



2019

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

From the President

The organization continues to evolve in response to member needs, and is well positioned to continue positive change and growth under new leadership.

Dear Members,

It has been a pleasure serving as vice president and then president of VPA for the last two years. The organization continues to evolve in response to member needs, and is well positioned to continue positive change and growth under new leadership. I am delighted that Jeff McKee, our current vice president, is willing and eager to step into the role of president as I step aside in October. I am also pleased that Lynda Marshall, our energetic and productive executive director, will continue in her role.

This past year, VPA continued to modernize and increase our communication with members, both in providing news and updated information on a timely basis (rather than twice a year), and in communicating about our CE workshop offerings.

With Lynda's guidance, we have partnered with the New Hampshire Psychological Association to provide reciprocal member rates for our respective CE workshops, and with the National Register of Health Service Psychologists for VPA member discounts on their webinars.

Lynda also built a brand-new website that makes registration for our workshops easier, and provides information and resources in an exclusive, members-only web page.

We have restarted our Diversity and Social Justice Committee (under leadership from Andrew Blair) and our Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee (under leadership from Melody Frank) in order to better coordinate efforts in these areas. If you have interest in these important initiatives, please let us know.

We have worked to garner sponsorships from numerous Vermont senators and representatives for a bill allowing doctorate-level psychologists with advanced training to obtain prescription privileges. This is an ongoing effort, for which VPA just received a supportive grant.

Finally, VPA continues to offer excellent CE events. We have moved these workshops around the state so that attendance is more convenient for all of our members. Let us know what you think of this experiment.

Thank you for your active and ongoing support of VPA.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gus Jordan', written in a cursive style.

Gus Jordan, Ph.D.
President of the Board
Vermont Psychological Association

Board of Directors



Gus Jordan, Ph.D.
President



Jeffrey D. McKee, Psy.D.
Vice-President



Sara M. Clements, Psy.D.
Secretary/Treasurer



Danielle B. Ingram, M.A.
CE Committee Chair
SW Reg. Representative



Karen J. Hack, Ph.D.
NE Reg. Representative



Melody B. Frank, Psy.D.
Disaster Preparedness
& Response Committee
Chair



Andrew D. Blair, Psy.D.
Diversity & Social
Justice Committee
Chair



Jessica L. Metcalf, Psy.D.
Ethics Committee Chair



Milton J. Marasch, Ph.D.
Insurance Committee Chair
APA Council Rep.



Richard T. Barnett,
Psy.D., M.S., LADC
Legislative Committee
Chair



Lynda L. Marshall, J.D.
Executive Director
Ex-Officio

VPA Service Award Recipient

Karen M. Fondacaro, Ph.D.

Each year, the Vermont Psychological Association presents its Service Award to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the field of psychology. “Outstanding contribution” includes activities that result in a significant benefit to the general public or might make a major contribution to a specific population.

This year’s award goes to Dr. Karen Fondacaro.



Dr. Fondacaro is the director of Vermont Psychological Services (VPS—UVM’s psychology training clinic) and the internship co-director in the Clinical Psychology Internship Program at the University of Vermont. She has developed two extraordinary community programs, Connecting Cultures and the New England Survivors of Torture and Trauma (NESTT), in her roles at UVM. It is Karen’s work in establishing and directing Connecting Cultures and NESTT for which she receives this award.

[Connecting Cultures](#) is a mental health program, specifically designed for refugees re-settled in Vermont. This program focuses on the development and dissemination of evidence-based services, including community-based outreach services, direct clinical services, mental health research, and training. Connecting Cultures and VPS received the 2016 Clinic Innovations award from the Association for Psychology Training Clinics.

[New England Survivors of Torture and Trauma \(NESTT\)](#) is a program designed to coordinate and meet the psychological, legal, social, and physical needs of survivors of torture and their families and communities. NESTT is one of only 35 programs in the National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs, which received the 2017 Human Rights Award from the American Psychiatric Association.

We applaud Karen’s work and innovation in these areas, and we look forward to finding opportunities to help Karen, a VPA member, succeed in her professional endeavors.

New Members

Matthew A. Albaugh, Ph.D.	Burlington
Neila A. Anderson-Decelles, M.A.	Newport
Aubrey L. Carpenter, Ph.D.	Burlington
Amanda J. Dingman-Parini, M.A.	Middlebury
Karen M. Fondacaro, Ph.D.	Burlington
Elizabeth S. R.Goldstein, Ph.D.	Burlington
Tedd R. Habberfield, Ph.D.	Shaftsbury
Brook Hersey, Psy.D.	New York, NY
Jennie S. Holden, Ph.D.	Barre
Reem Koinis, LCMHC	Williston
Rachel Kling, M.A.	Burlington
Hilary L. Linderman, Psy.D.	Rutland
Mary Kate McDowell, M.A.	Burlington
Katherine A. Schlageter, Psy.D.	Stratton
Douglas L. Smith, M.A.	Middlebury
Demaris Tisdale, LICSW	Montpelier
Tanya R. Searles, M.A.	Hyde Park
Pamela J. Swift, Ph.D.	Burlington
Robert G. Vaillancourt, M.A.	Bethel

