



SYSTEMS-CENTERED® NEWS

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

More Learning from the Large Group

Looking back at Conference 2006 after a few nights of rest gives me the chance to look beyond the excitement and pleasure in seeing so many of you, to a bird's eye view of what the Conference helps us know about our organization and our new learnings in SCT.

First, we are growing! We set a record for attendance with 147 registrants. And most important, 38 of these people were new to the Conference.

Second, our Conference large group is developing. Building on where we left off last year, it is continuing to surface and work relevant issues for the organization.

Large groups are not unique to SCT; they are offered in many group conferences. The American Group Psychotherapy Association regularly offers a large group session as an educational event. The International Association of Group Psychotherapy and the Group Analysis Society offer large group meetings open to all in attendance at the end of each day. From the beginning of our annual Conference seven years ago, SCT has offered a large group at the end of each day, scheduled so that all participants can attend. What discriminates an SCT large group is that we use functional subgrouping and undo restraining forces in a sequence linked to the group's phase of development.

What was clear this year is that the large group is much more than just a training event. In fact, it now serves an important role in the organization where work relevant to our organization's development is being done. The first few years we were all learning the ins and outs of functional subgrouping in a large group. Now the large group works! Looking at the large group work now gives us not only a view of SCT in large group, but also an important perspective on our organizational development.

Significantly, the large group in this year's Conference took up the issue of licensing, leadership and future leadership in SCTRI.* Not surprisingly, as the large group worked, there was a subgroup with frustration and anger over the SCT licensing process that explored targeting energy toward the leadership for not providing more structure. As the group continued, another subgroup emerged with the understanding that the licensing process and the licensing groups contain the leading edge of the organization's development. Still another subgroup began exploring the recognition that not finishing licensing meant new leadership was unavailable to the organization. This was a source of comfort for one subgroup that recognized that they like the leadership we have and were unsure they wanted themselves or others to take leadership. For another subgroup, it was a source of frustration, as they recognized they want to take more of a leadership role in SCTRI.

In a later session, the group took up exploring the roles members go into in the large group context out of frustration to spite the group. Members identified roles such as, "I withdraw," "I hold back," "I silently criticize," and recognized the impact these roles have on the large group and the other

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contexts in which we use them.

In listening and resonating with the group, I found myself gaining a deeper understanding about how our licensing groups have been containing some of the organizational conflicts that have not yet been worked in our development as an organization. In effect, the licensing groups have been in a non-adaptive role encapsulating the developmental conflicts in the organization that have not yet been discriminated and integrated. Building on what we know about how groups have to take back a role that a member holds for the group before the member is free to work, I ended up with the hypothesis that the large group work may have undone enough of the role that the licensing groups have contained for the larger system to free the licensing groups to work.

The news that the licensing groups' work had already influenced the licensing structure was also brought into the large group. The expectation is that the newest licensing group will be licensed by the Conference in Spring 2007 (one year instead of three or four!). There was a group-as-a-whole response of both envy and delight.

Maybe most important of all, there was a deeper understanding of ourselves as an emergent organization. We recognized that if we do not over-structure at the expense of emergence, and continue to explore what the licensing groups contain for the organization, then both the licensing groups and the organization have more capacity for development and transformation. We also understood that the cost of developing an emergent organization may include more frustration along the way. This of course, elicits the old, non-functional roles and must be undone at all system levels.

The excitement and development in the Conference was palpable. This leads to our next step: to continue to develop contexts throughout the year where the restraining forces in our development can be worked at every system level, and the vitality, so visible at the Conference, can continue to come into our action groups and interest groups. This will make it possible for us to continue to develop and strengthen our organization. For example, the Web Action Group, which has been making such significant contributions this last year, rediscovered that their capacity to work was tied to their development as a task group. Once they had developed themselves as a task group, their ability to work took off!

*The SCTRI trademark license protects the integrity of the SCT methods so that only those who are licensed can call themselves SCT practitioners. Those pursuing licensing join a peer licensing group at the end of intermediate training. It is their peer group that then works as a task group, sets the criteria for assessing themselves for a license, and then assesses and recommends its members as qualified or not for an SCT license.

– Susan Gantt
sgantt@systemcentered.com

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Members,

Having just finished editing the Newsletter, I am struck by the vitality, intellectual rigor and *joie de vivre* of our organization. As I finished each article, thumbnail sketch, report and update, I found myself tingling with a rich medley of associations. Beyond the words, I saw each of your faces, heard your voices and relished the nuances of the connections that have been built over many years. I felt the familiar resonance of older members and delighted in the bright, new perspectives of people who I am just getting to know. It is truly a privilege to work and play, laugh and learn with all of you!

The Newsletter is the major way that our organization talks to itself about itself. As such, it plays an essential role in the ongoing process of creating our identity as an organization. This identity flows with the currents of our collective creativity and our most up to date emotional intelligence about how to fulfill roles – as members of SCTRI and as therapists, trainers, teachers and consultants. To keep this river flowing with vitality, we must guard against our rigor rigidifying into dogma on one side, and on the other, against our creative exuberance overflowing into a cacophony. If we look at this process from a great height, we can see that not only are we learning how to function well as SCTRI members, therapists, trainers, teachers, and consultants, we are also learning how to be good citizens of humanity. As our world grows increasingly complex and as conflicts around the globe intensify, this learning is important to help us meet the many challenges that we are facing as individuals, families, organizations and as a global community.

The theme of our recent Conference was “Creating Links.” This theme is clearly evident in the pages of this Newsletter. As an organization, we are looking beyond the false dichotomies of us and them, and discovering both similarities and differences with other theoretical approaches. Next year, we will continue to mine this theme in our conference and add a sub-theme of “Research.”

As we discover the underlying principles that unite a variety of models, the age old research questions of “What works?” and “Why does it work?” become increasingly relevant. The world of psychotherapy, education and organizational development is burgeoning with new strategies to alleviate suffering and to help individuals and groups reach their goals. If SCT is truly an umbrella model, perhaps it can help us to more deeply understand why we do what we do, what about our interventions truly works, and to discriminate the contributions of other theories in our field that are valuable from those that are merely a passing fad.

In the articles that follow, there are several noteworthy efforts to integrate the similarities and differences between SCT and other models of human development. Anne Alonso’s presentation of her psychoanalytic approach to

group therapy stimulated several members to share their thoughts. Jon McCormick, in the “Theory, Research and Application” section, has written an erudite and insightful piece comparing Kleinian theory and SCT. John Straznickas, who was a member of Anne’s demonstration group, shares his reflections about that experience in the “Thumbnail Sketches” section. Yvonne has also written about the similarities and differences of Dr. Alonso’s approach and SCT in her “Emerging Theory” section.

There are also several articles in this issue that make a bridge between exciting new developments in the field of neurobiology and SCT. Mark Johnson has written an article called “SCT on the Path of Integration: From Emotion to Interpersonal Neurobiology, via Attachment.” (Now that’s an intriguing title!) I have written a piece on working with the implicit memories that are stored in the body through SCT. Yvonne has also integrated recent thinking in neurobiology, particularly the work of Dan Siegel, into her latest thinking about roles in SCT theory. From a slightly different perspective, though also “body-based,” Ian Macnaughton has written about the similarities and differences between SCT and Mind-Body Therapies, particularly the approach of one school, Bodydynamic Analysis. From a totally different perspective, Michael Hanson has written an excellent and concise comparison of SCT and current research into the dynamics of creativity. I found all of these articles engaging, informative and thought provoking.

There are also reports from centers throughout the U.S. and Northern Europe, a variety of reflections from the Conference, updates from the various action groups, and the latest applications and theoretical developments in SAVI. Taken together, all of this reflects back to us an organization that is vigorous, growing and healthy.

I would like to extend a special thanks to the Newsletter team for the many hours of work that they have each put in to make this issue possible. Claudia Byram and Verena Murphy had the job of compiling and editing the “Reports and Updates.” Michael Silverstein was responsible for the “Theory, Research and Application” section. Fran Carter was the coordinator and editor for “Thumbnail Sketches.” Yvonne, as always, has contributed an insightful and illuminating group of articles in her “Emerging Theory” section. Our wonderful administrators, Jan Vadell and Kathy Lum, were priceless in getting the final copy of the Newsletter to the printer and ultimately into your hands. To all of you on the Newsletter team, and to everyone who wrote an article, report, update or thumbnail sketch, let me say a heartfelt, “Bravo!” It is through the contributions of members like you that we have created the kind of organization that we want to be a part of!

I hope that you enjoy this issue. The Newsletter group welcomes your input. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any feedback – positive or negative!

– Michael Robbins

MEMBERS FORUM

This is a community forum for posting announcements on related trainings, personal life events, awards, letters to the Editor, responses to articles that have appeared in our Newsletter, etc.

Dear Systems-Centered Community,

Thank you for providing me with a Systems-Centered® Training and Research Institute scholarship for your 2006 conference in Boston. What an experience! I am extremely grateful for the personal and professional opportunities that the scholarship provided and feel honored to have been invited into your community through your scholarship program. The entire Conference experience was rewarding and connecting.

I attended Claudia Byram's 2-day SAVI institute with the thought that I might use the SAVI system someday to code group behaviors within the context of a research project. During Claudia's course, I quickly realized that I would use SAVI for my personal growth and development, as well. During the SAVI institute, then later during the Conference, I practiced observing and changing my own behavior patterns, while also thinking about ways that I might use SAVI in research projects. I enjoyed this process.

The SCT foundation training experience with Rich Armington was simply fantastic. I was quite satisfied when I realized I could finish an SCT foundation training group feeling, expressing, and subgrouping on frustration. How liberating! It seems ironic, yet quite true, that the SCT system, although saturated with SCT norms, structure, and language specific to the system, does a great job of providing new trainees with an amazing amount of freedom to be authentic. Throughout the training experience, I was encouraged to feel the depth and range of my feelings and the expansiveness of my energy.

I came to SCT a "subgroup hopper." In spite of Yvonne's attempts to slow me down and assist me to be more effective in my world, I kept hopping along, quite rapidly. This caused the large group experience to feel stressful. However, eventually, I was "subgrouped" within the large group and realized I did not have to navigate the large group experience alone! As I enter large systems in the future, I will now enter with a deeper appreciation for the importance of finding a subgroup. I feel this will enable me to feel less alone, less like a stranger, and more like a citizen. Thank you Yvonne!

In workshops and during lunches at the SCT Conference, I gained exposure to the high quality cutting edge research that is already being conducted on behalf of SCTRI and I found an excited subgroup of researchers. Most notably, Una McCluskey's workshop increased my hope that I may eventually be able to integrate both research and clinical practice in a way that truly respects the integrity of each of these endeavors.

Thank you for your generosity! Following this personal

and professional growth opportunity, I am much more comfortable with large group dynamics, as well as with my own "person system" quirks. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to begin a relationship with the lovely group of people that make up the SCT system and I look forward to seeing you next year.

Sincerely,

Karin Hodges, M.S.

*Doctoral Candidate, Clinical Psychology
Antioch New England Graduate School*

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I learned from the heart and words of the leading theorist, the essence of systems-centered work. This learning was transmitted didactically, experientially and by watching the leaders live the theory. The modeling of congruence allowed me to practice with guidance. My intention for this conference was to learn to better contain affect and I learned I can reach those goals through SCT. As a scholarship recipient, I am grateful for the resources invested in me that allowed me to attend the conference. I trust I can return energy and enthusiasm for the work in kind. Thank you for these valuable learnings.

Kirsten Michels, M.A.

*Predoctoral Intern, Clinical Psychology
University of Georgia*

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The Video Action Group (VAG) released its new training DVD "Coming to Agreement" in time for the SCT 2006 Conference. We have had very good feedback from those who viewed it.

The DVD uses 5 SAVI strategies to identify and undo the OPINION/OPINION communication behavior that contributes to many disagreements and conflict.

Opinions are our most common verbal behavior. They are not a problem until we try to use them to solve a problem. The training tape shows how to extract the information buried in our opinions and by using this data, helps us come to agreement.

These skills are demonstrated in a variety of interactions. The viewer does not need any previous knowledge of SAVI. The tape has been successfully used at a family gathering, with a married couple, in a business setting, and by an SCT trainer as a way to introduce medical students to SAVI. In each of these settings the individuals were able to make use of the material without any other training.

Awards

A new tradition of presenting awards was started at the 2005 annual Conference. The *2005 Distinguished SCT Trainer Award* went to Fran Carter in recognition of her pioneering contributions in helping develop the SCT training system and the exemplary training and mentoring that she has provided in her role as an SCT trainer. Rich Armington received the *2006 Distinguished SCT Trainer Award* for his steadfast and consistent leadership in developing the Austin SCT training program and his exemplary skills and commitment to providing outstanding SCT training throughout the system. The *2006 Outstanding*

Leadership Award was presented to Claudia Byram for her invaluable and often unsung contributions to developing SCTRI, her consistent emotional support for the organization, her uncanny sense of what needs to be done and her unfailing willingness to step in and provide the leadership that is needed, and for her vision and leadership in developing the SCT website. Congratulations Fran, Rich and Claudia!

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Yvonne Agazarian was made a fellow of the American Psychological Association in January 2006.

EMERGING THEORY BY YVONNE AGAZARIAN

A THEORY OF LIVING HUMAN SYSTEMS

The Theory of Living Human Systems assumes a hierarchy of isomorphic systems that are energy organizing, goal-directed and self-correcting.

Living Human Systems: Each system is defined by boundaries which separate outside the system from inside the system. Boundaries exist between and within all systems in the hierarchy. These boundaries are potentially permeable to transactions of information and energy. Open systems survive, develop and transform through an integration of these transactions. Closed systems survive at the expense of development and transformation. Living human systems function through the discrimination and integration of energy/information.

Hierarchy: Thinking hierarchy means thinking in threes because all systems in a hierarchy are always in the middle of an up and a down. Thinking systems means thinking context. Like a set of Russian nesting dolls, each exists not only as the system itself, but in the context of the system above and as the context for the system below.

Isomorphy: Isomorphy is defined as the equivalence of structure and function. What is learned about the structure or function of any one system generalizes to every other system in the hierarchy.

Energy-organizing: Systems organize the flow of energy/information through the discrimination and integration of information – discriminating differences in the apparently similar, similarities in the apparently different, and consistently integrating these discriminations into the system organization. It is thus that systems survive, develop and transform from simpler to more complex.

Goal-directed: Systems are oriented to the goals of survival, development and transformation.

Self-correcting: Systems orient their direction by constantly re-vectoring their energy towards the goal.

Systems survive: Systems survive by organizing and

re-organizing internal energy/information.

Systems develop: Systems develop by integrating the information (energy) that crosses the boundaries. All systems develop through predictable and identifiable phases. Developmental changes are integrated sequentially.

Systems transform: Systems transform from simpler to more complex by integrating differences in the apparently similar and similarities in the apparently different.

ROLE THEORY

Theoretically, a living human system exists within boundaries, in a hierarchy, which survives, develops and transforms through the functional process of discriminating and integrating differences.

We know from attachment literature and neuroscience that, given a secure environment, the system thrives – developing its genetic potential into a brain structure, and through interaction with the environment, developing a functional mind – a mind that organizes the flow of information and energy. SCT re-conceptualizes these important findings into a theory of roles.

If we think about a developing system as a circle with an inner circle (the center, containing the flow of innovation-energy) and an outer circle (representing the potentially permeable boundaries), we can suggest that role systems develop from the interaction between the system and its environment.

