

Hudson Valley Interest Group

HVIG

June 30th 2006 Newsletter

Greetings to and from the members of the New York Mental Health Counselors Association (NYMHCA) Hudson Valley Interest Group (HVIG). We meet every six weeks on the campus of Marist College, Poughkeepsie, New York in the beautiful Hudson Valley. The NYMHCA is an advocacy organization representing the clinical counselors of New York State. Our goal for this newsletter is to keep our members current with information relating to mental health counseling, keep our members united, bring information to our members about local training and seminar opportunities, and to expand our group through email information. For a complete listing of meeting dates and agendas, visit the [HVIG website](#). This newsletter is sent out to any current members together with anyone interested in the profession of mental health counseling. In this newsletter:

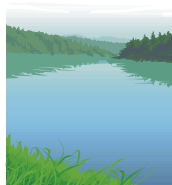


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HVIG LEADERSHIP

Group Coordinator
Director of Training
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Public Relations
Newsletter

Yvonne Poley
Suse Volk
Craig Debinski
Rick Scott
Craig Debinski
Tammy MacBrien
Kristen Fortuna
Jon Petersen
Cynthia A Canaday



**The Hudson River Valley is a great place to go to school,
live, and to work as a Mental Health Counselor!**

IMPROVING YOUR SERVE



College Themes

by
Yvonne Poley, M.A., LMHC
HVIG Coordinator

"I can't fit in. I can't adjust. I have no friends. I don't think I am at the right college. Everyone here is different from me. It isn't what I thought it was like when I visited last year. I am not happy here. I am lonely. Everyone has a group to hang around with already and I have no one. I don't think I can take it anymore. But my parents will be so disappointed in me. I can't even tell them how bad it is here."

As a counselor in a college counseling center, I frequently encounter these themes when meeting a new client. I hearken back to one of my own indelible college memories of the early 1970's to guide me to help.

I returned to begin my sophomore year of college following a year's leave from the world of academics. During my year off I had maintained a tiny apartment and supported myself by working two jobs. During the day, I was a teacher of autistic children, at night and on weekends, I ran the desk in a fifty six lane (large!) bowling alley. I paid my rent and did not manage to save a penny. I did, however, develop an appreciation for the luxury of the pursuit of academic study.

In August, a group of young women whom I had known slightly called my home to invite me to become the fifth member of their townhouse arrangement on the campus. I was thrilled they even remembered me and I happily accepted the offer. It was reassuring to be returning to live amongst people I actually knew, and I began to plan what I would bring to school with me.

I moved into the townhouse on move-in day in September (without parents, of course, as I was now an upper class person) and I fixed up my own little room with my typewriter and pictures and clothing. I had yet to sign up for classes which everyone else had done during the previous spring, but at least I had a comfortable home base.

We had a group meeting and made decisions about chores and sharing the kitchen space and about meals. I began to study my house-mates to make sense of their interrelationships and to figure out which young man who stopped by for a visit or for dinner was attached to which young woman. I quickly came to see that matters generally centered around one gal, an attractive, dark haired woman named Diana. She was apparently the leader of the group and seemed to be an impetuous, outgoing person. I, too, enjoyed her company and I began to get to know her, as well as the others, a bit better.

Things proceeded along until the middle of the second week when one house-mate, Alicia, announced to me, "Diana is withdrawing from school to go home and become a writer, and the townhouse is folding!" She explained that as we were no longer numbered five women, we were not entitled to stay in the townhouse any longer. "But what are people doing?" I asked in distress and unbelief. "I am going into a different townhouse and Kara and Joanie will be roommates in the vegetarian dorm." replied Alicia. "But what about me?" I asked aloud. "You better talk to the Housing Office." advised Alicia.

