

Analyze This!



San Gabriel
Valley PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

www.SGVPA.org

The Official Newsletter of the
San Gabriel Valley Psychological Association

AN OFFICIAL CHAPTER OF THE CALIFORNIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

January/February 2016

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CARE

Open

Upcoming Lunch Meetings

Date: Friday, January 8, 2016
Topic: Virtual Reality Goes to War: Innovative Approaches to the Prevention, Assessment, and Treatment of PTSD

Speaker: Skip Rizzo, PhD

Date: Friday, February 12, 2016
Topic: Mentalization Based Treatment: A Step in the Imagination Beyond Empathy

Speakers: Nazare Magaz, PhD, and Robert Lundquist, PsyD



PLEASE RSVP NO LATER THAN THE FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH TO YOUR INTERNET EVITE, OR TO THE SGVPA MAIL BAG INFO@SGVPA.ORG.

CE credits available for Psychologists, LCSWs and MFTs

Monthly luncheons are held on the second Friday of the month at the Women's City Club, 160 N. Oakland Avenue, Pasadena, from 12:00 to 1:45 p.m.

Members Costs:

Luncheon, Service, and Parking Privileges...\$22

CE credits...\$20

Audit...\$10

Non-Member Costs

Luncheon, Service, and Parking Privileges...\$27

CE credits...\$25

Audit...\$15

Please note: Unclaimed lunch reservations will be billed to the individual--So please claim them!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Colleagues,
Certain days, I am blessed in my spirit to have a special experience. It is usually late afternoon, and I'm at home with my children or the park. The light is diffuse across areas, casting everything in a soft gray light. It is quiet; my children are napping or playing. I have given myself permission to have an intermission from whatever work is in queue for attention. I am still, maybe even lying down but I am exquisitely alert. I have a sense that all the important people in my life are okay enough and do not need my immediate attention. I can attend to myself. I can go inward and enjoy a sense of resting and of peace. I can experience a lack of demand on myself. I can almost feel my cells recovering from having been at work. I discern a tingling feeling of aliveness, and it is so enlivening. I try to soak this time up and be as present as possible—as if to hold time captive...

When the time shifts and I turn myself back outward, I sense that I can do so with increased strength and love. I note all this only to point out that we all need to find ways to replenish ourselves. For me, it is taking a break from "caretaking" and "productivity."

I hope in this New Year that each of you find ways to honor and gather up as much replenishment as you need. It is not easy to do in this fast paced culture! And it is not built into our caretaking profession inherently—although thankfully, it is encouraged and validated. The work of psychotherapy can be deeply taxing, but also deeply, wonderfully rewarding.

The SGVPA board has some "renewing" this year as we welcome Dr. Karin Meiselman to our board as the Special Interest Group (SIG) chair. I am looking forward to working with Dr.

(continued on p. 2)

Meiselman, who has been a long time board member of LACPA and a longtime member of SGVPA. Welcome to her, and thanks to her for her willingness to serve on the Board. We also welcome continuing Board member Dr. Brett Veltman into a new position as the Chair for Early Career Professionals (ECP). I'm looking forward to collaborating with him to help plan a fantastic year.

My personal and heartfelt thanks to the rest of the board who continue in their previous roles including Dr.'s Suzanne Lake, Martin Hsia, Laurie Nougier, Dustin Plattner, David Lorentzen, Larry Brooks, and Wayne Kao. Our Student Chairs, Jeremy Cernero, and Tiffany Shelton, also continue. It is quite a task to be making your way through graduate training, and serve on a board.

I'm inspired and humbled to work alongside this group of people, who are so generous to volunteer their time for our association. I also want to thank and acknowledge that two board members retired this year including Dr. Stephanie Law who served faithfully on the Board for nine years in many positions including President for three, and Dr. Daniel Linscott, who was our ECP in 2015 and promised me I'll still see him around. I do hope so!

Finally, one special event that is always reviving, celebratory, and fun is our annual January Jubilee, coming up on January 29th. This year, our event will include a full dinner for the first time at a thrilling new venue, Luminarias Restaurant, located atop a mountain in Monterey Park. As part of the festivities, we will be honoring our Distinguished Member of the Year, announcing the recipient of the Future of Psychology Scholarship, and offering a coupon for discounted SGVPA membership renewal. I'd love to see the entire association turn out, along with some who are curious about who we are and what we do.

Don't miss it! And let's all have a great year.

Respectfully,

Ellen Miller Kwon, PsyD
President

SGVPA Events Calendar

Friday, 1/8/16 — *Monthly CE Luncheon* — 12:00 Noon



Virtual Reality Goes To War :
Innovative Approaches to the Prevention,
Assessment and Treatment of PTSD

Dr. Skip Rizzo



Friday, 1/29/16— *Annual January Jubilee*— 6:00 p.m.