Our Numbers

Regular Members	95	Psychologists (D)	105
Members Emeritus	28	Psychologists (M)	47
Retired Members	10	LICSW	2
Lifetime Members	10	LCMHC	1
Academic/Research	5	LMFT	2
Associate Members	5	Rostered	1
Early Career Members	4	Student	1
Rostered	1		
Students	1		
TOTAL:	159		

Continuing
Education
2019



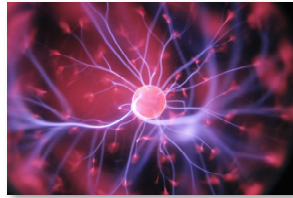
March 15

DISCONNECTED: Addressing Socially-Based Trauma

Mark Nickerson, LICSW

Rutland

53 Attendees



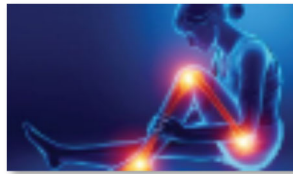
May 3

The Brain-Gut Connection: Evidence-Based Psychological Strategies for Treatment of Gastrointestinal Symptoms

Julie Snyder, Psy.D. & Amy Hale, Ph.D.

South Burlington

75 Attendees



June 7

*Psychological Assessment & Treatment of Chronic Pain in the
Midst of an Opioid Epidemic*

Amanda W. Merchant, Ph.D.

Rutland

23 Attendees



August 16

Helping Couples Achieve Improved Intimacy

Laura Louis, Ph.D.

Montpelier

39 Attendees



September 27

*Treating Insomnia with CBT-I: It's Not Just About Improved
Sleep*

Donn Posner, Ph.D., DBSM

Colchester

57 Attendees



October 11

Family Relationships of Older Adults

Sara Honn Qualls, Ph.D., ABPP

Montpelier



November 1

Ethics Across the Lifespan

Ken Major, Psy.D.

Colchester



December 13

Getting HIP to HIPAA

Co-Sponsor: Vermont Mental Health Counselors Association

Various presenters and panel

Colchester

Committee

Reports

Disaster Preparedness & Response

Disaster Preparedness & Response

The Disaster Preparedness & Response Committee has begun taking an active role in this area within the past year. The Committee has developed a three-phase approach to this work, and the first phase is in full-swing. In this phase, the Committee is researching the mechanisms currently in place to address the mental health of the Vermont community, including first responders. Members of the Committee have met with trainers, the Vermont Emergency Management organization, the Agency of Human Services, and the Department of Mental Health. Meetings with the America Red Cross have been delayed due to the storms in the Bahamas and elsewhere.

In the second phase, the Committee will determine where VPA can help fill any gaps in the current system of addressing mental health in case of a disaster, and how we can help first responders and others be aware of, and deal with, the mental health impact of disasters.

The Committee needs additional members to help with the planning and research of these items. If you are interested in making a difference with first responders and with your community, please contact Lynda Marshall, executive director, at (802) 229-5447 or at vpaed@vermontpsych.org.

Melody B. Frank, Psy.D.
Disaster Preparedness & Response Committee Chair

Diversity & Social Justice

The Diversity and Social Justice Committee has been discussing how best to serve the needs and interests of the VPA membership as well as consumers of psychological services in the state of Vermont. One project identified by the committee was to look at how VPA might encourage and support psychologists to seek out training and continuing education which would increase their multicultural competency. As we look to the increasingly diverse communities we serve in Vermont, being able to work affirmingly with clients of various identities becomes increasingly important. If you have any interest in this or other issues at the intersection of the practice of psychology and diversity/social justice, please feel free to contact Lynda Marshall, executive director, at (802) 229-5447 or at vpaed@vermontpsych.org, with your ideas.

Andrew B. Blair, Psy.D.
Diversity & Social Justice Committee Chair

Ethics

Since October of 2018 (the last annual meeting), the Ethics Committee has received three requests for consultation on the issues of (1) responsibility for supervision of patients seen by supervisee in an agency setting to which supervisor is not affiliated versus to those seen in private practice of which the supervisor is a part; (2) supervision in exchange for rent/overhead expenses; and (3) safety, threat, disclosure and duty to warn.

This past April saw my first meeting as Chair of the Ethics Committee. The Committee reviewed and reaffirmed its processes around consultations; discussed the Committee's visibility and VPA activities around membership and new committees; and discussed ethics considerations around telemedicine and interjurisdictional issues.

The Ethics Committee is seeking one or two new members. IF you are interested in being part of the VPA Ethics Committee, please submit a letter of interest to our executive director, Lynda Marshall.

Jessica L. Metcalf, Psy.D.
Ethics Committee Chair

Finance

Our financial position has continued to improve through out the end of 2018 and 2019. At the end of 2018, we reduced the amount of 2019 dues we were using for 2018 expenses by approximately 70%, compared to the 2017-2018 overlap. We reduced our negative equity by over 50% as well. This year, with new marketing efforts for our continuing education workshops, we have significantly increased the revenue from our workshops, even taking into account the additional cost of marketing using mailed flyers.