I was in shock. I found my way to the Housing Office, the director there was aware of the disbanding of the townhouse. "I suppose you can move into a dorm room with someone," she offered. I wailed back at her, "I don't want to move in with someone I don't know, and I don't want to be on the meal plan." "Then you must be hoping for another townhouse placement," she said. There are three openings in townhouses that I am aware of at this time." "So what do I do?" I asked. "I will give you the numbers of the three houses and you can go introduce yourself to the women there." she replied.

Still bewildered, I left the Housing Office clutching a paper with the numbers of the three townhouses written on it. As I walked off, it hit me: I was going to have to meet and convince these strange groups of women that I would be a good house-mate. They were not required to accept me as their fifth, so somehow I was going to have to convince them that I would be an asset to their group. It was clear to me that I could not do this. The little bit of confidence with which I had returned to college depended on my having a secure home base at school from which I could venture out to become reacquainted with the college. That security was now gone and I felt alone, adrift, like a shell of a person, connected to no one. There was no way that I could convince anyone that they wanted me as a house-mate.

I found my way to a secluded telephone booth in an administrative building and I closed the door and I called home. I tried to explain the enormity of the disaster to my mother through my sobs, "Now I have nowhere to live and I have no friends, and I can't go meet new people like this."

My mother sized the situation up quickly. She responded, "Of course you can, and you will. There really is no other choice. Now I want you to think about what a good house-mate you really are and how you are a kind friend and smart and sweet and funny. Really think about it, about doing things in the past that were tough and getting through them. Then go home and wash your face and take some deep breaths and then go meet the first townhouse. Then you call me back and tell me how it went. Remember, Yvonne, they WILL be lucky to be getting you."

Still in the phone booth, I dialed the phone number of the first townhouse on the list, D-10. With my eyes shut tightly, I waited for someone to answer, and then I said, "I am Yvonne Poley. The Housing Office says that you have one open room in your house, could I come by and introduce myself to you tonight at 6PM?" The young woman replied that all four house-mates would be home then, so that would be fine.

I had about an hour to compose myself. I decided that this was all I would do tonight, then I would report to my mom. If things didn't work out tonight, I would wait until tomorrow to make further visits. I thought about presenting myself to these women and I determined that I was going to be ACCOMMODATING and ADAPTABLE. However they ran their house, that was fine with me as long as I could have the open room. I would ask them about chores and food and money and the phone bill and visitors, and I would support all their agreements.

I found my way to Townhouse D-10 at 6PM and said hello through the screen door to the four women seated at the kitchen table. They invited me to sit with them while they ate dinner. They seemed a motley crew. Two were petite and coiffed, with lots of jewelry. One was tall and gaunt, the remaining one wore all denim and looked sort of tough. Each was eating a sandwich, pea soup, macaroni, cheese and crackers. No one offered me anything.

The women ate quietly for awhile, finally, one asked what had happened to me and I explained about my having taken a year off and about the collapse of the townhouse. They agreed that my situation was a tough one. I asked how their townhouse had come together. Apparently the two from New Jersey had known each other the previous year and the Housing Office had put them together when they expressed their choice of townhouse living. I asked about how they handled the different group issues. There was not really a leader or spokesperson; whoever was not eating answered my question of the moment. They seemed congenial, laid back, not really involved with each other, but friendly enough. Their answers to my questions made sense: I could live with these policies. Since no one was taking charge, I asked if they had any questions for me. I expected to be thoroughly grilled. One said, "I hope you don't play loud music at night," I agreed that I did not. Still silence. I summoned up

my courage and asked, "Would anyone mind if I moved in?" No one did. "Great" I said. "I'll be over tomorrow." I left very relieved and astonished at their laissez-faire attitude toward taking in a total stranger.

I was able to move into the new townhouse the following day, and I began slowly to acclimate to life at college. Now, thirty years later, I try hard to offer to my clients what my mother offered to me: a reality check, positive thoughts, cheerleading, and an action plan.