Theoretically, as the information/energy crosses backwards and forwards across the boundaries, it is functionally discriminated and integrated within the system. There is a nice complement between this SCT assumption and Daniel Siegel's assertion that "the mind develops from the flow of energy and information between the genetic possibilities of our neurophysiology and our interpersonal relationships." (Siegel, 1999, 2004).

When we are babies we interact with our environment (mother). When our interaction is secure, we have full

access to our exploratory drive, our secure attachments, and we thrive. In SCT terms we develop and transform our centered self.

As SCT practitioners, we develop our centered selves through the discipline of SCT centering.* Centering puts us in touch, not only with our thinking selves, but also with our emotional and experiencing selves. It is the experience of being centered that allows us access to the peaceful understanding of our relationship to ourselves and the universe.

Siegel offers an analogy for this state (Siegel, 2007). He suggests we think of a bicycle wheel. The hub is the center. On the rim are all the issues in our lives, past, present and future. The spokes are our connection to these issues. When we are not centered, each of these issues connects to the multi-tasks of our every day. They also connect to our past, present and future concerns. They are the source of our wishes or fears, our hopeful anticipations or conflictual and anxiety provoking thoughts, i.e., the raw material of our stress. They are mostly a product of our left brain.

When we are centered, the spokes are not connected to the concerns of our every day. They are not conflictual. The issues on the rim are just that – issues around the rim. We can see them as part of a larger universe, and we can experience ourselves as part of the universe. It is from this peaceful and integrated state that we can allow ourselves to understand, and from our understandings, know how to act. SCT calls this being centered.

Now let us return to the development of the subsystems that we call roles. When our environment potentiates development, then we take up the many different roles of our every day with a flow of energy from our center. We have free access to our faculty for discriminating and integrating differences. In SCT we call this taking on the member role which relates directly to the context and goals of both our environment and ourselves.

In contrast, when we experience our environment as insecure, then the roles that we take up are those systems that we have developed to secure ourselves against a threatening environment. They relate to the goals and context of earlier survival modes, and not to the here-and-now.

Thus there are basically two kinds of subsystems of roles. The first are adaptive role systems because they are adaptive to the context. Adaptive roles emerge from organizing internal and external information in relationship to both personal goals and the goals of the context in which the person is taking up membership. When the energy is central energy (energy whose source is the centered state) these roles are characterized by curiosity, exploration and central feelings of well-being, even when role responsibilities are challenging.

The second kind of roles are not adaptive. These roles are triggered by some present stimulus that precipitates the

person system into the past. In non-adaptive roles there is no discrimination between the past and the present – without discrimination, the past becomes the present. Because there is little central energy in these roles, they are characterized by strain.

Roles are always adaptive to the context in which they are developed. As further challenges in role relationships emerge, the range of adaptive roles increases and becomes more complex until labels like avoidant, ambivalent, submissive, dominant, etc. enable us to recognize the particular constellations of behavior that distinguish one role from another. Adaptive roles respond to the here-and-now demands. Non-adaptive roles are imported into the present without any awareness that they belong in the past.

From a systems perspective, in healthy development, we can now draw the picture of the circle a little differently. We have the central flow of energy/information. As we interact securely with the environment, our boundaries are appropriately permeable to similarities with the environment. Then, gradually, we develop the capacity to open our boundaries to differences in the apparently similar, and later to similarities in the apparently different. This process can be drawn as subsystems (roles): smaller circles that connect the center to the environment.

* There are other ways of achieving the same state of awareness and peacefulness through spiritual disciplines which are similar to SCT centering. What is important in SCT centering is that, by looking up and widening our gaze after our internal focus, we are attentive to our environment as well as our internal experience. We thus increase the potential for integrating our experience from both inside and outside our “system” and move toward the goal of becoming a “self-centered system in a systems-centered context.”

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HOW SAVI CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SYSTEMS-CENTERED THERAPY

Anita Simon and I finalized our first draft of *The SAVI System for Analyzing Verbal Interaction* and started to verify it through informal research in 1964. Our first informal research with SAVI was to identify the communication patterns that made up different roles. I later introduced “role” as the bridge construct between group and individual dynamics (Agazarian & Peters, 1981). The first clusters of role behaviors we analyzed were the clusters that characterized the Autocratic, Democratic and Laissez-Faire leadership described in the three Styles of Leadership (Lippitt & White, 1935). We coded several role plays of the three styles with different sets of students, and obtained consistent communication patterns in the group under the conditions of the three different leadership styles. I repeated this approach with the Blake & Mouton (1965) managerial grid, getting different patterns from the volunteers who played the four different roles of High Task/Low Person, High Person/Low Task, Low Task/Low Person and High Task/High Person. We were then able to define the different roles as a cluster of specific categories of SAVI verbal behaviors. I repeated the same design and analyzed the Bennis & Shepard (1957) Phases of Group Development, using students from different classes taking their graduate level Group Dynamics course. These yielded consistent patterns for flight, fight, and pairing.

The hierarchy of defense modification that emerged from the different patterns that were developed for each phase yielded clear pictures of the driving and restraining forces to development in that phase. The restraining forces were identified as defenses, which when reduced within the norms of each specific phase, freed the developmental drive (Agazarian, 1997, 2002). Without SAVI, it is unlikely that we would have been able to define the communications that characterize each phase of group development as the context which determines which defenses can be modified and which defenses cannot. We discovered through informal SAVI analysis that certain defenses cannot be modified in the earlier phases. For example, acting out as a defense against the retaliatory impulse can be modified in the context of fight, whereas attempted modification in the phase of flight, increases rather than decreases the flight defense (Agazarian, 1997).

Fundamentally important to the development of SCT was the use of the SAVI-generated matrix of communication patterns to adapt the techniques of defense analysis, practiced in Short-Term Dynamic Psychotherapy (Davanloo, 1987), into the techniques for systems-centered defense modification. For example, we changed therapist interpretations into descriptive data that the patients could

check for themselves. Thus the goals of the therapeutic communications remained unchanged, while the route of the “path to goal” was charted on a SAVI map to make it compatible with the systems-centered values of legitimizing, depathologizing, universalizing and normalizing the human dynamics in group and individual therapy.

The SAVI system has had a fundamental influence on developing our ability in SCT to think isomorphically about the different system levels in groups. Its unique value to us is the potential it provides for enabling the input and output communications between systems to be observed, while simultaneously making it possible to identify the communication pattern that is specific to each system involved. For example, in one informal study, I discovered that whereas the overall pattern of “cross-purpose talk” remained constant throughout a group psychotherapy session (the system-as-a-whole pattern), the individual (member system) communication patterns changed significantly from one ten minute section to another. The changing outputs from these member system patterns into the group “corrected” any deviation from the overall pattern of the system. This was quite startling in one instance, when the group members all demonstrated a work pattern, and it was the therapist’s input that maintained the system in cross-purpose talk.

Our own reasons for using SAVI have been an effort to bring the process of research into clinical practice by introducing a tool which can be used by clients in a variety of settings, as a research tool on a sample of one (themselves) over time. We have been trying various ways of introducing the SAVI-generated communication matrix to clients as a map upon which they can trace what happens in their relationships with themselves and others as they try different strategies – moving from “red light” behaviors (Avoidance) to “green light” behaviors (Approach) both in the therapy session and in their lives. We have found that once people understand the difference between the communication behavior and the content, they intuitively know which categories give them trouble. In contrast, we have found that in general, people don't know which categories to use to get them out of trouble. Training in the underlying theory of non-defensive communication allows them to make useful choices.

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FRIDAY AFTERNOON AT THE CONFERENCE

We were overjoyed when Anne Alonso accepted our invitation to present to us on Friday afternoon. In 45 minutes, she beautifully demonstrated the Kleinian approach with seven volunteers. It was a significant success. I am tempted to think that it was not only the skills, empathy and attunement of Anne to the group and its members, but also the responsiveness and attunement of the members to Anne that enabled the group to demonstrate all three stages.

Anne told us that these stages are based on the following assumptions: "The baby begins life in a state of fusion with the mother, in which there is no awareness of anyone else in the world. This is known as the 'schizoid position,' or a start of blissful symbiosis. As the baby develops, he/she begins to notice that the nipple belongs to the mother's breast and not to its own mouth. This shocking realization ushers in the 'paranoid position,' with its oscillations between good-breast and bad breast-object (and self). We might think of this baby as an age-appropriate borderline! As development continues, the baby notices that good and bad are found in the same object (and in the self). This ability to contain ambivalence leads to the 'depressive position,' with its capacity to tolerate the melancholy acceptance of compromise. Only then is intimacy really possible."

It was in this final phase that the group (somewhat white-faced) ended. One of the major differences between Anne's approach and SCT is that Anne relies on the unconscious integration of experience, which she so powerfully evokes. SCT on the other hand consciously and systematically reduces the restraining forces to exploring experience, thus the experience itself is contained within the subgroup. Thus, in SCT the equivalent of Kleinian dynamics are not explored until the phase of intimacy, after members have survived the paranoid position which is the transition from phases one and two. The Kleinian schizoid position is explored in the SCT subphase of enchantment, and the depressive position in the subphase of disenchantment.

Extraordinary to me (though perhaps I should have known better), was that the large group, following the demonstration and discussion, continued where Anne's

group left off. The subgroup continued to work, exploring in a deep sea dive, through emptiness, soullessness, dissolving into blackness, vapor, meaninglessness and nothingness – then, as is familiar to many SCT members, the subgroup's experience of being despairing insignificant particles changed into a recognition that insignificant or not, each particle was the only particle that existed in the vastness of the universe and was thus unique. With relief I saw the group and the subgroup provide the container to integrate the work. (Trust the group!) Members reemerged, reinforced in strength and identity and the realities of both sides of life's existential paradox – meaning and meaninglessness, significance and insignificance.

It is with deep gratitude from all of us that Anne gave us an experience of her approach which we could compare and contrast with ours.

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM MEMBERS

Agazarian, Y.M. (2006). *Systems-centered practice: Selected papers on group psychotherapy*. London: Karnac Books. Traces the development of a theory of living human systems into systems-centered practice from 1985 to now.

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THEORY, RESEARCH AND APPLICATION

SCT AND PSYCHODYNAMIC GROUP THERAPY - A TWIN STUDY

Dr. Anne Alonso led a psychodynamic group demonstration that concluded the workshop presentations at Conference 2006, *Creating Links: Similarities and Differences*. Drs. Alonso and Agazarian, friends for over thirty years, have met periodically to demonstrate and discuss their respective approaches, providing fascinating, rich and educational opportunities for differentiation and integration. Demonstrations and accompanying discussions of these approaches have been recorded and are available to SCTRI members.

A major similarity between an SCT group and the psychodynamic group led by Dr. Alonso is that the leader's methods and interventions are informed by their respective developmental theories. Dr. Alonso referred to Melanie Klein in orienting us to the theory underlying her way of conducting this demonstration. Ms. Klein was a psychoanalyst from Berlin who, with the help of the British Psychoanalytic Society, relocated to London in the mid-1930's to escape from Nazi Germany. She is best known for her work in child psychoanalysis, her seminal contributions to developing the theory of object relations in psychoanalysis, and especially for her ideas around earliest infant development and the organizing processes of unconscious "phantasy." (The spelling of "phantasy" in Kleinian theory, as opposed to the more familiar "fantasy," has endured to denote complex central processes that comprise the unconscious inner world. The most relevant in the context of this discussion include instincts, their objects, and the processes of projection and introjection.) Many psychoanalytic group therapists employ a Kleinian perspective and many more have been influenced by her ideas. One of the best known was Wilfred Bion who most articulately described the functioning of group-as-a-whole dynamics, basic assumption groups, and provided an elegant elaboration of the paranoid-schizoid process and projective identification (Bion, 1964).

Basic Kleinian Theory

Klein's work with, and observations of, child development led her to conclude that the foundation for organization of the self took place in the earliest experiences of the first year of life and was characterized by two major developmental phases, the paranoid-schizoid and depressive "positions." These two positions remain accessible throughout life and become evident from a Kleinian perspective when stimulated in a particular context, e.g., by loss, disappointment or frustration, similar to the way in which issues around authority and intimacy become evident from an SCT perspective when aroused or triggered.

For Klein, the earliest state of complete infantile dependence is characterized by basic need states with no awareness of "self" or "other," simply differences in arousal, differentiated as pleasure or displeasure. The differentiating of these experiences is contemporaneous with physical development that includes the stimulation of processes of consumption and elimination. As experiences accumulate for the infant, active sorting into what is pleasurable and desired and what is unpleasurable, to be eliminated, result in what has become known as "splitting." This differentiating of experience is a developmental achievement that allows for the possibility of separating the "good," need gratifying experience from the "bad," painfully ungratifying experience or arousal.

The infant can then hold onto and protect the good by getting rid of the bad in unconscious phantasy. Under the influence of developing physical processes, bad is eliminated by the phantasy of projecting it out. During initial schizoid development (as well as in the adult when schizoid anxieties are later stimulated), the infant experiences the persistent return of bad, frustrating experience as persecutory. If the infant is sending it out, something else must be sending it back. Since the infant has yet to develop an awareness of separate others, he or she relates and attributes this action to the immediate objects of which he or she is becoming aware, often referred to in Kleinian terms as the satisfying or unsatisfying breast, or "part object." The "part" designation relates not just to an isolated body part or organ, but to the fact that it is also experienced as all good or all bad exclusively at any one time. These splitting, projecting and re-introjecting processes form the basis for projective identification, which can help us to understand why this phase is called "paranoid."

As the infant continues to develop, discovering inside and outside, self and other, he or she realizes that the gratifying and loved object or "other" is the same external object that is frustrating and consequently hated. We in SCT might think of this as a moment of integration, finding similarities in the apparently different. In ideal development, this realization heralds the attainment of the depressive position, the recognition that the loved and hated objects are the same whole and separate object, leading the infant to attenuate its primary (consummative and destructive) aggression to protect the source of nurturance and love, giving rise to guilt and reparative impulses. Efforts toward reparation, according to object relations theorists, together with symbol formation in internal phantasy are central to all creative activities and further relational development.

While there is a temporal sequence in their initial

emergence, both positions remain active throughout every individual's life, with the particular salience for either position to be in ascendance in a particular environmental context interacting with the vicissitudes of individual development.

Conference Demonstration Group

In the demonstration group, Dr. Alonso was empathetically responsive to each member in turn, nodding and accepting every reported experience as legitimate. As the opportunity arose, she universalized and interpreted members' comments to refer to the context of early childhood experience. Interpreting current experience in the context of early childhood developmental anxieties and relating them to her as leader, she encouraged "regression" in the here and now and the emergence of unresolved feelings in "transference." Group contagion potentiated a regressive experience itself, with members unconsciously relating to the group-as-a-whole as mother and the body of mother, also arousing early conflicts and anxieties.

Dr. Alonso invited early schizoid anxieties by introducing the word "greed" in her interpretation of the group discussion of what members were wanting and expecting from the experience in group and with her. Her timing and use of this word were based on theory and a good enough fit to the content presented by the group. While group members did not appear to resonate strongly at first, they quickly began to move toward more exploration of "wanting," exclusivity and conflicts around dependency.

