (Netherlands) and Shuli Goodman (California). Both Rowena and Roelof have some experience with developing at least one site and bring a real doer energy. Shuli brings special expertise in website development, and is challenging us to really think through what we are doing. Fortunately, she is also providing the structure to help us do it! Amazingly we are now meeting weekly (which is quite a scheduling challenge, considering the 9 hour time difference) and feel we are really beginning to move forward again.

By the way, please send us any suggestions, preferences or ideas you have for the site. Now is the time to influence us!

– Claudia Byram, Rowena Davis, Lucy Fine,
Shuli Goodman, Roelof Langman,
Kathy Lum, Michael Silverstein

MEMBERSHIP ACTION GROUP _____

The Membership Action Group continues work on developing a strong, sustaining, growing membership. One focus of our recent work has been on “oiling the wheels” of the membership renewal process. We now have clarity about the annual renewal cycle. Just in case there is anyone who is not clear: the membership year runs from February 1 to January 31, with dues of \$150.00, more or less, (\$30.00 for full time students) due by January 31. After that, there is an additional \$25.00 late renewal fee. We will continue to send out the first e-mail reminder in early December and a letter in early January. You can also use the Membership Renewal Form on the last page of this Newsletter for your convenience.

Additionally, most of our SCT trainers have now put procedures in place that facilitate members utilizing their benefit of a discounted rate for ongoing training groups.

Once again, our annual Conference was a great opportunity to welcome and sign up new members, and remind all attendees of their member benefits.

And finally, a new Membership Directory with the popular spiral binding is on the way.

– Michael Robbins and Jim Peightel

PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTION GROUP

The Public Relations Action Group continues to hold the role of PR for the system. In the past 5 months, we have had two meetings with the Steering Group. Last February, we explored hiring a professional to work with us towards the goal of introducing SCT to a wider population. Representatives from the Electronic Communications, Membership, Newsletter and PR groups were present at the second meeting along with Ginny Marcin, who was hired to initiate this work.

Ginny has developed a series of information gathering questions to assist us in communicating the benefits SCT brings to our work and to the world, in our roles as clinicians, consultants, educators, etc. These questions have first gone to the Steering Group to be explored and answered. In addition, an Ad Hoc group has formed including Elaine Pratt representing PRAG, Jim Peightel from Membership and Michael Silverstein from the Electronic Communications group. This group will continue the work of reviewing the questions and answers and creating next steps.

– Linda Scott Solomon and Elaine Pratt

RESEARCH ACTION GROUP

Our Research Action Group members are excited to report that Faith Gordon has accepted the Project Manager position in the ongoing Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) research project headed up by Larry Ladden. Larry has been consulting with an anxiety disorders research expert regarding study design issues. Various subject assessment strategies and data collection instruments are now under consideration. Ten Philadelphia-based SCT therapists have agreed to serve as treatment providers for study subjects. Larry and Faith are hopeful that the study will be actively recruiting subjects soon.

Rich O'Neill is in the approval process with his Institutional Review Board at SUNY Upstate Medical University. He plans to conduct a study comparing Verena Murphy's dissertation findings on the group process of the SCTRI Steering Group to a non-SCT "control" group, that is, a similar group not using SCT methods.

At Conference 2006, Rich will present a report on his findings comparing the group climate in AGPA institute groups with the group climate of SCT groups. Verena will present her findings on the SCTRI Steering group. Larry's group will present a report on the progress of the GAD research project.

Thank you for all your support of SCT research.

– Verena Murphy

TRAINERS GROUP REPORT

The Trainers Group has met a number of times these past six months. We have paid attention to our goals of

tracking innovations, assessing trainings in the organization, and implementing training – all while having fun. Some recent tasks have included addressing the issue of dual roles in training groups and creating criteria to help in the decisions of adding members to training contexts as compared to therapy groups. We have also discussed the recent "Roles" workshop in Austin led by Susan Gantt and Rich Armington (see Austin Report), and have begun sharing learnings and discoveries from the Conference in April with an anticipatory eye towards 2006 in Boston.

At our last meeting, our group collectively expressed satisfaction and excitement with the training that occurred at this year's Conference. We were particularly enthusiastic about the development of new training contexts for licensed members wanting to take up training roles. A recent example is the addition of Nina Klebanoff in a co-leader role with Steve Weinstein in the intermediate training group at the Conference.