Full Dinner Buffet and Program

Luminarias Restaurant beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Monday, 2/1/16 — *Deadline for Submissions to Analyze This!*

Submit to Editor,

DrSuzanneLake@aim.com



Friday, 2/12/16 — *Monthly CE Luncheon* — 12:00 Noon

Mentalization Based Treatment: A Step in
the Imagination Beyond Empathy

Dr. Nazare Magaz

Dr. Robert Lundquist



My Mission to Reduce Bias

By Tiffany Shelton, MA
SGVPA Student Representative



As a young woman navigating life, I found myself in therapy way before I ventured into this career path. However, in my search for competent therapists, too often was I left feeling offended

or misunderstood. Culturally among African Americans, therapy is plagued with stigma and mistrust. I believe wholeheartedly that it is important to analyze the material presented by our clients beyond a personal level, and incorporate not only their immediate setting but also the surrounding historical context. It is only then that we can fully comprehend and empathize with our clients. Based on my own experiences and accounts from other Black women, too many times Black women walk into a therapy session and find the therapist opposite them to be ignorant of the collective context that helps shape their psyches.

Moreover, too often a clinician's formulation of what it is to be an African American female consists of pervasive stereotypes propagated in our culture. This can lead to ineffective treatment, or more devastatingly, malpractice. Unfortunately there are numerous negative stereotypes that plague the Black woman's psyche, but two in particular have fueled my mission to reduce bias by educating clinicians about them.

The first stereotype is "The Mammy." The mammy stereotype is an overweight and dark-toned woman depicted as a desexualized nurturer. It evolved during the slavery era in America by whites in an attempt to mediate the defiling relationship between African American women and white men with degrading nostalgia. Propagation of this stereotype served to portray a non-existent figure in the white home that was revered; however in reality no such figure existed. In fact, it is common knowledge now that Black women were treated like animals and property, and the mammy stereotype is an ill-fitting mask to this cruel treatment.

I tend towards using a depth psychological perspective and I liken the mammy stereotype to a disempowered depiction of the mother archetype that lives within all of our psyches. The mammy's asexual attributes disempower her the fertility of the mother archetype, leaving her an oppressed stereotype. The dangers in internalizing this oppressing stereotype, whether by the client or therapist include: role strain/extreme caretaking, the stressful notion

of being palpable/subservient to whites, normalizing the very dangerous condition of obesity, and body image issues related to skin color (light vs dark toned). Given this information, I think it is helpful to consider the imagery and corresponding impact of "The Mammy" stereotype when treating African American women, and hence I am very passionate about bringing light to this stereotype.

Another stereotype that pervasively plagues the Black woman is the "Angry Black Woman" or "Sapphire" stereotype. This imagery has its roots in the show *Amos and Andy*, with the infamous character "Sapphire," depicted as excessively mean, rude, and man-hating. This original stereotype of Black women has continued in popular culture over time, most of which continue appearing on television, emasculating men and emphasizing fighting.

In my own experiences, I have had to stressfully navigate how to avoid being perceived as just another *angry Black woman*. This stereotype is very damaging to the Black woman's psyche and experience. Such a portrayal evokes no sympathy nor empathy for the Black woman's experience, trivializes and destroys any space for the Black woman to express justifiable anger, as it is easily deemed characterological anger. One can easily see how this can affect the therapeutic process, which is why I feel it is my duty to make clinicians aware of this pervasive stereotype. Mental health problems, including depression, can present themselves when anger is suppressed. Furthermore, evidence is gathering to illustrate how anger, hostility, and aggression are associated with hypertension and cardiovascular disease—both of which plague the Black community. Continuing to use a depth psychology perspective, I encourage clinicians to refer to the warrior archetype in order to balance their perspectives, should you mistakenly identify a client as fitting this stereotype. I find that by keeping in mind the aspects of the warrior archetype (i.e. desires justice, or fears being powerless), I am better able to empathize with myself and process anger.

Aspects of both of these stereotypes have affected how I have been perceived as well as how I interact with the world. I don't believe my negative experiences in therapy were a result of racism, but due to a lack of knowledge and understanding, which is why I have made it my mission to reduce such bias.

Tiffany Shelton, MA, can be reached at tshelton1@alliant.edu.

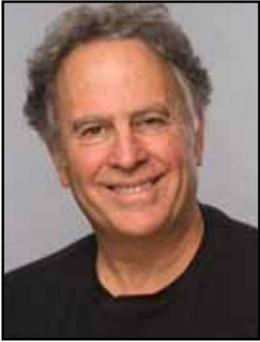
The Interpersonal Triangle

Out of Kilter:

A New Way to Look at Old Pathology

Part II of a Series

By Sam Alibrando , PhD



This is the second installment of an article published in the summer issue. Here's a brief review of the main points from Part I.