In the context of a demonstration with limited time, work around basic dependency and paranoid-schizoid anxieties was not developed and fully explored. Instead, Dr. Alonso moved ahead to stimulate and demonstrate depressive level anxieties by commenting, "What if there is not enough love to go around ... What if there is not enough love for even one child?" The impact of considering this possibility was palpable in the group. As members responded with depressed voices and sad facial expressions, Dr. Alonso interpreted their comments as the "melancholy acceptance of compromise." In this very short and charged public demonstration, her interventions did indeed seem to move the group through developmental stages as she predicted, generating evidence for support of the theory.

It seems important to note that this demonstration of group dynamics took place late in the context of a group conference that itself encouraged the cooperative exploration of experience. Most of the volunteers participating in the demonstration were experienced SCT members who could be expected to have previously explored the experience of "regression" through loss and "disintegration" of self, typically seen as characteristic of paranoid-schizoid level anxieties.

While Kleinian theory is much more rich and complex than I can begin to elaborate here (see Segal, 1964, for a wonderfully accessible presentation including

historical context and bibliography of Klein), Dr. Alonso demonstrated the essential basics, how her interventions were guided by theory, and the impact of such interventions on the work of the group. She adhered to the basic psychoanalytic method of attending to and interpreting transference and facilitating regression to earliest anxieties in order to surface and explore them, providing the opportunity for reintegration at a more complex level.

Emerging Explorations

On the surface, these are not totally unfamiliar processes to those of us familiar with SCT. In new groups we look for initial authority phase development where, for all members' efforts to interact with each other, attention and dependence remain primarily on the leader. Through the "barometric event," the omnipotent leader of the authority phase is destroyed (often consumed) and the group focuses on issues of separation, individuation and the loss of idealized fantasy. This heralds the beginning of the intimacy phase as the group moves into the reality of the relationships its members can make with the leader and each other. While there are significant differences in method, activity and interventions between the two theoretical approaches, there are also significant similarities in the theories and methods for us to identify and explore further in other contexts, perhaps at next year's conference.

I am reminded of Dr. Alonso's opening remarks regarding the similarities and differences between SCT and psychodynamic approaches to group. She stated they have different theories and subsequently different methods but that the goals are similar: freer functioning and greater satisfaction and happiness in the individual. The theme of this Conference hypothesizes enough differentiation in our organization to explore a significantly different theory and method. As we welcome and become more familiar with similarities in the apparently different, perhaps we will become more comfortable with discovering and integrating differences that make a difference. As Valone (2005) notes in his observations of myriad psychoanalytic orientations, the more we sift through similarities across disciplines, the more we may identify underlying knowledge and develop a greater understanding of the organization of energy. Drs. Alonso and Agazarian may not be identical twins, but perhaps we have matured enough for them to be siblings who can share with us, as well as with each other, their uncommon wisdom and knowledge.

– Jon McCormick

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BODY MIND APPROACHES AND SCT

Systems-Centered Therapy (SCT) (Agazarian 1997) and Mind – Body Psychotherapy (MBP) have much to offer each other. The field of psychology and its subset, group process, often offer competing views and theories of the “right” way to conduct an inquiry and to intervene with individuals and social systems in order to alleviate human suffering. The Theory of Living Human Systems (TLHS) and its systems-centered practice encourage joining on similarities first and then noticing the differences in the similarities. The focus in SCT on making system boundaries appropriately permeable to information is in keeping with creating open dialogues between SCT practitioners and those from other fields. In this article, I would like to compare SCT and a particular school of MBP, the Bodydynamic Analytic System (BNA) (Macnaughton 2005), in order to discriminate and integrate similarities and differences that may be useful to systems-centered practice.

Before we discuss the similarities and differences between the two models, it is important to understand the roots of each approach. SCT theory and practice are based on General Systems Theory, which forms the foundation for the Theory of Living Human Systems; it is within this framework that the theory and practice have been developed. MBP has developed within the realm of psychology, initially psychoanalysis, and while organic and systematic, its theoretical underpinnings spring from different theoretical backgrounds. BNA’s focus on prenatal, early childhood, childhood and adolescent development, and the related muscle and connective tissue resiliency involved in psycho-motor development, sets it apart from most approaches even within the field of MBP. The following offers a brief and practical overview of some of the similarities and differences between the two approaches to individual and group process.

History

Both SCT and MBP have evolved from the theory and practice of other pioneers in the field. Both approaches have added a fresh perspective with expanded and emergent possibilities for intervening with individuals, couples, families and societal systems.

William Reich, initially a colleague of Freud’s, became interested in how his clients’ language, body posture, gestures and muscle tones related to their perception of the world. Like Agazarian, he developed a defense assessment model (which he framed as character structure), as well as a systematic approach to helping clients access the fundamental life force and reduce their characterological defenses. Since these beginnings, a hundred plus years have passed and many different schools of theory and practice have emerged. In the European Association of Body Psychotherapy there are some sixty-eight schools, with many similarities among them as well as some significant

differences.

I would like to briefly go through some of the possible contributions that Bodydynamic Analysis (BNA), a particular school of Mind – Body psychotherapy, may be able to offer to SCT. A comprehensive description of the BNA theory, assessment and practice is beyond the scope of this article. The following is a partial outline of their similarities and differences which I hope will stimulate the reader’s curiosity about the possible contributions that BNA could make to SCT.

Similarities

- 1) Both models encourage clients to stay in the present and avoid regression or emotional flooding by developing their observing self.
- 2) Both place a high value on staying connected to oneself and others.
- 3) Both focus on staying centered with an accent on body posture and awareness.
- 4) Both models utilize an assessment and typology schema.
- 5) In both models, defenses are modified or reduced in a systematic and sequential way, with careful attention to modifying a defense only when the client has developed appropriate skills and resources.
- 6) Both focus on resource-oriented skill training as a psychotherapeutic method.
- 7) Both pay attention to the development of various roles and their functionality in various contexts.
- 8) Both utilize processes to teach an awareness of context and help people to develop appropriate boundaries.
- 9) Both can be used with individuals and groups.
- 10) Both models address issues around authority.
- 11) Both focus on a client’s strengths and resources.
- 12) Both include interventions to undo the conversion of emotion, or the over-containment of emotions, into tension patterns, and help people regain an experience of their fundamental life force.
- 13) Both attend to nonverbal cues.
- 14) Both focus on exploring and expanding awareness rather than explaining or interpreting experience.
- 15) Both BNA and SCT pay particular attention to identifying defenses, attachment issues, and the difference between intentional and instinctive movements.

Differences

- 1) SCT contains the construct of isomorphy. One practical implication of this idea is that any group member or subgroup is seen as containing experience and information for the group-as-a-whole. Although BNA utilizes a similar theory base (Bion) and also identifies defenses, which are seen as characterological, and identifies roles that individuals adopt in a group setting, it does not have a concept similar to isomorphy. In BNA, there is some focus on scapegoating and individuals carrying the anxiety of the group, however it is not as

- explicit as the SCT idea of isomorphy.
- 2) Authority issues in BNA are viewed as characterological issues. BNA pays particular attention to the structures of will (the ability to make choices and own one's power through actions and emotions), opinion (the ability to form and express one's own opinion), and solidarity/performance (the capacity to balance being one's best as an individual with being a member of a group).
 - 3) The BNA group process orientation is psychodynamic.
 - 4) SCT utilizes subgrouping to connect members around similarities with a focus on members not working alone. Members of a subgroup are encouraged to maintain eye contact and join on similarities. Members with a difference are encouraged to hold that difference until the working subgroup is sufficiently stable. BNA does not use subgrouping.
 - 5) SCT, unlike BNA, explicitly encourages the exploration of authority issues, i.e., supporting and encouraging the exploration of retaliatory impulses towards the therapist.
 - 6) BNA offers a more complex model of defenses than SCT, in which defenses are part of an overarching model of character structure. [The BNA model has nine characterological stages and each stage has within it three different aspects, those of being resigned (muscles are hypo-responsive to palpation), over-contained and rigid (muscles are hyper-responsive to palpation) or functional, i.e., "healthy".]
 - 7) BNA model categorizes different ego skills, i.e., centering, grounding, balance, boundaries, stress management, etc.
 - 8) The BNA resource-oriented skill training is based on a precise knowledge of what muscles and muscle groups relate to which psychological and social dimension of experience.
 - 9) BNA utilizes psycho-motor history and training in the assessment and treatment process.
 - 10) BNA assessment methods can include a "Bodymap." A Bodymap is created by palpating 125 muscles for responsiveness on a continuum of 9 gradients of hypo-response (resigned) to hyper-response (over-contained). This assessment provides the basis for an orderly and sequential treatment and modification of defenses. SCT has nothing similar to this Bodymap.
 - 11) BNA has developed and described a specific method for dealing with shock trauma, very high stress, and post-traumatic stress as well as conditions of peak experience.

In brief, it is my opinion that some aspects of BNA theory and practice could assist SCT practitioners and clients in some relatively simple ways. The following four seem particularly relevant.

- 1) SCT already utilizes the method of centering. BNA has a rich and complex methodology for working with

psychomotor patterns that could easily be integrated with centering interventions. Changing the construct of centering in SCT would not be necessary.

- 2) BNA's articulation of both hypo and hyper-responsive muscles could be helpful in discriminating body-centered awareness. (Undoing hyper-responsive muscle areas would need to be done gradually to avoid flooding. Developing more body awareness in hypo-responsive areas could be helpful in generating more gradual, present-centered awareness, in order to assist in centering and staying present, and avoiding a regression to early developmental or traumatic experiences.)
- 3) The awareness of both hypo and hyper-response defense patterns could be included in undoing anxiety.
- 4) Exploring some of the other aspects of BNA theory and practice, especially BNA's knowledge of the meaning of nonverbal patterns and the psycho-motor possibilities for resource building, may be useful for SCT practitioners. BNA's typology of the meaning of nonverbal patterns of behavior might build on SCT's discrimination between intention movements and role behaviors.

- Ian Macnaughton

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THE RIVER OF WELL BEING: USING THE IMPLICIT MEMORY SYSTEM TO RELEASE OLD ROLES IN THE BODY

Neuroscience teaches us that there are two forms of memory – explicit and implicit (Siegel, 1999). Understanding the differences between explicit and implicit memories may have direct implications for the strategies that we use as SCT therapists to untangle the deeper roots of dysfunctional roles and pervasive transferences.

Memory is the way that we track and codify what we learn over time. The capacity to efficiently catalogue and skillfully retrieve our memories has tremendous survival value for us as individuals and for humanity as a whole. When our memory systems are interacting with our environment in a way that is flexible, stable and adaptive, they are constantly being updated and reorganized so that the maps that we use to navigate the world match the territory. When these systems are dysfunctional, they become either rigid and redundant or chaotic, ambiguous and disorganized.

Dan Siegel calls the capacity to maintain a flexible, stable and adaptive flow of energy and information through all of the systems of our bodies and minds the "river of well

being” (Siegel, 1999, 2003). He makes the hypothesis that this river is banked on one side by rigidity and on the other by chaos. Any time that we overflow these banks on either side, we lose our sense of well being. If we develop a chronic pattern of existing outside of this river of well being, we develop long term patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving that create significant suffering both inside of ourselves and in our interactions with others. This is very similar to the current SCT understanding of a maladaptive role system as a rigid system which is impermeable to new information in the here and now (Agazarian, 2006). Siegel bases his ideas on Complexity Theory, which is a mathematical model of how complex systems evolve over time.

Evolution has ingeniously created two methods for us to catalogue and retrieve our learnings. One system operates mostly below our consciousness, often with lightening speed, to insure that our organism survives. This system, the implicit memory system, begins as soon as a human being is born and is probably operative even in utero, although exactly when this system comes on line is still the subject of scientific debate. This system is embodied, intuitive and nonverbal. The implicit memory system is associated with the right brain and with a part of the limbic system called the amygdala. It is dominant in human beings until about 18 to 24 months, when the development of the left hemisphere and the hippocampus (another structure in the limbic system) makes the development of language and more linear, logical thought, and an explicit memory system possible.

This memory system is called implicit because, when we use it, we do not have the explicit sense that we are remembering “something.” Implicit memories are in the form of a felt sense, a mood, or in a habitual pattern of tension or relaxation that becomes triggered in our bodies in response to some external stimuli or interaction. They are not memories that we can easily describe in a linear, logical fashion like a mathematical equation. When we make these memories conscious they carry the emotional tone and poetic flavor of an experience. The interaction of our implicit and explicit memory systems creates the rich texture and color in which we can recall our experiences over time.

Our deepest and most significant implicit memories are laid down in our early attachment experiences. In these experiences, our mothers or care-givers communicated through their body language their own implicit learnings about how to survive in life. When our early care-givers communicated a pattern that was flexible, stable and adaptive, we developed a secure attachment that formed the foundation of a functional, resilient and emotionally attuned relationship with our environment. When that pattern was rigid, chaotic or traumatic, we (usually) developed insecure attachments that were ambivalent, avoidant or disorganized.

We can hypothesize that these distressing attachment experiences, and their associated implicit memories, form the foundation of maladaptive role systems that are unconsciously and compulsively repeated over a lifetime.

To further understand the implicit memory system it is useful to develop our understanding of the functions of the right hemisphere of the brain (for a deeper understanding of the differentiated functions of the left and right hemisphere see Siegel, 1999 or Cozolino, 2002). Although the following comments are rather broad and oversimplified, I hope that they will still be helpful.

The most basic thing that one can say about the right hemisphere is that it is holistic, intuitive and nonlinear in its approach to the world. It is through the right hemisphere that we get our overall, gut sense of a situation. This is the area of the brain that helps us to distinguish the face and voice of our early care-givers from a stranger. It is also through the right hemisphere that we make an immediate, intuitive appraisal of someone’s affective communication and decide if that person is safe or dangerous. Although other parts of the brain are also involved in our capacity for emotional attunement (particularly the orbito-frontal cortex), the right hemisphere is essential. Importantly, the right hemisphere also contains our internal map of where our body is in space. It is with the right hemisphere that we sense the subtle patterns of internal tension and relaxation in our muscles and breathing patterns that help us to mark the differences between emotional states and also form the patterns of our most basic identifications. These patterns inform the habitual way that we walk, sit, move and organize the flow of energy and information through every system of our body/mind.

Understanding the complexity of the functions that the right hemisphere performs can help us to understand that the deepest roots of maladaptive (rigid or chaotic) role systems, and the implicit memories that support them, are located directly in our bodies and sensory-motor experience. At the time that we created these roles they were an adaptive and creative response to our environment. The problem is that the environment that they were responding to no longer exists! Unless we develop our capacity to make these patterns conscious, i.e., learn how to connect and integrate the implicit learnings of our right hemisphere with the explicit learnings of our left hemisphere, they will maintain a subtle and powerful gravitational pull on our being. By making these unconscious, sensory-motor patterns conscious, we can begin to modify the pervasive background noise of our lives and find the fork-in-the-road between repeating the old patterns with maddening persistence and learning something new.

Fortunately, the understanding of the implicit memory system may help us to more skillfully disentangle ourselves from the maladaptive patterns that we are helplessly repeating. One of the most important keys to unlock this

door may be to pay very close attention to the sensory-motor experiences in our bodies (right brain, implicit memory) and to resist the pull to interpret or analyze these experiences (left brain, explicit memory). These interpretations can only lead back to what we already know, reinforce the old stories and role systems, and further coalesce the maladaptive pattern. Indeed, this interruption of the pull to interpret is what we have already been doing in SCT for more than a decade. The difference now is that we can understand a little more about the scientific underpinning of our interventions.