We have also been paying attention to our process within the context of a task group. Recently, we took the time to subgroup around the work in our group. Two subgroups emerged, one felt "connected," the other "disconnected." As we made room for the connected subgroup, we learned that time together on the phone as well as having professional and personal time together at the Conference increased our sense of connection with each other. In this subgroup there was sincere interest in hearing about and working with innovations.

The disconnected subgroup explored the difficulty of not having eye contact in the conference calls. This has the effect of making it difficult to maintain our connections in electronic space between meetings. This disconnection drains us of energy for our work, for taking up tasks and for our relationships. This subgroup discovered that an important restraining force was not paying attention to our automatic and unexplored "no" (about work, meetings, etc.). When we explored this "no" it helped us find out what we do indeed want in our group. This experience of "want" held the vigor that energized us as well as our group, and put our work in context. This "no" was a voice for the group rather than merely a personal restraint.

An example of an innovation that presented a lot of interest occurred in the June "Roles" workshop in Austin. We discussed the spontaneous emergence in that workshop of an important learning as members were drawn to tell their "stories" as they explored their various roles. It was easy to imagine that the story was an exploration of the actual role, but it wasn't. In the workshop, we discovered that the role holds the story, which is like a frame that props up the role. By separating from the story, members were able to find the information that is encapsulated like a "pearl" within the role. When the story is separated from the role and the role itself is explored, the member becomes free to discover the information that was held inside the role. This kind of

discussion in the Trainers Group sparked many ideas and energized us as we considered our various training contexts.

Our group does pretty well at taking the personal, placing it into our group context and then moving it to the task level for further work in our role as trainers. It is extremely satisfying when we can use the laboratory of our own group to create new energy and information for training. Sarah Bernhardt had a reflection on this, "energy creates energy." It is by spending oneself that one becomes rich.

– *Rich Armington*

TELEPHONE SUMMIT REPORT _____

Phone lines lit up across the globe on May 17 when SCTRI held its first-ever telephone Summit Meeting. This meeting brought together members representing all the different regional centers and training groups. The goal of the meeting was to provide a context for a cross-fertilization of the grassroots energy from all the areas where SCT training is offered. With this goal in mind, the Steering Group invited all regional centers and training groups to send representatives. In response to this invitation, 18 members from each of our centers in the US and Europe came together for a lively exchange of ideas and information about the various training programs.

One of the most exciting aspects of this meeting was the mixture of "old" and "new." We had both brand new and very experienced members, including some trainers, asking each other questions and swapping information about training groups that have existed for years as well as about more recently formed training groups. This mixture of old and new also became apparent as members discussed some innovative structures which the groups have created to suit the training needs of their particular region or have adjusted the focus of training to adapt to the emerging training interests of their members.

The excitement was palpable as members listened to how different groups manage obstacles and have made creative adjustments which have changed challenges into opportunities. As the information flowed from Stockholm to San Francisco, from Atlanta to York, from London to Austin and to the many points in between, including Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Houston, members expressed their excitement and curiosity about how they could take information back into their groups.

In respect to leading edges, many people stated that members are increasingly taking up leadership roles with the trainers acting as consultants. In several training groups, members are taking up responsibility to present a theoretical concept at the beginning of the group. Rich O'Neill commented that in a recent consultation group, he and Steve Weinstein experimented with working in a "My problem is I" subgroup instead of working with the traditional consultant/consultee structure.

Different structures and innovative ideas were discussed. For example, in Stockholm, the trainings are structured so that the different level groups work in a fishbowl in the morning and then work in a large group in the afternoon. Both the Stockholm and London trainings are organized by semester, with participants committing to three full-day trainings each semester. Between trainings, London has a small, informal study group which meets about every six weeks in members' homes. This study group helps members to keep up with the theory between trainings. Philadelphia has created a Roundtable get-together several times a year, featuring a short presentation on the theory or application of SCT and time for socializing. Members are encouraged to bring friends, co-workers, and family members.

Building on the excitement and members' satisfaction with this first meeting, the Steering Group has scheduled the next Training Group Summit Meeting for Tuesday, December 13, from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. EST. Reserve this date on your calendar and come as a representative of a regional center or training group!

