



From The Director...

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"Restoring humanity to life"



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Executive Director

Over the last several weeks we have seen tension between ISEPP's psychiatric survivor members and members from the various professions. The tension is about whether direct individual experience or formal scientific study gives us the best understanding of human emotional suffering and how to alleviate that suffering. I encourage everyone to consider the value of both ways. When it comes to emotional well-being, lived individual experience is paramount. The only reason mental health professionals do what they do is because individual people suffer. Those individuals hold the key to what works best because they are the ones experiencing the distress.

Dear ISEPP members and friends,

ISEPP's 20th Annual Conference - Denver, Colorado!

This year's conference, "Mental Health: Considering Context in Human Suffering", will be held October 6-8 in Denver, Colorado. The conference call for papers, flyer, sponsorship information, and venue and hotel reservation particulars are posted at our [website](#). Please start to make arrangements to attend. The specific program information, to include plenary speakers and breakout sessions will be uploaded soon.

The Warfighter Advance

March saw the launching of [The Warfighter Advance](#), a unique program that humanely helps those who serve our country to recover from trauma outside of the traditional medical model that focuses on pathologizing and drugging. Dr. Mary Vieten and several other ISEPP members run the week-long free program at a serene [recreational site](#) in southern Maryland. I have the

As in many of my previous writings, you know my professional focus is on that one person sitting in front of me and how to apply the research to, and be empirical with, that person. This is where formal scientific study is important too. It would be unethical for us to ignore the results of research, both of the nomothetic kind that attempts to derive general laws of human behavior and experience, and of the n=1 kind that attempts to assess what works with one person over time. It would also be unethical for us to ignore our observations during our times with that person. The definition of empirical is "...derived from or relating to experiment and observation rather than theory." So critically observing people is a formal scientific pursuit. Yet formal science also paradoxically can tell us how much we don't know about peoples' suffering. Maybe we'll never know, as people are not static objects that react uniformly to the "laws of nature."

unique opportunity to represent ISEPP during each of their retreats in a 90-minute talk entitled, "Smoke and Mirrors: How we are being fooled about mental illness."

Bedlam in America

Check out my interview with Katherine Hine at [Bedlam in America](#). It is the second time Katherine offered me an opportunity to get our word out to the public. Other ISEPP members have also been interviewed by Katherine. These include Toby Watson, Noel Hunter, and Jim Gottstein.

Sesame Street's Autistic Muppet

ISEPP's [Randy Cima recently responded to a 60 Minutes episode](#) about Sesame Street's decision to add an "autistic" muppet to their cast. As with most of us, Randy has a special place in his heart for 60 Minutes and Sesame Street, but he nonetheless wanted to express his concern about how they may be unwittingly reifying a concept that is harmful to children. He does an excellent job of demonstrating how the autistic epidemic is most likely the result of medical organizations' and drug companies' marketing strategies.

VIP Interview

One of our members, Dr. Richard Shulman was recently [spotlighted on his local CBS affiliate television program](#). Richard runs [Volunteers In Psychotherapy \(VIP\)](#), a unique program that offers psychotherapy to clients who earn it by volunteering elsewhere for the charity of their choice. This helps people who don't have insurance benefits or otherwise cannot afford therapy. It also helps them maintain

complete confidentiality. I'm sure Richard would appreciate it if you visit their [Facebook](#) page and "liking" or positively "reviewing" them.

Membership

We have finished our 2017 membership drive but not all ISEPP members from 2016 have renewed. If you were not aware of the membership drive, you can still renew on our [website](#). Of course, for those of you who are not yet members, I encourage you to join! My hope is to continually increase our membership, especially by bringing on younger people entering one of the many mental health professions. They are the ones who will represent our views and make changes from within.

As always, I ask that you all share this newsletter and other ISEPP information through your social networking sites. Also, make sure to visit our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages. Feel free to contact me at docruby@me.com or 301-646-6022 if you have any questions or suggestions.

Best wishes,



Chuck



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