A brief example of unwinding the sensory-motor pathways of an implicit memory may help make all of this more real. In a recent group that I was leading, a group member was suffering from a bad case of constipation. This digestive difficulty is a chronic pattern for her that she has treated in a variety of ways with only moderate success. It is also easily exacerbated by stress. During the session, I asked her to explore, in a subgroup with other members who were also exploring patterns of physical discomfort (chronic shoulder ache, tight jaw, etc.), the moment to moment sensory experience of her distress. The major interventions that I made to her and to the subgroup were to constantly vector them away from interpreting, analyzing or telling themselves or each other stories about their bodily felt experience. As this group member followed her sensory experience, she began to notice the impulse to lift her arms up in a gesture of reaching that was coupled by an equally strong sensation of something restraining her movement or pressing down on her arms like a weight. The stronger she felt her impulse to lift her arms, the stronger the counter force was keeping her from moving. This sensory experience was accompanied by an emotional experience of dread, followed by great frustration and anger, followed by a sense of defeat and helplessness. With the defeat and helplessness, she noticed a sense of deadness and tightness around her belly and a clamping down of the muscles around her anus. Although it would have been easy to make up a story about this experience as a memory of an early interaction with her care-givers, we both resisted this pull and stayed as close as possible to the phenomenological exploration of her sensations and emotions in the present. As she paid attention to the pattern of sensations and emotions in her body, in the context of an attuned subgroup, she began to notice the subtle ways that she was maintaining the pervasive pattern of tensions which she had “imported into the present without any awareness that they belong in the past” (Agazarian, 2006). The next step was to notice that she actually had the choice, in the present, to release some of the tension and the accompanying emotional responses associated with the sensory-motor pattern. As she found the fork-in-the-road, she noticed, with some astonishment, that she could actually choose to loosen the tight, uncomfortable feeling in her belly. As she did this, there were little gurgling

sounds as things started to move again!

From the standpoint of our current understanding of the implicit memory system, we might say that she was beginning to make a connection between a current-day symptom and the implicit memories that were stored in her body. By bringing her consciousness to the sensory level of the old, rigid pattern that her organism had used to cope with a stressful situation, she was beginning to develop a new, more adaptive and functional way to cope with stress. As the sensory-motor pattern of tension and the associated, emotional distress became conscious, her organism started to become more flexible, adaptive and stable. In other words, she started to rediscover the river of well being!

- Michael Robbins

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SCT ON THE PATH OF INTEGRATION: FROM EMOTION TO INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY, VIA ATTACHMENT

One of the central tenets of both the Theory of Living Human Systems (TLHS) and Systems-Centered Therapy (SCT) is an explicit interest in integration. Such integration can happen via functional subgrouping, or as in the recently concluded annual conference, via comparing applied theories in emotion, neurobiology and attachment.

Theories of Emotion

Jesse Prinz's recent book on emotional theory, *Gut Reactions* (2004), offers the following definition of emotion: “Emotions are valenced embodied appraisals that represent core emotional themes.” Prinz's definition is drawn from his meta-analysis of the extant theories of emotion (see James-Lange and Cannon-Bard) and shows important overlap with the position arrived at by Agazarian (1997) for SCT. In SCT theory, emotion is defined as “a physiological response which is a combination of affect, sensations, and motion that is always accompanied by an intention movement (often subliminal) that signals an impulse to action.” The key commonality here is that emotion is seen as belonging to the body, e.g., “embodied” and “physiological.” Further, SCT sees emotion as distinct from feelings in that emotion is viewed as a “primary apprehensive process.” Importantly, SCT views emotion as preverbal, pre-cortical and thus arising in the brain's architecture at or below the mid brain. Feelings, by contrast,

are defined as a “secondary, comprehensive process which enables emotion to be verbalized.” Further, feelings can arise from two potential sources: emotions and thoughts.

Were we to take the liberty of translating Prinz’s definition into SCT terminology, his definition becomes this: Emotions are vectored physiological forms of energy/information that discriminate and integrate attachment experiences especially as they relate to significant caregivers.

Interpersonal Neurobiology

In a wonderfully heuristic talk regarding the interactive effects of brain development and interpersonal environment, Juliet Koprowska, Michael Robbins and John Straznickas (2006) expanded on the seminal work of Dan Siegel’s *The Developing Mind* (1999). Siegel’s definition of emotion, “a value system for the appraisal of meaning,” highlights yet another similarity with SCT. Here, the key overlap among neurobiology (Siegel), cognitive neuroscience (Prinz), and SCT is the concept of appraisal.

It is becoming clearer that emotions, which result from person-environment interactions, arise from preverbal sources in order to signal an appraisal in our relationship to self and/or others. So primary are these forms of meaning-making, that they exist from birth (if not earlier) and are organized in implicit memory (i.e., preverbal) well before the age of two. Additionally, mirror neurons (Rizzolatti & Craighero, 2004) have been identified that enable us to actually feel the state and intentions of an “other.” This hard wiring for attunement, as Una McCluskey (2005) has pointed out, predates empathy in human development and signals a readiness to respond to others in all the ways necessary for survival. This neurological basis for attunement behavior provides a natural bridge to attachment.

Attachment

In Una McCluskey’s work (2005) on goal-corrected empathic attunement, she has identified 6 major systems within the attachment dynamic:

- 1) The care-seeking system
- 2) The care-giving system
- 3) The interest-sharing system
- 4) The sexual system
- 5) The system for self-defense
- 6) Personally created external supportive environment

All six are seen as operating interdependently in order to maintain well-being and competence. Successful care-seeking/care-giving attunement is at the heart of human species survival. Therefore linkage to theories of emotion and neurobiology is not only likely, but necessary in the reality that emotion and our neurobiology must serve system survival goals first. This same linkage is alluded to by Jaak Pankseep (1998). In *Affective Neuroscience*, Pankseep details the results of over twenty years of basic research into brain organization and emotion. His study of a part of the

mid brain (top of the brain stem) known as the periaqueductal gray (PAG) lays out an emotional “register” in order from most to least primitive: fear, rage, lust, separation-distress, care-seeking, care-giving, and an exploratory drive to play. Starr (2006), in reviewing Pankseep, noted that these emotional circuits converged in the mid brain and then were connected to limbic and other cortical subroutines.

From this list, we can readily see the primitive nature involved in the first four emotions identified: fear, rage, lust, and separation-distress. These emotions are all basic and associated with the struggle for survival. But he also found more subtle emotions, including the quest to receive and offer care and the desire to explore/play. These last three emotions are part of what Pankseep sees as the “seeking” system whose primary goal is exploration of the world, especially of the interpersonal environment. From an SCT perspective, we could see this as a movement along the emotional continuum from survival into growth and development. The linkage, of necessity, is via the successful deployment of the attunement/seeking system.

The link that bears highlighting, however, is even more basic. When “core relationships” are threatened, the evocation of primitive emotions actually serves to disrupt attachment goals. Here, rather than being self-correcting, emotions can become disregulatory and dysfunctional. Hence, the attunement work involved in care-seeking and care-giving can be severely compromised. It is just this emotional “raw material” that we seek to access in SCT via the systematic modification of defenses. In particular, by reducing the restraining force of anxiety, we open the system up to the driving force available from attachment and connect people to their vital emotional resources. This can now be seen as serving the system goal of survival first. For without this connection our emotional hard wiring will pull us inevitably away from exactly what we need: goal-corrected empathic attunement.

- Mark Johnson

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EXPLORING LINKS: CREATIVITY AND GROUP SYSTEMS

When we first begin to believe anything, what we believe is not a single proposition, it is a whole system of propositions. (Light dawns gradually over the whole.)
 - Ludwig Wittgenstein, "On Certainty"

The theme of the SCT 2006 Conference in Boston was "Creating Links: Similarities and Differences," which was celebrated with workshops comparing and contrasting SCT to other psychological models and ways of looking at the world. One of those workshops examined the link between the Theory of Living Human Systems (TLHS), upon which SCT is based, and the psychological research on creativity.

In that workshop, I presented some psychological concepts and research about creativity and, using the experience of the people in the room as data, we began exploring possible links between that research and TLHS and its systems-centered practice. This was an initial step in an exciting exploration. A two-hour workshop, of course, cannot make far-reaching conclusions, but the group's enthusiasm, the range of examples from experiences with SCT, and the ease with which the group made links between the two sets of ideas indicated a strong potential for linking these bodies of theory and research.

A key issue that we explored was how each participant's individual style contributes to the practice of SCT. TLHS

defines the person system as the "primary energy/information for system development through functional role systems" (Agazarian, 2006). We can then think of personal style as the unique contribution of each individual's person system – the totality of information/energy and role systems the person brings to the context. This style is like artistic style. We may think of Rembrandt's work as characterized by certain types of subjects, compositions, lighting and brush strokes. But any one of those characteristics will not produce a Rembrandt, and even an exquisite forgery – the work produced out of context – is not a Rembrandt. Likewise, an individual's style can be very usefully classified and described in many ways, but is always, ultimately unique.

We also explored links between other TLHS concepts and concepts from research on creativity, some of which are listed below. I hope that putting this information into the broader SCT community will spur further thoughts.

- Michael Hanchett Hanson

* For all references to SCT theory, see Agazarian, 1997.

References

Agazarian, Y.M. (1997). *Systems-centered therapy for groups*. New York: The Guilford Press.

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SCT Theory*	Creativity Research
View of development as discrimination and integration of difference(s).	Creativity is often conceived as introducing new ideas (discrimination) that become integrated into a symbol system ("domain," such as music, art, math, psychology) and have enduring impact (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Gardner, 1993).
Systems integrate differences that are "not too different," (Agazarian, 1997, p. 19) but close boundaries or encapsulate elements that are too different to be immediately integrated.	Case research, such as examination of scientific note books, has shown that people who develop ground breaking ideas often isolate, ignore or even reject the ideas initially. It usually takes time for the individual to recognize the significance of a revolutionary idea, and integrate it into his or her own thinking (Gruber, 1974/1981, 1989). Similarly, the field (gatekeepers) of any domain tends to resist groundbreaking approaches, such as the innovations of Galileo, Darwin or Stravinsky (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Gardner, 1993; Gruber, 1974/1981, 1989).
Importance of appropriate permeability between apprehensive and comprehensive systems.	Role of intuition (following hunches or having sudden insight). It is theorized that strong feelings accompanying the insight help us (a) distinguish the experience of important insights and (b) remember those insights (Gruber, 1989; Simonton, 1999).
Subgrouping as a means of exploring experience.	Case research has found that creative people tend to have exceptionally strong support networks at times of significant breakthroughs (Gardner, 1993).

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). Implications of a systems perspective for the study of creativity. In R.J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of creativity* (pp. 313-335). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Gardner, H. (1993). *Creating minds: An anatomy of creativity seen through the lives of Freud, Einstein, Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Graham and Gandhi*. New York: Basic Books.

Gruber, H.E. (1974/1981). *Darwin on man: A psychological study of scientific creativity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gruber, H.E. (1989). The evolving systems approach to creative work. In *Creative people at work* (pp. 3- 22). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Simonton, D.K. (1999). *Origins of genius: Darwinian perspectives on creativity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

SAVI® UPGRADE

We have been gathering feedback for years from people using SAVI® and have recently completed modifications in the SAVI materials. Our goal is to make the GRID clearer and simpler.

Summary of SAVI GRID Changes

Changes at the Overall Grid Level:

The words “person” and “topic” are key concepts in SAVI theory. These words appear on the new grid.

In SAVI, every message has two parts – a person part and a topic part. The topic part of each message is what is being talked about: taxes, tomatoes, tornados, etc. In the person part, the content is mostly personal. Person messages are also identified by the voice tone, the amount of pressure in the voice, volume, and the many other sub-verbal ways that we, like other animals, express ourselves without words. (You can hear the “person” part of the message through a closed door even if you can’t make out what’s being said.)

What differentiates the SAVI columns is the relative amount of “person” or “topic” in a message.

Column 1 (newly named Personal) contains the highest ratio of person to topic.

Column 2 (Factual) contains the highest ratio of topic to person.

Column 3 (Orienting) contains a mixture of both topic and person. In Column 3 the message potentially influences the direction of the communication, e.g., an Interrupt or a Proposal or a Build.

Changes at the Square Level:

We’ve replaced some square titles to bring them more in line with SAVI theory. Overall, we’ve made all the square labels active – they now all end in “-ing.”

Square 1: Fighting, Square 2: Obscuring, Square 3: Competing, Square 4: Individualizing, Square 5: Finding Facts, Square 6: Influencing, Square 7: Resonating, Square 8: Responding, Square 9: Integrating

The biggest changes in square titles are:

Square 2 is now called Obscuring. The core of this square is that the behaviors being used increase ambiguity. This can be with respect to treating an assumption “as if”

it’s a fact (Mind Reading), or being ambiguous about the source of data (Gossip), or being ambiguous as to the relationship to the topic (Joking Around), etc.

Square 5 is now called Finding Facts. This change was made to bring the “asking-for-information” as well as the “giving-information” part of the square into the square title.

Square 7 is now called Resonating. The core of this square is that inner-person information is either in interpersonal or inner-personal resonance, e.g., to answer a Feeling Question, the speaker must be in tune with (resonating with) the feelings being asked about. To qualify as an Inner-feeling behavior in square 7, the speaker must be in resonance with his or her core self.

Square 8 is now called Responding. The core of the square is that there is evidence that information has been transferred to the speaker who is responding to something already said, e.g., someone is answering a question that has been asked or paraphrasing something already said.

Changes at the Category Level:

In Square 1, Self Defend is now called Self Attack/Defend.

In Square 2, Negative Predictions is now Negative or Positive Predictions.

In Square 4, Personal Explanations is now Personal Opinion/Explanation.

In Square 4, a new category has been added – Personal Question. Personal Questions are low risk. They ask about things that are generally socially acceptable to talk about. These differ from a Square 7 Feeling Question which asks about inner-person experience. A Personal Question is a question that solicits Personal Information, either Current or Past. These questions ask about preferences, internal state, opinions or facts about the self, or relationship to the topic. Questions may be narrow or broad. For example: “Where do you work?” “Do you like movies?” “Are you hungry?” “Do you agree with this decision?”

We particularly want to thank those who’ve given us feedback by e-mails, in workshops and in training sessions, and contributed to this effort and particularly Claudia Byram and Fran Carter who have contributed to this task every step of the way.

To get a black and white copy of the new grid, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Anita Simon, 2134 Wallace Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130.

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Springtime

Right now
open
skittish
jumping from stone to stone
dancing to the song
of my own curiosity
hearing the sensual
banter of teenagers
their bodies smiling
responding
to an ancient drum
beating
below the surface
calling them to explore
something they cannot yet name
like sunlight calling fish
to break the surface of the water
in celebration.

I did not know
that I had become so stagnant
or forgot so much
until my daughter's voice
so full of her own springtime
woke me from my trance
and I discovered myself
again
open and fresh
freed from
the chains of self importance
looking out in wonder
at these mountains of water
breathing salty air
sitting on ancient stones
grateful
in the knowledge
that they
barely
notice me
at all.

- Michael Robbins

Notice Board

Systems-Centered® Training

Training Events and Workshops 2006

July 2006 Update



Notice Board Updates on the web at www.systemscentered.com

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ATLANTA

MONTHLY TRAINING GROUP

with Susan Gantt

SCT group with theory, leadership, group practicum and consultation.