Historically, SCTRI has developed as people in different geographical areas have gathered with energy to organize trainings and to create organizational structures to support these trainings. As the number of regional centers continues to grow, we are discovering that each center, with its unique character, is a resource for the larger organization. The Conference has become a "hub" for the various centers, and something special happens when members of the various centers gather together for a common training experience. By hosting bi-annual Summit Meetings, our goal is to build on this exchange of energy from the Conference and to increase the potential energy in each center and in the organization.

Make sure your region or training group is represented at our next Summit Meeting on December 13th. Contact Kathy Lum (admin@systemscentered.com) to let us know you're coming!

– *Susan Gantt, Dorothy Gibbons,
Joy Luther, Jon McCormick*

ATLANTA _____

One of the rewarding events occurring in Atlanta is the growth of the training groups. The experiential group on Mondays now boasts seven participants, and the Friday afternoon training is bursting at its seams. It is good to see a solid root system developing after all the hard work of tilling the land. Trainees range in experience from fairly new to Authority Group participants. This diversity lends richness and depth to each of these groups.

In addition to the energy in the groups there is growing excitement in many members around the implementation of their current SCT skills in their practices. Therapists are reporting movement in groups not seen before the

introduction of subgrouping or the undoing of anxiety and tension. One entire group actually attended some sessions at the Conference in order to become more versed in SCT theory and methods. These folks are primarily therapists-in-training, and the professional experience at the Conference added to their own therapeutic experience.

Janet Lutz (one of our Atlanta members) wrote the following after her experience at the Conference in April:

"I can't ever remember going to a week of continuing education and finishing up as energized as I was at the end of the SCT Conference last week. Perhaps it was the wonderful mix of people from all over the world, perhaps it was the training groups, or perhaps it was the connections I made with myself and others. Whatever it was, I am energized and hopeful. This was my second time at an SCT Conference. Last year it was all so new, that I could hardly take it in. This year I savored every moment I was there. Claudia's SAVI workshop was just amazing, as was her leadership of the Foundation Group. Susan Cassano's workshop on SCT Community Intervention enabled all of us who were there to touch our 9/11 experiences in new ways. Yvonne is such a gift to us all. And, at the end, Susan Gantt and Yvonne showed us clips from "What the Bleep Do We Know?" Seeing this movie through SCT eyes was amazing! A terrific way to finish up before the last big group. Thank you to all who planned, presented and participated!"

– *Bettie Banks*

AUSTIN

Many new developments from the Austin Center! For many years Austin has held 3-day workshops that followed the structure of the foundation/intermediate group as an introduction to systems-centered therapy. In 2004 we experienced a lower turnout for this workshop and the Board was curious as to whether this particular workshop still met the training needs of our community. To explore this, the Board held an "SCT community meeting" in October of 2004. We asked the question "What are your training wants, and what resources/energy do you have for future trainings?" The meeting was an energized discussion that helped identify areas of interest for future trainings. These included SAVI workshops, a 2-day intermediate workshop on Roles with Susan Gantt, a workshop on Attunement with Una McCluskey, a Conflict Resolution workshop with Fran Carter, a 2-day Organizational Development workshop, as well as the 3-day Foundation/Intermediate workshop with Susan Gantt. Following the community meeting, an email survey went out to members and they were asked to rate these training ideas based on personal interest. The data from this survey led to our June workshop "Working with Roles in SCT" led by Susan Gantt and Rich Armington! The SCTRl-Austin Board wanted this year's workshop to reflect the wants/needs of our SCT community. We asked for it and we got it!

The workshop focused on identifying maladaptive roles and their original function, how roles have their own specific attitudes, story lines, perceptions and experiences. The workshop was a great success with 28 participants and four SCT trainers in the "observer" role. Two important surprises/learnings emerged within the workshop: 1) It is more helpful to focus on "centering" rather than "getting centered"; and 2) In the process of differentiating our maladaptive roles from our authentic self, it is extremely useful to be able to contrast on the one hand the experience one has when centered and, on the other hand, the experience when in the role.

One specific satisfaction: the Austin Intermediate level training group experienced a transformation in their work after attending the workshop on roles together.

