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ann@centraloffice1.com*From the President's Pen**By Barbara Riggs, PhD*

We live in uncertain times – financially, politically, and socially. Add to the uncertainty health care reform for which no one is sure how we will be affected personally and professionally. But with all the doom and gloom around us, marriage and family therapists are needed more than ever. In fact, marriage and family therapy was listed as one of the 50 top careers for 2010 by US News and World Report. The demand for MFTs is expected to grow substantially over the next decade. MFT is considered a “core” mental-health profession, alongside social work, psychiatric nursing, psychology, and psychiatry.



While this is good news for our profession, we can't stop working to educate the public that we have something special to offer that many other mental providers do not have. As such we all have a responsibility to our profession. It is easy to get bogged down in the minutia of rendering care for our clients and lose sight of this bigger picture of responsibility. With that, I would like to challenge each and every one of you to look at how you are personally managing your responsibility to the profession. As election time for IAMFT Board positions nears, would you consider getting more active with the Board? There are officer positions and committees that need volunteers. Thank you to those of you who have already indicated an interest in serving. To the rest of you, please feel free to contact me if you have questions about what positions need to be filled.

As a division, we are strong in numbers and growing. So here is my invitation to you. Will you consider volunteering some time to the bigger picture of marriage and family therapy?

Barbara Riggs, IAMFT President

If you are interested in volunteering with the association, please contact any Board Member and/or IAMFT Central Office via phone or e-mail. All contact information is listed on the website and in this newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you!

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Newsletter**August 15th submission
September 1st publication*Newsletter dates are subject to
change. Archive newsletters can
be downloaded from the IAMFT
website. www.inamft.org**Effects of Imminent Danger Upon Intimate
Relationships, Infidelity, and Group Cohesion*
By John Behn Watts, M.S.*Winner of the 2009 IAMFT Graduate Student Research Award*

There are a growing number of military personnel fighting in both Afghanistan supporting Operation Enduring Freedom and in Iraq supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. Presently, more than 1.3 million service members have served in the War on Global Terrorism (Bowling & Sherman, 2008). The dynamics of a combat environment are complex and can be a source of camaraderie and strength or a time of complete and utter confusion. While in combat where imminent danger is continually present, most service members experience a great amount of personal growth and change due to the life-altering nature of being deployed and separated from significant others and families. The Global War on Terrorism has highlighted the importance of family research on military personnel. The United States military consists of 3.5 million service members (U.S. Military 2005 Demographics Report). During a time of war, an ever greater number of people are directly affected by their family member's absence and knowing they are in harm's way. Of these 3.5 million serving, over half are married, and countless others are in committed relationships existing outside the context of marriage (U.S. Military 2005 Demographics Report). In addition, there are over 1 million children under the age of 5 who are directly affected by their parent's deployment overseas, and over 1 million spouses who are also affected (U.S. Military 2005 Demographics Report). These same individuals invariably participate in outside environments within which they influence the lives of others through the lens of their circumstances. In this nation, most people either know a service member personally who has served overseas or are close to someone who does. With all the lives being affected by the War on Terror and the societal strain on the American military family and its relationships, this population warrants attention. The goal of this study was to examine the effects imminent danger has upon infidelity, intimate relationships, and group cohesion.

Method

Ninety veterans serving a six month minimum tour of duty in Iraq or Afghanistan in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom or Enduring Freedom were included. The participants were mostly male (65% male, 35% female) including various races/ethnicities and religious denominations. Several scales were used to assess anxiety about death, combat experience/exposure, attachment style, coping, extradyadic romantic involvement, group cohesion, and perceived relationship satisfaction. Several regression analyses were conducted to evaluate imminent danger, attachment, and coping on intimate relationships, infidelity, and group cohesion.

Results

This study found a significant inverse relationship between imminent danger and emotional infidelity; however, there was not a significant relationship with physical infidelity. Imminent danger reflects the presence of mortality salience, often leading people to reinforce core values (Hirschberger et al., 2002; Mikulincer & Florian, 2000; Mikulincer et al., 2003; and Smieja et al., 2006), thereby not engaging in infidelity. Terror Management Theory (TMT) might explain these results, or at least reports of less infidelity, as TMT may also lead people to report being more in line with social norms (Simon, Arndt, Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1998). Imminent danger was also

found to contribute to greater group cohesion serving as a buffer to mortality salience also in accordance with Terror Management Theory (Hirschberger et al., 2002; Mikulincer & Florian, 2000; Mikulincer et al., 2003; and Smieja et al., 2006). Group cohesion may serve as a survival mechanism to alleviate the stress associated with mortality salience that is ever present in a combat environment. The data supported the hypothesis that higher perceived degrees of family coping prior to deployment also acts to buffer against infidelity. As service members perceive their family to be capable of effectively functioning in their absence, they may be more inclined to keep in touch with things at home since the family functions more as a source of support rather than stress for them. Alternatively, service members perceiving low levels of family coping may turn to other sources for assistance and connection. Finally, upon completion of the analysis, a post hoc test was conducted to ascertain if there was a significant relationship between anxious or avoidant attachment styles and emotional or physical infidelity. There was a significant relationship between avoidant attachment and emotional infidelity. This may be due to a tendency to seek fulfillment outside the relationship as evidenced by Ainsworth et al. (1978).