- **Where:** 18 Lenox Pointe, NE, Ste. A, Atlanta
- **When:** 12:15-5:30 PM, One Friday a month
- **Registration:** \$150 per meeting
- **Dates:** 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:** 18 Lenox Pointe, NE, Ste. A, 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, Ste. 701, Austin
- **When:** 1:00-2:30 PM, Weekly
- **Contact:** Rich Armington (512) 306-0166 or armington@gmail.com or Susan Cassano (512) 327-4170 or susancassano@sbcglobal.net

WEDNESDAY CONSULTATION GROUP

with Rich Armington & Susan Cassano

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

- **Where:** 2525 Wallingwood Drive, Ste. 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, Weekly
- **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, Weekly
- **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

- **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

SCT CONFERENCE 2007

- **Where:** Holiday Inn, Brookline, MA
- **When:** Institute Mar. 24-25, Conference Mar. 26-30
- **Early Registration before Oct. 31:** Members: Institutes \$325, Conference \$525 Non-members: Institutes \$365, Conference \$565
- **Hotel Accommodations:** Discounted rate \$139 until Feb. 23. Reservations: (617) 277-1200
- **Contact:** Jan Quirl (512) 326-5569 or janquirl@ev1.net or John Straznickas (415) 522-9700 or john.straznickas@med.va.gov

ENGLAND

EUROPEAN TRAINING GROUP

with Ray Haddock

- **Where:** Near Kings Cross Station, London
- **When:** 09:00-17:00, Fridays
- **Dates:** Sept. 29, Nov. 10, Dec. 15
- **Registration:** £130 per meeting
- **Contact:** Ray Haddock +44 (0) 114 271 6894 or ray.haddock@sct.nhs.uk

ATTACHMENT ISSUES IN SYSTEMS-CENTERED PRACTICE

with Una McCluskey & Yvonne Agazarian

- **Where:** Kings Manor, University of York, Exhibition Square
- **When:** Sept. 8-9, 2006
- **Registration:** £200
- **Contact:** Liza Bingley Miller +44 (0) 1904 633 417 or liza.miller@btinternet.com

ANNUAL SYSTEMS-CENTERED TRAINING WEEK

with Yvonne Agazarian, Fran Carter, Susan Gantt, Ray Haddock, Una McCluskey & Staff

- **Where:** Kings Manor, University of York, Exhibition Square
- **When:** Sept. 11-15, 2006
- **Registration:** £525 before Aug. 1, £600 after Aug. 1
- **Contact:** 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 First Wednesday of each month except Aug. & Sept.
- **Registration:** Fees are based on rate of \$50/hour with a 10% discount for members.
- **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 First Thursday of each month (after the first Wednesday) except Aug. & Sept.
- **Registration:** Fees are based on rate of \$50/hour with a 10% discount for members.
- **Contact:** Yvonne Agazarian (215) 561-7428 or agazarian@aol.com or Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com

FIRST FRIDAY: TRAINING GROUP

with Yvonne Agazarian

This is a closed training group.

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

FRIDAY ONGOING FOUNDATION TRAINING GROUP

with Fran Carter

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

Notice Board Updates on the web
www.systemscentered.com

PHILADELPHIA

FIRST MONDAY: 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. and 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
Second Monday: Theory with Fran Carter
Fifth Monday: SAVI with Anita Simon
Does not meet in Aug.
- **Registration:** \$37.50 per meeting
- **Contact:** Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com or Anita Simon (215) 561-3431 or anitasimon@savicomcommunications.com

THIRD WEDNESDAY: TRAINING GROUP

with Yvonne Agazarian

Intermediate membership by invitation only.

- **Where:** 1831 Chestnut Street, Ste. 801
- **When:** 10:30-12:30 PM, Third Wednesday of each month except Aug.
- **Registration:** \$100
- **Contact:** Yvonne Agazarian (215) 561-7428 or agazarian@aol.com

THURSDAY FOUNDATION TRAINING GROUP

with Claudia Byram

- **Where:** 1831 Chestnut Street, Ste. 801
- **When:** 8:00-9:30 AM, 2nd & 4th Thursdays
- **Registration:** \$75 per month members, \$80 per month non-members
- **Contact:** Claudia Byram (215) 561-0341 or claudia.byram@verizon.net

LAST FRIDAY:

INTERMEDIATE TRAINING DAY

with Yvonne Agazarian

- **Where:** 1831 Chestnut Street, Ste. 801
- **When:** Theory Group: 12:00-1:15 PM
Consultation: 1:40-2:40 PM
Leadership Practicum: 2:45-4:00 PM
Ongoing Group Practicum & Review (by invitation only): 4:15-5:45 PM
Does not meet in Jan. & Aug.
- **Registration:** Full day \$160 per month members, \$175 per month non-members
- **Contact:** Yvonne Agazarian (215) 561-7428 or agazarian@aol.com

MENTOR TRAINING

with Fran Carter

- **Where:** The Racquet Club of Philadelphia, 215 S. 16th St.
- **When:** Nov. 11-16, 2006
- **Registration:** \$650
- **Contact:** Fran Carter (215) 988-9523 or carter2229@aol.com

LICENSING GROUP V

with Yvonne Agazarian

- **Where:** The Racquet Club of Philadelphia, 215 S. 16th St.
- **When:** Nov. 12-16, 2006
- **Contact:** Yvonne Agazarian (215) 561-7428 or agazarian@aol.com or Susan Gantt (404) 261-5559 x1 or sgantt@systemscentered.com

FALL WEEKEND SCT WORKSHOP

with Yvonne Agazarian, Claudia Byram & Susan Gantt

- **Where:** The Racquet Club of Philadelphia, 215 S. 16th St.
- **When:** Nov. 17-19, 2006
- **Contact:** Yvonne Agazarian (215) 561-7428 or agazarian@aol.com or Susan Gantt (404) 261-5559 x1 or sgantt@systemscentered.com

SAVI WORKSHOPS

See listings under "SAVI Trainings"

SAN FRANCISCO TRAINING GROUP

with Susan Gantt

- **Where:** Fort Mason Center, Rm. C-230
- **When:** 3:00-6:00 PM, Thursdays
- **Dates:** 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:** Aug. 18, Sept. 22, Nov. 3, Dec. 1
- **Contact:** Peter Bernhardt (510) 526-5727 or biousa@mindspring.com

BAY AREA PHONE STUDY/ EXPLORATION GROUP

with Fran Carter & Susan Gantt

- **When:** 8:00-9:00 AM PT, First Friday of each month
Meetings are on the SCTRI telephone 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

SWEDEN

SCT TRAINING GROUP

with Ray Haddock

- **Where:** IOGT-NTO Gården, Klara Södra Kyrkogata 20
- **When:** 08:30-17:00, One Friday every 2 months
- **Dates:** Sept. 1, Oct. 20, Dec. 8
- **Registration:** £150 per meeting
- **Contact:** Ray Haddock +44 (0) 114 271 6894 or ray.haddock@sct.nhs.uk

SYSTEMS-CENTERED TRAINING WORKSHOP

with Susan Gantt & Ray Haddock

Details available soon!

- **Where:** Stockholm
- **When:** Jan. 29-31, 2007
- **Contact:** Susan Gantt (404) 261-5559 x1 or sgantt@systemscentered.com or Erica Ekedahl +46 (0) 8 795 4350 or ees@humannature.se

SAVI TRAININGS

SAVI APPLICATION SEMINARS

with Anita Simon & Claudia Byram

- **When:** 10:00-11:30 AM ET, One Friday each month. Advance sign-up not required.
- **Dates:** Sept. 15, Oct. 20, Nov. 10, Dec. 15
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

APPLYING SAVI

with Claudia Byram

SAVI skills seminar and/or SAVI skills in SCT.

- **When:** To be determined. Meetings are on SCTRI telephone bridge. Call 1-641-793-7018 PIN 181505# at the appointed time. (You pay your own long distance charges.)
- **Contact:** Claudia Byram (215) 561-0341 or claudia.byram@verizon.net

PRACTICE IN SAVI

with Claudia Byram

SAVI skills seminar and/or SAVI skills in an SCT context.

- **When:** To be determined. Meetings are on SCTRI telephone bridge. Call 1-641-793-7018 PIN 181505# at the appointed time. (You pay your own long distance charges.)
- **Contact:** Claudia Byram (215) 561-0341 or claudia.byram@verizon.net

INTRODUCTION TO SAVI

with Anita Simon

- **Where:** Philadelphia
- **When:** Sept. 16-17, 2006
- **Registration:** \$400
- **Contact:** Anita Simon (215) 561-3431 or anitasimon@savicomcommunications.com

SAVI INTRODUCTION: HAVING CONVERSATIONS THAT WORK

with Claudia Byram

- **Where:** Philadelphia
- **When:** Sept. 22-23, 2006
- **Contact:** Claudia Byram (215) 561-0341 or claudia.byram@verizon.net

PUTTING YOUR SAVI KNOWLEDGE TO WORK!

with Anita Simon

- **Where:** Philadelphia
- **When:** Dec. 8-9, 2006
- **Contact:** Anita Simon (215) 561-3431 or anitasimon@savicomunications.com

SAVI ADVANCED TRAINING

with Claudia Byram & Fran Carter

- **Where:** Philadelphia
- **When:** Feb. 17-18, 2007
- **Contact:** Claudia Byram (215) 561-0341 or claudia.byram@verizon.net

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

For members who are licensed or in the Authority or Licensing groups.

- **When:** 2nd Thursday of 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:** Oct. 19, Nov. 9, Dec. 14
- **Registration:** \$350 per series, paid in advance. 15% discount for taking both. 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
- **Registration:** \$35 per meeting. Send check payable to Susan Gantt, 18 Lenox Pointe, NE, Ste. A, 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
- **Registration:** \$35 per meeting. Send check payable to Susan Gantt, 18 Lenox Pointe, NE, Ste. A, 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.
- Any member can come, any time, as a benefit of membership.
- 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
- **Dates:** 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. Send check payable to Susan Gantt, 18 Lenox Pointe, NE, Ste. A, 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
- **Registration:** £25 (€36 or \$44) per meeting. Send payment to Susan Gantt, 18 Lenox Pointe NE, Ste. A, Atlanta, GA 30324 US
- **Contact:** Susan Gantt (404) 261-5559 x1 or sgantt@systemscentered.com

SAVI SEMINARS

See listings under "SAVI Trainings"

BAY AREA PHONE STUDY/ EXPLORATION GROUP

See listing under "San Francisco"

SCTRI MANAGEMENT GROUP

with Yvonne Agazarian & Kenneth Eisold
SCTRI Management Group members only.

- **Fall:** Oct. 12-15, 2006
- **Spring:** Apr. 19-22, 2007
- **Fall:** Oct. 19-22, 2007
- **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.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCHES

...FROM THE 2006 SCT CONFERENCE

Looking Back on Some Experiences:

Racism in Work with Clients and Colleagues: Experiencing the Impact of Racial/Cultural Identity – Joan Adams

This is a topic very important to me as a white woman in a culture that looks different depending on where I am. From the perspective of ethnicity or “race,” my neighborhood looks different from my workplace, and the place I’m in looks different depending on what part of town I am in. This workshop helped me to continue to be curious about this topic, and to think about it in some different ways. We discussed the concept of race as a social construct and our experiences of privilege and subjugation and the effects it has on people of color and whites. It also reminded me that I would like to see more people of color in the SCT community and I am curious about how to facilitate that.

SCT and Interpersonal Neurobiology – Juliet Koprowska, Michael Robbins and John Straznickas

This was fun and surprisingly accessible. The workshop started with a brief overview of the anatomy of the physical brain, then zoomed into the neuronal level of function, then moved out to interpersonal neurobiology. We came away with a fist-and-hand model of the brain, with the wrist as the brain stem, the thumb wrapped in the fingers as the limbic system and the cerebral cortex as the four fingers folding over the limbic system thumb. Then we moved back and forth between function on the biological level and experience from the emotional level. The workshop ended with examples in which therapy can facilitate neural integration.

Observer Training – Phyllis Goltra

As an observer, one has a unique opportunity to sit on the outside of the group and collect data. This can be complicated by the fact that the observer may be pulled to the work of the group, and is trying to capture as much data about the working of the group as possible, while trying to stay in contact with one’s observer subgroup. This experience gave me new respect for the work of the foundation group, the work of the leader, and the work of our subgroup and our leader. It was fascinating to experience the isomorphy at so many levels as well as the complexity of information being generated at each morning session. One of my learnings, which was expressed by others in one of the large groups during the conference, is how much the leaders had learned by the end of the Conference.

Applying the Phases of Development to Organizational Work Groups – Susan Gantt, and Working with Organizational Work Groups: Identifying the SAVI Patterns in the Phases of System Development – Claudia Byram and Susan Gantt

These two workshops helped make it easier for one to identify what it looks like to be in each of the phases of development, and how hard it can be to intervene at some of the stages. One of the concepts that felt new was that the group will have a distribution of members in each of the phases, with the majority of members in one of the phases. The role play was very effective – it demonstrated that it is difficult for the consultant or facilitator to remain unaffected by the group. The second workshop, which brought in the SAVI communication patterns that occur at the different phases of development, reinforced the first workshop and added the language behavior as more data to map the group’s development.

Dancing at the Monday Night Dinner

I was struck by the dancing subgroup and the seated subgroup. I kept using my peripheral vision to take in both the creative, energetic, active dancing subgroup and the seated, conversant subgroup. I was curious what work each subgroup was doing for the group-as-a-whole. I found it invigorating to see the whole dance floor hopping and bopping to the music and felt a part of something larger, even though there were few words exchanged between the subgroups.

Overall Conference Experience

I was not in a task role during the conference this time, as I have been in each of the conferences I attended previously. I felt so supported by the members of the SCT community to be real and to be myself. The trainings, the leaders, the groups, the dancing, the singing and the supportiveness of the people were, for me, very tangible and growth promoting. Your kindness, consideration, respect and caring are appreciated. I spent the week at a “full well” and came away refreshed and renewed.

- Deborah Woolf

A MOMENT AT THE 2006

CONFERENCE

A snippet caught me at break between meetings,
astonished at the views of mutual engagings,
Rising somehow out of deep experience amidst a myriad
morphing micro mutings,
Finding meeting in a friendly face and tone,
amidst inside scramblings for lightness
crossed with seriousness purpose and needs:
She flew lightly on sproutings and greenings,
energizings from inner space

- Jan Roggeveen

NOTES FROM THE RACE AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY WORKSHOP

Make no judgments
Make no comparisons
Delete the need to understand

Imagine being in a group with just these three caveats and invited to explore your identity through the lens of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability/disability and other relevant “sacred cow” variables. This is the structure Joan Adams provided in her workshop on Race and Cultural Diversity.

Imagine being given the information that there is no such thing as race; that race is a social/political construct. Human DNA is all alike, and the genetic marker for skin color is equal in size to that of hair and eye color. Yet, the United States is systemically racist and white privilege is alive and well. The subjugation of minorities continues, and it is so much the norm that it is not always noticed.