• The Thesis: Just as there are three dimensions of the physical world, there are three dimensions of the psychological world:

- *Power* (height) dimension, based on Karen Horney's *moving-against* relational style, and Wilfred Bion's *Hate* connection. This dimension has to do with power over others and regard for oneself. It has to do with divergence (not convergence).
- *Heart* (width) dimension, based on Karen Horney's *moving-toward* relational style, and Wilfred Bion's *Love* connection. This dimension accounts for our care and need for others. It has to do with convergence (not divergence).
- *Knowing* or *Mindfulness* (depth) dimension, based on Karen Horney's *moving-away* relational style, and Wilfred Bion's *Knowing* connection. This dimension is neither divergent nor convergent but instead observant (knowing) of others, and self-control.

It is important to note that these three modes are *not* personality styles. Rather they are each one of three discrete axes on which we move interpersonally. Furthermore, each movement or dimension can be either positive or negative.

The subject matter of today's article lies in the idea that, through the lens of this paradigm, we can see psychopathology as anxiety that throws us out of kilter; and this imbalance is dysfunctional.

Let me give you an example. I worked with a woman who was constantly being "hit on" by her male boss. A healthy (positive-Against) response to this would be for her to set a boundary with him, ask him to stop, and report him to the board if he did not. However, she had notable fear of saying "no" to authority. So she suffered endless boundary violations from this predator-boss. Because she was not able to exercise positive-Against, she ended up tilted in the negative-Toward dimension.

Another example. I coached a CEO of a \$100 million service company. When I did my surrounding interviews, it

came out that this otherwise very competent man kept really poor boundaries (unhealthy-Toward), and when frustrated, would literally throw temper tantrums (negative-Against). What was missing was healthy-Away. He (erroneously) thought that if he moved-away he was going to lose his agency. Because of this he was not able to relate from healthy moving-away (self control, mindful containment of affect, etc.), which threw him out-of-balance in the other two dimensions.

So if there are three dimensions in which pathology manifests, which dimension is the healthy dimension? You know the answer already--all three! In physics, synergy is defined as the integration of two or more, in this case three, agents, so that their combined effect is actually greater than the sum of their individual effects. In other words, when the three positive movements work together in a coordinated fashion, the quality of each individual movement improves. Therefore, in this paradigm, mental health is defined by the quality of the integration and balance of the positive dimensions.

We know that we are most effective as therapists when we are able to listen deeply (positive-Toward), while at the same time being observant, consciously present, and contained (positive-Away) as well as being able to keep good boundaries and tell the client truths about themselves (healthy-Against). This is what I call operating from our therapeutic "sweet spot."

I discovered compelling empirical support for synergy in, of all places, an organizational research study. The study attempted to answer the question, which leadership style is better? The traditional outcome-oriented authority-based leadership style that they called *Forceful*, or the people-oriented empowering leadership style that they labeled *Enabling*? After evaluating hundreds of leaders, and compiling thousand of data points through factor analysis, they found four distinct categories of leaders, which they labeled:

- Lopsided Forceful leaders, described as having too much Force and not enough Enabling. (*Negative-Against*)
- Lopsided Enabling leaders, described as having too much Enabling and not enough Force. (*Negative-Toward*)
- Disengaged leaders described as not having enough

(continued on next page)

Force or Enabling. (*Negative-Away*)

- Versatile, who were described as having just the right amount of Force and Enabling, and knowledge of when to use them.
- Reduced from hundreds of possibilities, four general

categories emerge, which just so happen to match the three negative dimensions, and one “sweet spot” (which is made up of the three positive dimensions).

In our next and final installment, I will discuss how to move from a reactive negative mode to a more positive synergistic mode of relating.

Dr. Sam Alibrando can be reached at Sam@apc3.com.

The SGVPA CARE Annual Picnic and Chili Cook-Off Returns!

By Brett Veltman, PsyD
CARE Chair



Congratulations to Dr. Wayne Kao, who was named the Chili Cook-Off Champion of 2015, thus dethroning the reigning champion, SGVPA President Dr. Ellen Miller Kwon!

While there were many excellent contestants, judges faced the difficult task of choosing only *one* as the best SGVPA Chili for 2015. Gallantly taking up this challenge, the judges duly tasted and savored each submission critically to discern the winner. They later revealed that it was Dr. Kao’s secret ingredient that elevated his chili to the top. (With some prodding, you might even be able to persuade him to share the special ingredient that led to his success!)