Rich Armington has graciously volunteered to hold a "Post-Workshop Follow-up Group" for the workshop attendees to discuss their learnings after they have had time to metabolize their experience.

The SCTRl-Austin Board is also sponsoring Joy Luther to attend the SCTRl Management Group twice a year. The Board has found great satisfaction in being able to provide the financial resources to support this important work. Joy has attended two groups and is now a member of the Steering Group which meets weekly.

Finally, Austin is also working to invigorate our Organizational Development study group through an "international raffle." Rich Armington is the creative force behind this.

– *Tomi Dominguez*

BOSTON

Boston continues to thrive as a training center. Currently, Fran Carter and Steve Weinstein are offering two levels of training on the first Sunday of each month, one for foundation level members and one for intermediate/advanced members.

We are also especially excited to host this year's Conference. Boston has been called the "Athens of the new world," with its plethora of universities, graduate training programs and post-graduate training centers, and offers an extremely rich environment to welcome this year's Conference. The Conference will be held in Brookline, a community in Boston that is filled with fine restaurants, bookstores, a great movie theatre and much more. Yes, it is true that March can be chilly in Boston, but it can also be filled with the first flowers of Spring! We are looking forward to seeing all of you in March!

– *Michael Robbins*

LONDON

The London Study Group continues to meet for 3 hours on Sunday afternoons every six weeks. Our goals are to explore SCT theory, practice skills and support each other in how we are applying SCT in our various contexts. Anyone is welcome to attend. Those with less than three days' SCT training or who are curious to see how we work, can come as observers. Those who have 3 days' training are welcome as members.

In addition to our regular meetings, we've recently been involved in organizing the June London training delivered by Yvonne Agazarian and Susan Gantt. If anyone would like more details, please contact us. Our contact information is listed in the Membership Directory.

*– Rowena Davis, Cristiana de Rysky,
Madeline O'Carroll, John Parkes, Jale Punter*

PHILADELPHIA

The Philadelphia SCT Center continues to offer members of the SCT community an opportunity to gather informally and to introduce their friends and co-workers to our system. Our Roundtable events have been well-attended, with Dick Ganley and Yvonne Agazarian hosting our two most recent get-togethers in their homes. In February, Fran Carter gave a presentation on "SCT in Organizations" and in June, Susan Gantt presented on "Emotional Intelligence and Organizations: An SCT Model." Both presentations were followed by lively discussions with both experienced members and newcomers subgrouping in response to looking at organizations from a systems perspective.

We have a small group of people who organize these events (Claudia Byram, Jim Peightel, Faith Gordon, Carl Yusavitz, and Dorothy Gibbons) and we generally plan to have three or four of these gatherings a year. The events are free and we depend on the donations of those who attend to cover the cost of food, wine and postage. We are open to suggestions for topics for future presentations and we encourage all members to volunteer to make a presentation on an SCT-related topic. These evening gatherings have helped us to keep in touch with one another in different training groups, to provide interested people with information about SCT, and to get to know one another socially.

Good friends, good food, and great conversation have made these Roundtables a popular part of the Philadelphia SCT community.

We welcome any members who would like to join our small organizing group, and as new energy emerges, we plan to add more events to our Center's calendar.

– Dorothy Gibbons

SAN FRANCISCO

The San Francisco Bay Area group continues to develop and flourish. Susan Gantt visits about eight times per year for training. Initially she offered only one day of training, but now is offering a day and a half. In the experiential group we have moved from a fishbowl format to two separate groups of beginning and intermediate members that meet at different times. Currently, we are gathering the experiences of the group members to inform us of the satisfactions and dissatisfactions of the present system. Our phone study group continues to meet monthly. Last year, with a lot of energy from Peter Bernhardt, we hosted a day-long workshop by Una McCluskey on attunement. We wished we could have had a week-long workshop!

In reviewing previous articles regarding the status of our group, in many ways, it seems that not a lot has changed. We continue to meet at Fort Mason Center, which requires advance work to rent a room. We all bring some food for snacks/lunch and pay our fees for the space and the training. There are times when we feel that things are going well and times when we wonder whether our lurking negative predictions are true. Nevertheless, we are attracting new members and it is a pleasure to witness a new generation growing and using SCT language and theory.

– Fran Rapoport

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