The group grappled with this information as we explored our own identities and struggled to understand the impact of who we are on others. We looked at the stereotypes that cloud over our experience of one another and noticed comments that, in our eagerness to relate, create chasms between us. We moved from ourselves to looking at the identities of clients and staff and how we are affected by aspects of those identities. We felt keenly the lack of sufficient time to delve further. We were surprised by the depth of our bonding and wished for more time in which to explore our relationships as well as our relationships outside of the group with significant others.

We came away from the experience wanting more: more time, more information, more training, more experience navigating this sensitive and present world of differences. It was an exciting workshop, from which many of us returned to the conference with new eyes and new intentions for next steps.

- Bettie Banks

THE INNER SABOTEUR

It is Friday and the sun is shining. Today is the day I leave the Conference and return to my life, my husband and children. I leave the Conference and return to my life and family in touch with my “inner saboteur.” With all the love and hate I can muster, I say, “Thank You, SCT.”

It is not surprising to me that I (and a subgroup) would enjoy destroying a living human system like large group. It is far too large and diverse for me to control and do what I want. The easiest course, then, is to take my own authority underground, to sabotage, to undermine, to deconstruct and to enjoy doing so.

It is a surprise to realize that, given isomorphy, I enjoy destroying other living human systems. I do sabotage, undermine and deconstruct my marriage, my family and myself every time I withhold my energy and authority in spite for those systems. Yvonne asked in large group, “Do you see how very sad it is to want to destroy a living human system?” Indeed. I do.

So as the sun is shining and I prepare to leave, I notice two things about my saboteur – I hate that I must share a cab with him and I am glad he is coming home with me.

- Liz Hilton

WORKING IN INTIMACY

A new term for working in the intimacy phase: “Dread Locks.”

- Peter Bernhardt

NOTES FROM THE CONFERENCE

A light bulb went off for me in Una’s workshop on the dynamics of attachment. It was a connection to the wonderful neurobiology work earlier in the week from John, Michael and Juliet. It was simply this: A researcher (Panksepp, 1998) has identified 7 discrete focal areas in the midbrain, the area at the very top of the brain stem in an area called the periaqueductal gray (PAG). In order from the midbrain base forward, they are: Fear, Rage, Lust, Separation-Distress, Desire to Receive Care, Desire to Give Nurture, Desire to Play. The connection to SCT and attachment seemed so resonant. Especially moving, to me, is the reality that care-seeking and care-giving both have a specialized home in our brains.

- Mark Johnson

A NOTE ON THE BUDDY SYSTEM

I volunteered to be a buddy as a resource to the system. What I discovered was the incredible reciprocity of the buddy system. My buddy did not “need” my help in integrating into the system, she was quite capable of maneuvering and connecting on her own. What we

discovered together was a warm and tender relationship that evolved during the week, especially as we worked experientially together in the Intention Movement workshop. I do not know if I would have connected with this person if not for the “buddy assignment.” I do know that it would have been a loss for me to not have had the experience of intentionally getting to know her. My learning is about interdependency, which is not new, rather variations on the same theme: “We are each of us angels with one wing, and we can only fly embracing each other.” (Luciano De Crescenzo).

- Joan Anderson

COMING TO AGREEMENT

There was high enthusiasm reported from Conference participants viewing the new training DVD, “Coming to Agreement.” “Very usable,” “Professional,” “It works!”

- Eileen Jones

AS A MEMBER OF THE DEMONSTRATION GROUP

I want to share a couple of experiences and insights as a member of the observed experiential group led by Anne Alonso that was part of the 2006 SCT Conference. The conference theme was “Creating Links: Similarities and Differences.” I think this group was the first non-SCT group at an SCT Conference (other than some of our more challenging self-licensing groups!). Anne Alonso is an advanced trainer in psychoanalytic group psychotherapy, a renowned group clinician, and a true peer and friend of Yvonne’s. Here are a few observations about similarities, differences and then some learnings from my experience in the group:

1. Sitting in a group led by Anne was very similar to the experience of sitting in a group led by Yvonne. Being with a skilled clinician who has been doing groups for “many” years, who is also a scholar that thinks and writes about these experiences, is a pure delight. The background music (Anne lightly hums as she works) and deep resonance that Anne brings to group work was surprisingly similar to the experience I have of Yvonne. (This experience is separate from the group experiences that come from Yvonne using SCT techniques.)

2. Anne built an analytic box of regressive pulls for good/bad transferences towards the leader (examples are interventions such as: “everyone is fighting for the good stuff from the leader,” “there isn’t enough love in all the world for even one crying child,” “you’ve got the wicked witch in the group,” “what if the leader is not mean, but incompetent,” etc.). Anne was as tight and consistent about holding that box as any of our trainers are with SCT techniques and certainly led to a deep exploration of human experience.

3. I felt pure freedom (I believe we had a GAW experience of freedom) when I “realized” that I was out of the SCT box. This “felt” freedom was intense. It was just as strong as the experience of freedom I have explored in a subgroup. The difference is that in SCT, I explore the experience of freedom. In Anne’s group, I felt the actual freedom of being out of the SCT box.

I learned that freedom is not free. There is a freedom we members got with Anne’s techniques that I don’t have in an SCT group. This freedom comes with some costs. The costs were: a less conscious exploration of my experience, a greater propensity to act out the group dynamics of scapegoating, less focus on my fellow members, and more focus on the leader.

I have a much greater appreciation for the benefits and costs of different group therapies. I can better appreciate and understand patients and professionals checking out SCT and seeing the loss of freedom that comes from the SCT frame and not seeing the chance to explore the experience of freedom in the box. I can more easily see why some patients and clinicians choose not to step into the box. I can also better see an old role of mine – pushing people into the SCT box in order “to help them” or because “SCT is the best.”

Finally, I come away with a better sense of two responsibilities as a systems-oriented clinician at the boundary of providing treatment or training to patients and interested colleagues:

1. Hold the SCT frame as clearly and consistently as possible so folks see what you are offering them and what kind of experiences they can have in that box.

2. Know that the only true freedom you can offer is the freedom to choose to work in this box or not.

- John Straznickas

REDUCING AMBIGUITY IN THERAPY

On the 3rd Friday of each month, Claudia Byram and I lead a telephone seminar during which participants explore the application of SAVI® in their work settings.* Recently, a participant brought in this dialogue from a therapy setting (changed slightly to preserve confidentiality).

Client: “Big things are happening.”

Therapist: “What is happening?”

Client: “Well, you have to get the big picture.”

Therapist: “Tell me exactly what the big picture is.”

Client: “My life is like white water rafting right now, on a turbulent river.”

Therapist: “When you think of rafting on that white water, what are your emotions?”

The client responded by giving facts in answer to the therapist request for feelings. This dialogue is an excellent example of escalating ambiguity in a system. The client starts with an Opinion – “big things are happening” – an

ambiguous conclusion drawn from data that only she has and the therapist responds to that ambiguity by taking on the role of trying to draw facts and feelings from the client. There are two main ways the therapist can affect ambiguity (one of the key restraining forces to information transfer).

One is to try to reduce the ambiguity by helping the client get the data out on the table (which is the route this therapist took).

First, he asked for data: "What is happening?" Then, he gave a command to the client to give data: "Tell me exactly what the big picture is," and then he asked for feeling data: "...what are your emotions?" If successful, this route will help the therapist reduce his own ambiguity about what the client is saying, however, it does little to address the problem of ambiguity in the system. Even if the therapist is able to get answers to his questions, this does not help the client know how to reduce ambiguity next time. In addition, it puts the therapist in the driver's seat: drawing the client out (questions and command) about the content – before either therapist or client fully understands the restraining forces to the client "being clear."

An alternative approach is for the therapist to directly address the issue of the ambiguity in the client's speech (in this case, opinions unsupported by data) and give information to the client about the problems created by ambiguity. In that way the therapist and client can both actively take on the job of reducing the ambiguity.

The therapist dealing with ambiguity has two tasks. The first is to help the client explore and reduce the forces that are driving the client toward ambiguity in talking about her problem. This task calls for therapeutic skills. When those restraining forces have been reduced, the therapist can then help the client develop SAVI skills to be less vague.

There are many behavioral strategies to do the latter step. The therapist can explore with the client the differences between opinions (i.e., conclusions drawn from data) and data from which the conclusions are being drawn. The therapist can illustrate how when a client's opinion is broad and abstract, it is more likely that what the client is thinking and what her listener is thinking when he hears that opinion will differ.

For example:

Wife: "You didn't cancel the newspaper order before we went on vacation (Data). That was irresponsible (Opinion)."
Husband: "It was not!"

That kind of opinion looping can keep a couple busy fighting for hours.

Note: This kind of Opinion-Opinion fight is compelling to us once we become involved as participants because each of us is coming from a data base that is "true" for us. We have the illusion that "if I can just get understood, you will see that I'm right and the problem will be solved." However,

our data base is usually not shared by the other combatant. In the case above, the wife's data base might be the three other times recently that her husband didn't do something she asked, and the husband's data base might be quite different. The therapist can also teach that the less abstract a statement is (that is, the closer it is to its data base), the less likely it will be ambiguous and, therefore, the less likely it is to encourage guessing about what is "really" meant. That's why it is harder to fight about the data part of a statement: "You didn't cancel the newspaper..." than about the opinion: "That is irresponsible."

Providing opportunities to practice moving from abstract to specific on the same topic is one way to increase skills, e.g., shifting from "She's really mean!" to "She criticizes my clothes." to "She said she did not think my tie matched my shirt."

A surprise and learning that emerged from our telephone seminar was the strength of the "pull" we experience in our role as facilitators when we are feeling frustrated by ambiguity – we have an urge to reduce our own frustration by "getting at the facts." The alternative is to use the natural frustration generated by ambiguity to signal that a change is needed to increase client knowledge about reducing ambiguity. Without this change in the system, information needed for change remains locked in the facilitator's subgroup, unavailable to the system-as-a-whole.

- Anita Simon

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SYSTEMS-CENTERED® TRAINING PROGRAM

SCT TRAINING OVERVIEW

There is a wide variety of training opportunities at the four levels of training described below, as well as specialty training 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, and 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 own 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 work 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 con-

tain 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 related 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, develop criteria for assessment, and implement 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.

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 SCTRI Director role).

SCT PROGRAM NOTES

This section contains official information about the evolving SCT training program. In this issue we are focusing on the six-day Mentor Training, a major piece of Intermediate Training. This is especially timely since the next Mentor Training is in November 2006!

OVERVIEW OF INTERMEDIATE LEVEL TRAINING

Intermediate Level training, including the Mentor Training, continues the personal and cognitive development begun at the Foundation Level, and adds to skill development the ability to use systems-centered methods and techniques with others. Consultation on the application of systems-centered techniques in one's own work context is a required element of the learning process at this level.

Cognitive Development - Theory: integration of the Theory of Living Human Systems and the methods (contextualizing, boundarying, vectoring and subgrouping) and techniques of systems-centered practice.

Experiential-Based Learning - Development: ongoing development of the capacity to take up one's member role and the exploration of experiences related to authority, intimacy and work in context; ongoing experiential work to increase one's capacity to fully take up functional roles in relationship to the goals of a context.

Technical Skill Development in Relation to Self and Others: building a systems-centered working context from the leader perspective; integration of the SCT protocols for reducing the system restraining forces in the hierarchy of defense modification in different application contexts.

Observation/Testing Hypotheses: continuing to practice the application of systems-centered methods and techniques in an observing, data-collecting mode, based on recognition that all practice is based on hypothesis-generating and testing.

THE SIX-DAY INTERMEDIATE MENTOR TRAINING

This November we will be offering the next step from the Intermediate Skill Training: Intermediate Mentor Training. This is the transition between the Intermediate Skill Training (now housed in the annual SCT Conference and in York, England) and taking up membership in the Authority Issue Group. This training is for members who

have made the commitment to use systems-centered theory, methods and techniques as a primary orientation to their work and are looking toward participating in the licensing process.

To apply for Mentor Training, members must have completed the Intermediate Skill Training at least once and begun to apply systems-centered theory, under consultation, in work contexts. Members complete the application process in consultation with their primary trainers.

This is a six-day intensive training that:

- builds on and reinforces the learning from the Intermediate Skill Training with further theoretical discussion, skill building, videotaped practicum session and force field review; builds on prior mastery of the SCT protocol set out in the "Gold Sheets."
- enhances the capacity to contextualize, understand what it means to develop a "systems-centered learning organization," orient to different contexts within the "organization," relate to the goal of the context, and take up one's functional role.
- starts members in the process of assessing their readiness to join the next Authority Issue Group.

A CLOSER LOOK AT MENTOR TRAINING

The Mentor Training focuses on issues related to:

- 1) Contextualizing (role, goal and context) as Mentors experience the multiple role changes in this training and contribute to learning at all levels of the hierarchy.
- 2) Containing and vectoring energy toward the task goals of a small, developing work group in an intensive learning environment; taking one's authority in the practice of SCT Module I and II techniques (undoing anxiety, tension, depression, outrage and preliminary role locks); creating a context of attunement and resonance.
- 3) Creating a functional small work group by containing and working with the predictable driving and restraining forces present in a "new" group and developing a task-oriented environment for learning.
- 4) Processing the experience in a group-as-a-whole Mentor training group using functional subgrouping to share information, contain and resolve conflict, and work with issues aroused in the task aspects of this training.
- 5) Understanding what it means to contribute to the

development of a task group.

Mentors will continue to develop skills in:

- 1) Understanding of the theoretical context for the use of the methods and techniques and its relevance for practice.
- 2) Teaching and providing a clear demonstration of Module I and II techniques.
- 3) Working with a group to deepen the understanding of how to develop a functional force field that can be used as both a diagnostic and assessment tool.
- 4) Collecting and organizing of observable data from videotape samples and using the information to develop hypotheses.
- 5) Giving and getting clear feedback on their work.
- 6) Assessing one's own and other's readiness to take the

next step in training.

This training will continue to develop an **assessment process** at the Intermediate Level. All those participating will use the data from the videotapes, force fields and feedback sheets to assess their own and others' readiness to enter the next Authority Issue Group or to continue to train in other contexts. This is an exciting addition to our training program and is isomorphic to the licensing process.

APPLICATION AND MORE INFORMATION

The Mentor Training application and additional information on the process are available in the Training section of the SCTRI website. Click on "SCT Training Program" and select "Training Documents."

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 action 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.

Research Director: Develops the research function with goals of fully integrating research into SCTRI and crossing the boundary to the larger world.

Steering Group: Implements policies and links action 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 action groups as needed, and hold the final authority for accepting recommendations for licensing individual members as SCT practitioners.

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

Action 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
Research
Trainers

MANAGEMENT GROUP

The Management Group meets twice every year to oversee the working of SCTRI, monitor its development, and attend to organizational structure and function as is needed to keep SCTRI on track toward its goals. This is policy and vision work, with an eye to implementation. Please see the organizational chart on the web page (www.systemscentered.com) to get the flow of how this group interacts with the system as a whole. Any one who has completed the Authority Issue Group is qualified to become a member of the Management Group.

We work for two days as a process group, with the goal of reducing restraining forces to taking up our roles in the organization, and another day and a half as a task group.

The major work of the recent meeting, April 20-23, 2006, related to taking steps in separation and individuation at all system levels, both as we interface with the larger world and as we continue to develop as an organization.

On the separation theme, we are very excited to report that we are in the process of establishing SCTRI as an

independent, nonprofit, entity. We have existed under the umbrella of Resources for Human Development (RHD), which has been an excellent “nursery” for our emerging organization – but are now ready to go out on our own! We have approved a set of bylaws, a working budget, and a policy manual: all the structures that we need now in order to become a nonprofit organization.