Clinical Implications

There is an influx of service members returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan, many having served multiple tours. This has a profound impact on the both the service member and their family. Many feel as though they have a limited support system. Veterans Administration facilities are overwhelmed with the volume of service members requiring help so it is necessary that marriage and family therapists are well-versed in military culture and deployment dynamics. There is a great deal of stigma associated with mental health in the military consequently service members may seek aid outside the military community; however, they may also be reluctant to do that since “civilian” providers lack the military background and experience to deal with their unique issues. Clinicians practicing without adequate knowledge of the military culture treat from a “civilian” frame of reference thereby compromising the quality of services rendered leaving military members and their families feeling misunderstood and further isolated. As military family dynamics are at the forefront and present notable issues in society, their impact is bound to echo in future decades. The continued traumatization that the War on Terror creates is capable of tearing families apart and inevitably having a transgenerational impact. As marriage and family therapists, we have the capability to aid in alleviating the traumatic impact combat deployments have upon military families through a better understanding of their culture and unique circumstances.

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*Graduate Student Reflects on Spring Conference**By Ethan Davis, MFT Graduate Student*

As a graduate student in Marriage and Family Therapy, the spring IAMFT conference was beneficial to my professional and personal development. Professionally, I was able to apply the material from Dr. Janis Abrahms-Spring's forgiveness model toward key breakthroughs when I conceptualized a particularly difficult case. The new conceptualization helped the client move past an ethereal view of forgiveness toward a forgiveness that is active and present in the counseling room.

Personally, I was refreshed and challenged as Dr. Abrahms-Spring asked us to carry out some structured self care by breaking up into small groups and unpacking the ideas of forgiveness in our own lives. "Know thy self," if I have heard this age old adage one time in my graduate career, I have heard it a thousand times. I have been to several state and national conventions and it is nice to attend a conference that actually facilitates development in an efficient and pragmatic ways.



PARK CENTER PROFESSIONAL TRAINING
WORKSHOPS - 2010

APRIL 16	Impulsive and Self-Harming Adolescents: A Dialectical Behavior Therapy Approach <i>Laurie Brodeur, PsyD</i>
MAY 14	Transforming Challenging Clinical Gremlins: Reaching People Beneath the Diagnosis - <i>Shawn Christopher Shea, MD</i>
JUNE 11	Caught in the Net: Assessment and Treatment of Internet Addictions <i>Kimberly Young, PhD</i>
AUGUST 27	Trauma Informed Care for Children and Adolescents <i>Juli Alvarado, MA, LPC, NCC</i>
OCTOBER 1	Emotional Intelligence in Relationships: Advanced Strategies for Teaching Your Clients to Rewire Outmoded Emotional Habits - <i>Brent Atkinson, PhD</i>

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IAMFT Fall Conference - Call for Proposals

The Fall Conference Program Committee is issuing this "Call for Proposals" to teach and engage health professionals in the state of Indiana and surrounding region.

Workshop sessions are scheduled for October 2010.
(Exact date TBD)

Sessions will run for 1 hour.

Focus Strands

1. Supervision
2. Ethics
3. Advocacy
4. Practice Development
5. Clinical Application
6. Other Topics Based Upon Board Approval

Please submit all proposals to Casey Roell, IAMFT Central Office via E-mail: casey@centraloffice1.com

If you have questions, please call 317-484-2630.

Contributions to IAMFT

IAMFT accepts contributions from members just like any nonprofit organization. Our nonprofit status is 501 (c) (6). Contributions to the scholarship fund (to help graduate students attend IAMFT conferences) cannot be used as charitable deductions on your taxes. However, contributions of goods or money as a co-sponsor of our conferences can be used as charitable deductions.

Finally, 68% of your dues to AAMFT are deductible. Contributions can be made payable to IAMFT and mailed to IAMFT Central Office.

Questions??

Do you have a question that would be helpful to IAMFT members? Ask it and we'll answer it in the next issue.

Email Barbara Riggs, IAMFT President 2010
barbara.riggs@indwes.edu

Call for Association Awards Nominations

1. IAMFT Award of Merit for Innovative Service to the Profession.

Eligibility:

- a. Active or committee member of the association
- b. Must be a clinical member of AAMFT.
- c. Clinical contributions made over a five (5) year period.
- d. Has demonstrated serious commitment to furthering the profession of marriage and family therapy.

2. IAMFT Award of Merit for Research in Family Life

Eligibility:

- a. Must be a clinical member of AAMFT.
- b. Has made significant research contributions to the field.
- c. Has demonstrated a serious commitment to furthering the profession of marriage and family therapy.

3. IAMFT Award of Merit to Non-AAMFT Member

Eligibility:

- a. Must not be a member of AAMFT.
- b. Must reside in Indiana.
- c. Must have made noteworthy contribution to family life over a five (5) year period.

4. The Distinguished Leadership Award

Eligibility:

- a. Sustained five (5) or more years of leadership to the Division.

Please contact IAMFT Central Office if you would like a nomination form. Phone: 317-484-2630 or via E-mail: casey@centraloffice1.com

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