If you would like to contact Yvonne regarding a speaking engagement please email her at: Yvonne.poley@marist.edu

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATIONS

The Mental Health Associations in Dutchess, Orange, and Ulster Counties can provide valuable support services for you and your clients. For information on services, programs, and additional resources available, contact the Mental Health Association in your county. Please see the "quick link" section of this newsletter for easy online access to the Mental Health Association website



The NYMHCA Hudson Valley Interest Group

Our next meeting will be held
on
Friday, June 30th, 2006
at 9:30-11:30am
topic:

**Healthy Boundaries in the
Counseling Relationship**



SkillPath Seminars

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Learn how to get and keep control of concurrent projects, competing priorities and critical deadlines
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FAMILY FUN SPOT OF NOTICE

Remsberger Maple Farm and Apiary

"Natural Sweetness from the Tree and from
the Bee"

Great farm to visit! They give tours and they sell maple syrups, candies, jellies, nuts, popcorn, sugar, honeys of all types, **gift baskets**, natural bee products! Visit their site online to get additional information, learn of their products, and plan a day trip for yourself and/or family!



Remsberger Farm

Pleasant Valley, NY
(845) 635-9168

CARTOONS

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**"You said I should spend more time with our
children, so I turned their faces into icons."**



HVIG, June 30, 2006



QUOTABLE

Don't worry that children never listen to you, worry that they are always watching you....Robert Fulgham

If the grass looks greener on the other side of the fence, its because they take better care of it...Cecil Selig

Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing.....Albert Schweitzer

A good marriage is the union of two good forgivers...Ruth Graham Bell

QUICK LINKS

[NYMHCA](#)
[NYMHCA Hudson Valley Interest Group](#)
[New York State Education Department](#)
[DC Mental Health Association](#)
[UC Mental Health Association](#)
[OC Mental Health Association](#)
[DC Departments Online](#)
[UC Departments Online](#)
[OC Departments Online](#)

FEEDBACK/COMMENTS

The NYMHCA Hudson Valley Interest Group continues to grow in membership. If you have not joined, or have any questions regarding membership, contact: cdebinski@aol.com

For general information about the HVIG of the NYMHCA, contact the Group Coordinator: Yvonne Poley:
Yvonne.poley@marist.edu

If you are a member of the HVIG and would be interested in presenting at one of our meetings, contact our Director of Training: Suse Volk: Suse@mindspring.com

Questions for our Treasurer? Contact: Rick Scott:
Scottfam@citlink.net

Questions or suggestions for our Webmaster? Contact: Craig Debinski: cdebinski@aol.com

Questions for our Outreach Director? Contact: Kristen Fortuna: ki2816@aol.com

Questions or requests for our Secretary? Contact: Tammy MacBrien: macbrien@sunydutchess.edu

Questions regarding Public Relations? Contact: Jon Peterson: jonpeterson@rehabprograms.org

If you have comments, suggestions, or requests regarding this newsletter, or if you are a member of the HVIG NYMHCA and would be interested in submitting an article for this newsletter, or have information for any of the columns, or would like to have your profile highlighted in our "Focus on a Member" column, we welcome it!! All submissions need to be received two weeks prior to publication. The next publication date: May 12, 2006. Please contact: cacanaday@optonline.net

If you would like to be added to the mailing for this newsletter or would prefer not to receive this newsletter, please let us know: cacanaday@optonline.net

Please join us at our June 30th Meeting!

[Get Directions](#)

To the Marist College Campus on Rt 9 in Poughkeepsie, NY from your location, then.....

From Rte 9, enter the Marist College through the south entrance and make your first left into the parking lot.

Proceed through this parking lot into a second, larger lot. Park as close to the Hudson River as possible. Walk north, parallel to the river behind the large dormitory, and Byrne Building will be on your left.

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone who might be interested in its content or interested in the Hudson Valley Interest Group of the New York State Mental Health Counselors Association

NEXT NYMHCA newsletter will be published
September, 2006, **Next meeting TBA**

Have a happy and safe summer!