As we got clear on our financial reality, we found that although our operating costs run to \$485 per member per year, our annual dues are only \$150. We also discovered that we have an "explicit" and an "implicit" budget: the one we can see relates to all the expenses that make up the numbers that flow into and out of our coffers; the one we cannot see relates to all the expenses that individuals currently cover on behalf of the system and do not report (for example, postage for flyers sent to colleagues and so on).

Three next steps emerged from these realizations. One, we decided to raise annual dues by \$25 to \$175 beginning in 2007. Second, we decided to collect some data! In order to support our goal of living in reality, we want to assess how much our members are spending their own money for items that would otherwise come under operating expenses. An ad hoc group is working on a questionnaire – look forward to receiving a survey!

Finally, we formed a Fundraising Action Group to explore other ways to raise income outside of the organization (contact Joy Luther or Jim Peightel if you are interested in contributing energy and/or expertise!)

The exciting development in research is Rich O’Neill’s solid step into his new role as Research Director, and the organization’s work to put itself just as solidly behind a research effort. This means two things (among many others!): 1) recognizing that we must support starting with the “null hypothesis,” i.e., that SCT does not make a difference and then prove ourselves wrong; 2) finding money to support research costs – a significant impetus for the Fundraising Action Group.

Throughout the three and a half days of work, in both experiential and task portions, the theme was separation and individuation: separation from Yvonne, from RHD, and from old roles and role locks; individuation, as members, action groups and the group-as-a-whole differentiated from each other and related to the specific tasks facing us in reality. All this along the path to our organizational goals of survival, development and transformation. For more details on the work of the meeting, go to the Management Group minutes in the member section of the website.

- Claudia Byram & Katherine Straznickas

STEERING GROUP

Your Steering Group is alive and well and excited to let you know about the following developments:

Building the Path - In October the Management Group made the decision to become an independent nonprofit

organization, and charged us with implementing the move away from the organization (RHD) that has incubated us for the past ten years. As a result, we have begun to put down the bricks on that pathway - by getting our bylaws and Policy Manual in place, identifying what legal consultation we will need and paying close attention to our budget. We are very satisfied to report that we are making headway on all of these and, for the first time, have created a budget for the year and a plan to review it. We have also developed a calendar so that we can better assess and budget our administrative resources.

Making Linkages - Our job is to create a structure that supports and links action groups and provides a conduit for the energy of these groups. We met monthly or more often with the Conference Co-Directors toward the goal of supporting their system and keeping an eye on any linkages that are necessary to that system. We have worked with the Web Group to support all the exciting developments in the look and structure of our website and we have held our third Summit Meeting, toward the goal of building the grassroots energy of our organization.

Working Together - Needless to say, all this path building and linking has isomorphically developed our system and we have been excited to notice an increasing ease in taking up our leadership and authority and an increased ability to focus on vision.

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

SYSTEM MENTORS

The System Mentors group serves as a resource to SCTRI. It consults to members, action groups, trainers and the system-as-a-whole. This year, its major task has been to function in a consulting role to the licensing groups, helping them reduce restraining forces in their work. Another major function is to become aware of places in the organization overall, or any member in particular, where the flow of energy for work is turbulent or has headed off into a backwater. So if we have missed any turbulent spots, please let us know!

We are particularly proud to announce that Licensing Group III has established itself as a vibrant and energized working group moving actively toward completion and assessment of work samples, and has ended our twice-monthly consultation to them. This particular Licensing Group has made an invaluable contribution to the development of the system’s understanding of the difference between experiential training and training for work in task groups. Future licensing groups will benefit from this understanding – and will go on to make contributions of their own. As an organization we have great reason to be proud of this group and its members.

A note: For those of you who are not familiar with the licensing process, here is a brief map. Participation in the

Authority Issue Group is the last stage of Intermediate training. Members at this level have made the decision to get licensed as SCT Practitioners and demonstrate significant mastery of systems-centered theory, methods and techniques. When the Authority Group is ended, members move into a task group with the goal of deciding the standards and criteria for licensing as well as developing the process by which they will license each other. They then assess their work samples and send them, with their recommendations, to the System Mentors group. The System Mentors review the individual work samples and give the final approval to the group's recommendation. At this time, the mentors also identify any next steps that would be necessary for any particular member (or the group!) before qualifying for licensing. If you are interested in more information go to the website and click on "SCT Training Program" in the Training section.

- Yvonne Agazarian, Claudia Byram, Fran Carter & Susan Gantt

CONFERENCE 2006, BOSTON _____

The 7th Annual International SCT Conference was held for the first time in Boston. The data collected so far shows a resounding success! We had 147 attendees, up 25 from last year, and continue our track record of growing with every Conference.

This is the result of the dedication and efforts of the many individuals who made up this year's Conference Coordinating Group, and of all the hard work and experience of the members who have created our past successful conferences. This year's team: Fran Carter and Michael Robbins, Program Visionaries; Kathy Lum, Administrator, Bursar; Jan Vadell, Administrator, Hotel and Bookstore liaison, Jan Quirl, Onsite Staff Coordinator; Julie Siegelman, Local Planning; Elaine Pratt, Hospitality, Silent Auction; Ken Frontman, Public Relations; John Straznickas, Silent Auction; Registration team: Sharon Brooks, Kim Gabellini, Linda Ghazal, Faith Gordon, Attila Grunzeisz, Kevin Johnson, Jose Miguez, Fran Rapoport, and Teryl Vincent. We want to thank all of you who contributed to our successful Conference with your time, energy and resources – the coordinating group, the onsite staff, the numerous volunteers and each of you who attended as participants. As our mentors said so well last year: you all helped create a systems-centered environment in which to learn, work and play!

The new workshop offerings reflected this year's theme, "Creating Links: Similarities and Differences," making our Conference boundaries more permeable to other disciplines. We hope that this theme will inform the leading edges of our system as it continues to develop. Besides the new workshops, many of us enjoyed the moving entertainment Tuesday night by the Playback Theater troupe. They

captured the essence of SCT by eliciting stories of development and transformation from the audience and reenacting them. Monday night's Welcome Dinner delighted us all with the "Liquid Therapy" bar menu – you could order a "Mind Read" or "Retaliatory Impulse" cocktail, a "Negative Prediction," a shot of "Role Lock," or "Intimacy" (champagne and pomegranate juice!).

Our inspiration for exploring the possibility of taking up the Conference Co-Director roles came on the last day of Conference 2005 at the SCTRI Meet the Management Group meeting, when Yvonne asked the simple question: "Is there energy in the group?" The knowledge that work in a systems-centered system was an opportunity to get additional training was the deciding factor for us to consider the role seriously, even though it meant discovering the boundaries of that role as we went along.

One of the best learning's of our Co-Director team was that we could draw on the experience of other members in our system and get support by our mentors Jon McCormick and Dorothy Gibbons and the entire Steering Group! We encourage others to consider the role – it's fun, as well as a challenge. Speaking of challenges, one of our biggest was sitting at the edge of the unknown with roles to be filled and seemingly no energy emerging from the system. We did so by containing our impulse to create "identified volunteers" (thanks, Dorothy Gibbons, for this theoretical contribution to our system!). To our delight and surprise, by containing our turbulence, we were able to eventually fill all the roles.

Adhering to the SCT structure, following the methods and applying the techniques made the meetings feel like a training experience rather than work, and based on our own research data, collected in each work session, we left our work with more satisfaction and energy than we started!

We want to say "Hello" and "Thank you" to Jan Quirl and John Straznickas for taking up the roles of Co-Directors in next year's Conference!

- Robert Hartford & Verena Murphy

CONTINUING EDUCATION _____

The CE Group continues with its main mission of supporting CE credits for the annual conference and core curriculum training events. The recent focus has been on preparing for the Boston conference, since the local CE sponsors there are different from the sponsors in previous locations (Philadelphia and Atlanta). We were pleased that we were able to offer CE certificates to psychologists, social workers, licensed mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and chaplains. We were also able to provide Certificates of Attendance for anyone else who wanted one to present to their own organizations.

One of the guiding principles from the Management Group is that CE's support themselves, which means covering the costs for contacting the organizations, paying the fees involved, and offsetting the administrative costs. In

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS/WEB _____

an effort to move in this direction, the fee for CE certificates was raised from \$10 to \$15 this year. This fee will be adjusted as we continue to collect data on the actual costs involved. Examples of the administrative costs are the onsite CE coordinator, the duplication of forms for the presenters to use, and the compiling of the workshop evaluation information in spreadsheet form.

In addition to the Conference, whenever possible, CE's are made available for trainers to provide to members attending their seminars. Practically, though, this is mostly for psychologists since the American Psychological Association is the only organization that provides credits on a national basis, and for an extended period, which makes it practical to have them available for smaller presentations. Some trainers provide CE's for other groups on their own initiative.

The other focus of the CE Group is to support grassroots efforts to broaden our ability to provide CE's to members of other professions. The main activity in this area has been spearheaded by Norma Safransky who has been trying to get Continuing Medical Education credits (CME's) for health care professionals. This appeared to be close to a "done deal," through a connection. Unfortunately, it turned out that they required one of their own people to be onsite at the Conference, which added a prohibitive cost, and scuttled them as a possible source. Efforts are currently underway with a psychotherapy group in the northeast, but this is at a very initial stage.

- Dick Ganley

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT _____

Hooray! We now have a complete description of the current core SCT Training program posted on the web! You will also find links to the training log, applications for different training events and other important training documents.

Everyone, join us on the website: go to www.systemscentered.com, click on **Training**, then on **SCT Training Program** at the left. Let us know what you think – "Is it clear?" "Do you like it?" "Do you have suggestions for improvement?"

This description will be updated as the existing program pieces are amplified, new program pieces are developed and other areas related to the training are identified. Our training process and program continues to develop and transform!

We would love to hear from you!

- Claudia Byram, Fran Carter, Susan Gantt, Dorothy Gibbons & Eileen Jones

Since the summer 2005 the Web Action Group has been working at a steady pace with the goal of transforming the SCTRI website into a site that is more relevant to its users as well as more accessible and pleasing to the eye. Shuli Goodman consulted to the group, introducing a work methodology that included five phases: Discovery, Define, Design, Develop and Deploy. This fit well with SCT's notion of phases of development – it organized us quickly around tasks. Each member of our group volunteered for various responsibilities based on special skill sets, and also based on interest and curiosity, willingness to learn something new, and available time and energy.

We quickly drafted a working document that spoke to the role, goal and context of the website and ascertained the audience we were addressing. The audience of the website is formed by three overlapping communities: personal development and growth, psychotherapy, and organizational development. The primary intention of the website is to support these communities by elucidating the contribution of SCTRI to the concerns of individuals, psychotherapists and organizational development coaches and consultants. Secondly, the purpose of the website is to link people interested in SCT to the SCTRI literature, as well as to practitioners and trainers of SCT. Thirdly, the website provides logistical and calendar information (schedule of trainings, conference brochure and registration). In the future we are aiming to develop the website as a medium the membership community could engage for interactive communication and cooperation, with the possible use of bulletin boards, blogs and wikis (wikis are an online resource that allows users to add and edit content collectively).

During the discovery phase we collectively audited many websites. We had fun comparing the similarities and differences of various sites and learning what worked and what didn't work for us. We looked at color palettes, features, how content was distributed and presented, and examined how easy it was to move around the site. Shuli and Roelof Langman, both professional information technologists, showed us how various features, fonts, designs and tools enhanced the presentation on some of these sites. During this phase we had the explicit task of assessing data, and the implicit task of moving through flight, fight and authority issues to become a collaborative working group. The goal of launching an improved website, with the support of the Training Curriculum and Management Groups behind us, was a constant driver for moving forward. Our experience is a possible model for cooperation with other action groups, the result being a demonstration of the interdependence of our work with SCTRI-as-a-whole.

Also, during the discovery phase, some SCTRI members received an online survey – a tool for us to gather information about the satisfactions and dissatisfactions our constituency experienced with the old website and to explore ideas for making it more relevant and user-friendly. Eventually we began to tackle the practicalities of deployment. With the use of technology in the form of “Go to Meeting,” working through phases by staying connected to goals, and taking up our roles as task, process leader, and scribe, increased our functionality. By January 20th we launched our first release and a second release on February 20th. With the added help of a professional designer the result was the effort of a group that knows how to combine technical, editorial and organizational skills correctly.

More is to come! We are excited to share some of our process and the challenges ahead with conference attendees. We welcome your input, your interest, and any way that you might like to be involved with us in the future. The learning is invaluable on so many levels.

- Claudia Byram

MEMBERSHIP

The Membership Action Group continues the work of building and supporting the SCTRI membership, and refining the role members play in our emerging organization. We have been building our membership by continuing the hospitality luncheon at the annual conference as a place where new attendees can informally learn about the structure of SCTRI and the benefits of membership. This year in Boston we had our largest lunch crew ever – a group full of curiosity and energy!

We have also been supporting the membership by refining our renewal schedule and reminding trainers of the fee reduction benefit for members enrolled in training groups and workshops.

As the website development continues, we are thinking about collaborating with the Web Group to build an exciting, interactive, members-only section of the site.

The Membership Action Group is open and eager for new members. We are particularly interested in attracting members who represent our geographical and professional diversity. If you are interested, please contact Jim Peightel at jpeightel@comcast.net.

- Jim Peightel

PUBLIC RELATIONS

In October of 2005, the Steering and Management Groups decided to temporarily dismantle the Public Relations Action Group (PRAG) as a separate entity and house it in the various action groups that present SCT to the larger world: the Web, Newsletter, and Annual Conference. This is a functional decision as we continue looking at the boundary between ourselves and the outside world.

PRAG developed a Public Relations Information Packet (PRIP) consisting of five differently colored pages that contains basic information about SCT theory and methods. This packet is available through Kathy Lum (admin@systemscentered.com) and is very useful for introducing interested people to SCT.

- Linda Solomon Scott & Elaine Pratt

RESEARCH

Our action group is excited to report the submission of two SCT research papers to peer-reviewed journals: Rich O’Neill and Michael Constantino’s study entitled *System-Centered Training Groups’ Process and Outcome: Comparing with AGPA Institute Groups*, and Larry Ladden, Susan Gantt, Stephanie Rude, and Yvonne Agazarian’s *Generalized Anxiety Disorder and SCT Protocol*. It will take a few months for the reviewers to let the authors know if the papers are accepted for publication.

Rich, Susan and Yvonne have been consulting with Gary Burlingame, a noted researcher from Brigham Young University, to further develop the research agenda for SCTRI. A major focus has been on developing research methods to measure functional subgrouping. Also, Larry has been consulting with Rick Heimberg, an expert on anxiety disorders research, to modify the design of the Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) study. The second phase of this study is slated to begin later this year.

As a follow-up to our last report, Verena Murphy is going to compare her findings on the SCTRI Steering Group’s communication to a control group that does not use SCT methods. Rich had found a volunteer control group, which unfortunately did not agree to be audio taped (a restraining force sometimes encountered by researchers). Our goal is to find a new one and proceed with the project!