We continue to slowly build a reserve in case of emergencies, and our cash position is better than it has been at least since 2014. In 2019, we have not needed to send out dues invoices early or use any line of credit to pay operating expenses due to this improved cash position. This is a marked improvement over previous years.

We applied for, and were awarded, a grant of \$5,000 from APA to apply towards lobbying efforts for passage of prescriptive authority for doctorate-level psychologists as well. These funds will be part of our 2020 budget.

For the remainder of the year and for 2020, we anticipate continuing to build stronger revenues to support all VPA activities and to provide the resources for VPA to meet its mission.

Sara M. Clements, Psy.D.
Secretary/Treasurer
Finance Committee Chair

The highlights of the insurance committee work since the last annual meeting include three major areas: addressing members' concerns about how to cope with teacher's health resource accounts (HRAs), the roll-out by CMS of a massive coding change for billing for neuropsychology services, and—more recently—BlueCross BlueShield of Vermont (BCBSVT) policy and contractual changes prohibiting out of network referrals. The insurance committee has provided direct consultation services to about 9 members since the last annual meeting.

2018 was a rough year for school teachers and psychologists alike as there were chronic problems with the HRAs being reimbursed. 2019 appears to have gone more smoothly with the schools' switch-over to DataPath for managing their HRAs. I have not received any member concerns or complaints on this once 2019 was well underway. My recommendation to members was to have a clear, written policy for their patients on payment of copays and deductibles. The Trust has sample patient agreement templates available for providers on their website.

At the start of the year, BCBSVT had troubles with implementing their new claims management system, and payments were significantly delayed. VPA and the committee fielded member complaints and passed along information to members about a loan offer from BCBSVT to help mitigate payment delays. It appears that BCBSVT's system is now working fairly smoothly, as there have been no complaints since the first part of this year.

In July and August, we coordinated with the APAServices in providing educational packets to BCBSVT, MVP, and Vermont Medicaid on standardized implementation of the new psychology and neuropsychology CPT codes. We also directly addressed concerns by our neuropsychologist community on this issue. American Psychological Association (APA) Services has a new guide sheet, *Crosswalk for 2019 Neuropsychological Testing and Evaluation CPT Codes*. This is freely available on their website.

The BCBSVT issue has been more recent and has generated several member complaints. Lynda Marshall, Gus Jordan, and I have teamed up and have been addressing this issue. I have consulted with APA Services, Lynda has been doing networking, and Gus has had phone contact directly with VPA. On the positive side, BCBSVT has softened the language of their policy quite a bit. However, some concern persists about contract language not being similarly changed, and we are looking into this.

Other issues discussed by members with the committee included concerns about electronic biller changes, and writing letters to CMS about the proposed 7% cut to psychologist and social worker Medicare reimbursements for 2020.

As always, it has been a pleasure to serve. I wish all a productive and prosperous 2020.

Milton J. Marasch, Ph.D.
Insurance Committee Chair

During the past year, Dr. Rick Barnett was approached by the Commissioner of Mental Health, Sarah Squirrell, to serve on the Rural Health Task Force Committee. The committee was created during the 2019 legislative session after Springfield Hospital announced it had lost \$14 million over the past two years; its purpose is to make recommendations about Vermont's struggling healthcare system. The committee met for the first time in June 2019, and there have been four meetings to date. Green Mountain Care Board member Robin Lunge serves as chairwoman of the committee. You can read an article about its formation [here](#).

The Legislative Committee has also been continuing to network and build support for RxP, also known as Prescribing Psychologist legislation. During the 2019 legislative session, bills for RxP had nearly 30 sponsors in the Vermont House and Senate. The 2020 Legislative session will be the fourth session with a House Bill for RxP and the third session with both a House and Senate bill. In addition to other support the Legislative Committee has gained, the Legal Counsel of the Office of Professional Regulation (OPR) has thoroughly vetted the current bill and history of this workforce and fully supports the legislation. OPR is eager to testify in support of this bill to improve mental health access and quality. The Board of Allied Mental Health Professionals is also in full support. The NASW-VT is neutral, although it appears that the Board of Psychological Examiners may not choose to support RxP. You can find the language of the bills [here](#).

Rick Barnett, the Legislative Committee chair, was recently on a [podcast](#) covering the topic of RxP for those interested in learning more.

We look forward to hearing from VPA Members about any of the above as well as your interest in advocacy at the local, state, and national level.

Richard T. Barnett, Psy.D., M.S., LADC
Legislative Committee Chair

From the Executive
Director

It is a delight working with, and getting to know, all of our members. So many of you had volunteered your time and energy to help VPA evolve into an effective, forceful organization, and every minute is appreciated.

I especially want to thank the members of the VPA Board of Directors, who also volunteer their services to VPA. I appreciate their patience, wisdom, creativity, and passion for the field of psychology.

I'm looking forward to an energetic, productive, exciting year!

Lynda L. Marshall, J.D.
Executive Director