- Verena Murphy

TRAINERS

There has been a flurry of innovative activity reported in the Trainers’ Group, which meets every other month on the phone bridge. Ray Haddock has been discussing an eight- to ten-session psycho-educational group he designed and has led as a format to introduce new patients to SCT. Ray also presented this information during the conference in Boston. The group format emphasizes skills through lecture, practice and an experiential segment that occurs at the end of each session. The structure allows for researching the efficacy of the intervention, e.g., the “I know it or I don’t...” format. The group is a very useful way to introduce patients to next steps in therapy, such as group therapy, or as a stand alone opportunity to develop life skills such as reducing anxiety and tension, using feelings as information, and even the beginning work on role locks! Ray also has interest in developing an information booklet to go with the course for

patients. Our group began some early discussions on the usefulness of a trainer's booklet that Yvonne has interest in creating. Lately we have been discussing the concept of "role" in the training of SCT practitioners, both in clinical and organizational contexts. Some of our more recent talks have had to do with linking roles to attachment theory. We are identifying the importance of ensuring that role work is strongly grounded in the SCT understanding of how role links to theory. The roles workshop, led by Yvonne and Susan Gantt, introduces a protocol for working with roles that is a valuable way to develop this understanding.

Another innovation that we have been experimenting with and discussing is in the area of centering. As a way to orient the nervous system to context, members are being asked to drop into their lower abdomen and instead of only looking inward, to gaze outward and widen their vision. This reorientation seems useful as a way to maintain a focus on both the self and the outside world, thus recognizing the importance of both contexts. We'll be bringing our learnings back to the group to identify what we're discovering and finding helpful. The Conference was a great environment to work with this in both large and small contexts.

We have also identified the need for a follow-up opportunity for intermediate members of the 5-day skills training at the Conference. We anticipate such an offering to be a way to further debrief and share the work of consolidating the skill building that occurs each year at the conference.

Our group has recently begun exploring the driving and restraining forces to creating more consistency in consultation – both in what trainers offer and what trainees use. Consultation is a requirement as trainees enter and move through the intermediate training track. More on this in future updates.

And finally, one small yet surprising satisfaction has been the setting of our group meeting times one year in advance. This was much easier to do than we had anticipated – one of the benefits of a working group!

- Rich Armington

SUMMIT MEETING – DECEMBER 2005

Building on the success of SCT's first summit meeting in May 2005, members throughout the system "dialed in" to our second meeting, held on our teleconference phone line on December 13, 2005. We crossed the boundary with curiosity about how we would connect without seeing the faces of other members – some of whom we've never met – or making eye contact with each other. As we centered into our member roles, we oriented ourselves to the goal of "cross-fertilizing" the system by exchanging the innovative ideas and the leading edge work that is happening in our various regional training groups as we all work to put the

Theory of Living Human Systems (TLHS) into practice.

Within the first few minutes of the meeting, two members in the Washington, D.C. area "met" each other for the first time, and discovered that they have the interest and energy to start a regional training group in that area. Later in the meeting, members from various regions began to explore other phone groups that offer them opportunities to subgroup with others around theory and methods, recognizing that geographical distance does not have to be a restraining force in continuing their training in SCT.

Most of our discussion focused on how groups are integrating theory into their training groups. In some groups, the leader presents theory at the beginning of each training. In other groups, members are preparing the presentations. Some groups discussed how theory is now part of the review section, choosing an interesting point in the group and then discussing the Phase of Development, the theory behind the intervention as well as other options for intervention at that point, and using force fields to track what happens after an intervention. Members discussed how their group's commitment to "break down the big words" on the theory chart is very helpful, and others reported that they often "draw the theory" for a better understanding. A large subgroup agreed that the "back and forth" that is happening between theory and practice in their groups is very exciting.

Our discussion about how the theory is being integrated into the training led to a lively discussion about what is being covered in theory. Several members brought in their excitement about how their groups are looking at developing concepts, such as roles, in the theory. Other members reported how their groups are beginning to look at the similarities between the Theory of Living Human Systems and other theories such as attachment and psychoanalysis, as well as looking at how discoveries in the field of neurobiology can inform our work. One Philadelphia training group is reading and discussing Daniel Siegel's *The Developing Mind*. Members also discussed how they are bringing their knowledge of SCT into other disciplines' professional conferences. And John Straznickas gave a plug for the "Neurobiology & SCT" full-day workshop at the SCT Conference in March.

Towards the end of our 90-minute meeting, members expressed surprise at how much energy they had. Some began with the negative prediction that they would be tired by the end of the meeting. As we explored how the reality was different from the prediction, we became aware that when we move into our member roles, we align ourselves with a goal outside of our person system and join a larger system of energy moving towards a goal. This alignment provides a structure to shore up and channel our energy. We also hypothesized that when we take on work as an "identified volunteer," we are not aligned with the energy towards the system's goal and that this may be the reason why we so often lose energy as the identified volunteer.

Members present at this meeting were Joan Anderson (Austin), Bettie Banks (Atlanta), Peter Bernhardt (Bay Area), Allison Carter (Philadelphia), Robert Hartford (Washington, DC), Joel Heller (Austin), Jim McCluskey (Washington, DC), Verena Murphy (Ohio), Jan Quirl (Austin), John Straznickas (Bay Area), and Carl Yusavitz (Philadelphia).

Also present were Steering Group members Susan Gantt, Dorothy Gibbons, Joy Luther, Jon McCormick, and Administrators Kathy Lum and Jan Vadell.

Future summit meetings will be scheduled for May and December of each year. Our May 2006 meeting was held on May 16, after the deadline for this Newsletter, so look for a summary of the meeting in the next issue. The next meeting is December 12, 2006 from 10:00-11:30 am EST, on the phone bridge. (1-641-793-7018, pin 181505#)

- Dorothy Gibbons

ATLANTA

A member of our Atlanta Training Group volunteered to go to New Orleans to do whatever she could to help these folks get back on their feet. What she brought back from her experience was a tale of heroism, trauma, and utter devastation. It was through the telling of her experience that we were brought into the actual horror of the aftermath of Katrina. We also learned more about the efficacy of SCT in dealing with trauma. It was important and exciting learning for us all. One of the most rewarding parts of this was her willingness to be debriefed in our group which gave us all a first-hand experience of how SCT can help someone get past terrible experiences and return to wholeness. It also made us all aware of the inner strength of those who volunteer to put themselves on the front line.

Atlanta hosted a training weekend in October 2005. We decided that this would be the last weekend we would offer for the time being. Three workshops were presented and were well attended: Roles, Couples, and a Foundation Group. Just how long this hiatus from presenting fall workshops will be is currently unknown. It is our hope that there will be a groundswell of energy seeking to have them resumed shortly.

The work of Dan Siegel is being studied by the Friday Training Group. We are excited by the confluence between Siegel's observations on how the mind can change the brain and the experience of the group. Siegel says that the brain is a structure while the mind is a process that regulates the flow of information and energy in the brain. He thinks that the mind can change the brain by the experience that the mind generates. The training group came up with the realization that functional subgrouping develops a group mind and therefore is able to change the brain of the individual. It was heady work! (Pun intended!)

An exciting event in December that we participated in was the 2nd annual summit telephone meeting. Participants

were representatives of training groups from all over the world who shared their current interests and theoretical pursuits. Training needs were requested as well as guidelines for starting new training centers. The structure of SCT was described which was of interest to one and all. The meeting was an hour and a half long and seemed more like 15 minutes.

- Bettie Banks

AUSTIN

The SCTRI-Austin Board of Directors has been looking at some of our policies, particularly our Board member election process, and what is functional now for the Board and the SCTRI-A community. We spent the last three meetings working on the election process, terms of office of our Board members and officers, and the roles of the Board in our SCT community. One result of this exploration was the election of SCTRI-A Board Officers for 2006: President - Bertha Genna Kondrak, Secretary - Tomi Dominguez, and Treasurer - Linda Fontaine, at the Annual Meeting on April 7, 2006. Another product of this work was a policy change in regards to terms of office, reflecting the energy, commitment, and the context of our organization currently. During this work to become more functional, Board members recognized the isomorphy with the work of the larger system, appreciating the hierarchy of living human systems. As we look at our function within our subgroup (SCTRI-A), and within the system-as-a-whole (SCTRI), we continue to survive, develop and transform.

Austin Trainer News The Austin trainers currently are Rich Armington, Susan Cassano, Joy Luther, Linda Scott, and Sydnor Sikes. We met in March to update each other on the work of the training groups and to subgroup about whom and what we want to present at the AGPA Annual Conference in Austin in 2007. A surprise and deep satisfaction was that our work led us to rediscover what we each still find irresistible about SCT. In addition, we greatly enjoyed the opportunity to connect with each other within this role. We decided to meet several times a year to subgroup around issues relevant to training, to track the progress of our 24 trainees through the SCT training program, and to identify next training steps in Austin.

- Tomi Dominguez

BOSTON

In Boston, we are still flying high on the wings of this year's very successful conference! It was such a pleasure to welcome the SCT community to our city!

The Boston group continues to be a loose affiliation of dedicated practitioners that gather once a month for a three-hour study group. Currently, we are offering two levels of training: a beginning group that focuses on developing basic skills and an introduction to SCT theory,

and an advanced group that is focused on deepening our understanding of SCT theory and working in an experiential group. This year the advanced group has been focusing on developing an understanding of Dan Siegel's "Interpersonal Neurobiology" and integrating his work with SCT theory and practice. It has been an exciting time for all of us as we have been starting to grasp the objective scientific underpinnings behind the dynamics of therapeutic change.

We are interested in seeing if there is emerging energy in the group to become more of a "center" and less of a loose affiliation of practitioners. We certainly have a group of highly trained practitioners with tons of resources. We will just have to see if all of that talent, energy, and knowledge emerges into a more coherent shape, or not!

- Michael Robbins

LONDON

The London Study Group continues to meet for 3 hours on Sunday afternoons every six weeks. Two new members joined at the end of 2005, which means we are now eight.

Our goals are to explore SCT theory, practice skills and support each other in how we are applying SCT in our various contexts. We've recently been exploring Yvonne's SCT supervision paper [Agazarian, Y. (1999). *Systems-centered supervision. International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*. 49 (2), 215-236] which has also helped us in our practice of giving each other consultations.

We have an agenda and members take up task and process leader roles. Currently we're working on learning to take up these roles. We do force fields and reflect on our Phase of Development. We break for cake and tea and are considering publishing our favorite recipes!

A subgroup of us has started a Business Meeting for an hour before the Study Group with the goal of developing SCT in London. Our strategies for doing this are:

- 1) Looking at the wider London context and any arising system developments that impact on London.
- 2) Using the business meeting to decide where to focus our energy.
- 3) Identifying resources to achieve the tasks.
- 4) Exchanging information and resources with the wider SCT system.

We're currently focusing on organizing and publicizing the London training (June 16-24 with Yvonne, Susan and Una). We work like an SCT Action Group with members taking up task, process and note taking roles. This discrimination of goals between the Study Group and the Business Meeting is proving very functional for us.

- Rowena Davis

PHILADELPHIA

As the Philadelphia SCT Center enters its second year, our major activities consist of gearing up for the continua-

tion of the Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) study and hosting our popular Roundtable events. Larry Ladden and Faith Gordon are organizing the next stage for the GAD study, a continuation of the study conducted in Austin in May 2001. Larry is working with a consultant from the University of Pennsylvania to firm up the protocol. When ready, licensed SCT members in the Philadelphia area will film 10-session treatments conducted according to the SCT treatment protocol.

The SCT Roundtables have become a popular part of the SCT Philadelphia community. Three times a year, we gather for a light supper and a presentation followed by a discussion on a current topic of interest. Our October topic, "Everything You Always Wanted to Know about SCT but Were Afraid to Ask," was so popular that we continued with this theme at our February Roundtable. Larry Miller and Jim Peightel graciously opened their homes for these gatherings in October and February, offering a comfortable environment for experienced and new members as well as some interested friends and co-workers to mingle and sample SCT in "bite size" pieces. Our next Roundtable evening is at Yvonne's home on June 30, with Susan Gantt and Larry Ladden giving a presentation on our current findings and future plans for the GAD research study.

We invite all members of the SCT community, not just those in Philadelphia, to attend our Roundtables. If you would like to be added to our list, contact Dorothy Gibbons at dorothygibbons2@yahoo.com. These events are free and we depend on the donations of those attending to cover the cost of the food, wine, and postage. We are open to suggestions for future discussions and we encourage all members to volunteer to give a presentation on an SCT-related topic. Our Roundtable organizing group consists of Claudia Byram, Jim Peightel, Faith Gordon, Carl Yusavitz, and Dorothy Gibbons. Anyone who would like to join us is welcome!

The Philadelphia Center holds its annual business meeting on the Sunday afternoon following the November Weekend workshop. So far, the Philadelphia Center is an informal collection of local SCT members who have volunteer energy to organize a few events a year. At our last meeting, we recognized that we are missing an opportunity to connect with the local Philadelphia Area Group Psychotherapy Society, and we have a goal of reaching out to this group to explore ways of working together.

Two years ago, we started our center as an experiment, curious if there was any energy in our local area for coming together outside of formal trainings. We have now hosted 7 Roundtables, are gearing up to support a major research study, and are planning to connect with a local group society. We are excited, proud and waiting to see what will happen next!

- Dorothy Gibbons

SAN FRANCISCO

We continue to train with Susan Gantt 8 times a year. Each training starts on Thursday afternoon with both a didactic and an experiential section. The Friday training includes a discussion of the Theory of Living Human Systems, consultation, leadership training, and a 3-hour experiential group. The Thursday training is offered with an eye to beginning level skills, while the Friday experiential is regarded as an intermediate level training experience. A fee structure has been set which provides for different levels of involvement. Fees for 6 and 8 sessions per year or for drop-in people have been determined and some can be paid for the whole year. Setting the fee structure has been made possible by strong commitment from our core group members who have been participants for 9+ years.

We are also proud to be hosting the 2008 SCT Conference in San Francisco. Jim Peightel, Kathy Lum and Jan Vadell put themselves at the edge of the unknown by visiting us in May to check out possible hotels for the Conference and our "party spirit."

- Fran Rapoport

SWEDEN

The training group in Stockholm uses a fishbowl designed for experimental work and continues to meet for a one-day training every second month with a blend of foundation and intermediate levels. The full day of training also contains theory and some opportunities for training in leadership roles. For the moment we have around 18 members mostly from Sweden and also some Danish participants. The trainer for our group is Ray Haddock from the U.K.

This February we also had our second annual workshop with around 30 participants. Our workshop was a 3-day event with a one-day OD program followed by a more traditional two-day SCT workshop. Susan Gantt and Ray Haddock co-led the workshop and offered more advanced members the opportunity to take up different training roles. We organized and managed the administration of the workshop by creating a task group on the phone bridge with Susan. We have lots of excitement and curiosity about participating in and contributing to the expansion of SCTR!

All the best to the system as a whole!

With a big hug and thanks for a GOOD Conference.

- Sven-Erik Viskari

Continuing Education Credits (CE's) for SCT Training

SCTRl 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.

SCTRl 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.

TAPES AVAILABLE!

SCT and Interpersonal Neurobiology

3 CD set for \$30, 2 1/2 hours

These are recordings of the morning session of the workshop given by Juliet Koprowska, John Straznickas and Michael Robbins at the 2006 Conference. They will give you a basic, accessible introduction to Interpersonal Neurobiology, particularly the ideas of Dan Siegel.

Proceeds will be used toward the possibility of recording the entire Conference next year.

To purchase, contact Michael Robbins at michaelrobbins@rcn.com

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