The picnic took place on a beautiful fall afternoon, at Farnsworth Park in Altadena. Besides the chili contest, the event gave members of SGVPA and their families, a chance to make connections, build relationships, and have fun in a relaxed setting.

The mission of CARE (Colleague Awareness Resources and Education) includes encouraging psychology professionals to recognize the importance of self-care, and fostering relationships within a professional community.

So be on the lookout for future CARE events to attend. They are always delightful, and offer opportunities to focus on self-care and building relationships and community with your SGVPA friends and colleagues.



Dr. Brett Veltman can be reached at drbrettveltman@gmail.com.

Dreaming in the 21st Century: Social Dreaming

Part IV of a Series

By Larry Brooks, PhD
Program & Continuing Education Chair



*Who was she who made love to you
in your dream, while you slept?
Where do the things in dreams go?
Do they pass to the dreams of others?
And does the father who lives in your dreams
die again when you awaken?*

—Pablo Neruda, *Book of Questions*

Developed in the 1990s by Gordon Lawrence, an English psychoanalyst, Social dreaming brings individuals together to share their dreams. Originally designed for use in organizational consulting, it has been used by practitioners to enhance creativity and collaboration, as well as to resolve inter-group conflicts. Social dreaming attempts to recover qualities of being and relatedness that have been lost as a result of post-industrialization. It is a way to see past the limits of our personal experience.

Social dreaming views the dream as having individual and collective meanings. Intertwined with the personal, dreams contain the shared anxieties, desires, traumas, and hopes of the culture, reflecting the circumstances of the human condition. Social dreaming groups create a psychological space receptive to the influence of dreams. Lawrence coined the term *social dreaming matrix*TM to capture the generative potential of collaborative dream work, and to differentiate it from groups that focus on interpersonal dynamics. The dream is not only the “royal road” to the unconscious, but is also a bridge connecting individuals to each other at deeper levels of psychological experience.

Social dreaming considers the dream a source of un-realized potential, tapping the unconscious well of mystery and creativity. Lawrence states, “The dream is always enlarging the space of the possible. Through the dream we are brought into tension between the finite (that which we know), and the infinite, that which is beyond our ken.” This infinite world of psyche can be thought of as a collective mind-stream that is the milieu of individual subjectivity.

The dream is an imaginal experience to be realized, a potentiality not yet known. The dream asks the dreamer to suspend logical thinking and to allow the dream to provoke associations, feelings, images, memories, and new ways of thinking. It is within an arena of play that its novelty emerges.

Billy Collins poem, Introduction to Poetry, captures this playful quality of dream work.

*I ask them to take a poem
and hold it
up to the light
like a color slide
or press an ear against its hive.
I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,
or walk inside the poem's room
and feel
the walls for a light switch.
I want them to waterski
across the
surface of a poem
waving at the author's
name on the shore.
But all they want to do
is tie the poem to
a chair with rope
and torture a
confession out of it.
They begin beating it with a hose
to find out
what it really means.*



SWEET
DREAMS

The Social Dreaming Matrix: To experience the intelligence of dreams involves patience, vulnerability, and a mind-set distinct from our rational mode of thinking. The social dreaming matrix creates an imaginal stage upon which dreams play out their drama. Certain conditions facilitate this process.

First, chairs are arranged in a snowflake pattern so that individuals are not facing each other. Lawrence did this to create an atypical environment to facilitate the suspension of our familiar expectations. Alternative chair arrangements can also be used such as a spiral.

Second, individuals are asked to offer their dreams to the group and listen to the dreams of others as if they were their own dreams. Relinquishing personal ownership of the dream diffuses the boundaries of self-experience. It initiates the individual into the collective.

Third, rather than interpret dreams, individuals are instructed to free associate. Learning to think freely and imaginatively is a process. According to Freud, free association, "is to surrender oneself to trains of thoughts, without monitoring them for importance, relevance, or whether they are nonsense or disagreeable.

Fourth, expressive techniques that utilize non-verbal and enactive means of expression are used to animate the dream images. These methods access non-dominant, non-logical cognitive-emotionally embodied dimensions of the psyche.

The social dreaming matrix alters the thinking process, enabling individuals to tap the group's unconscious mind. Through the sharing, associating, and "playing" with dream images, meanings emerge that enlarge the personal dimension of a dream. The dreams lose their individual identity, and the many become one communal dream. The individual is de-centered from a narcissistic perspective and is oriented to the group.

Dr. Larry Brooks can be reached at drbrooks@drlarrybrooks.com

A Voice From Behind the Scenes



By Michelle Garami, MS, MA, MFT
Website Committee Member

Every life decision I have made has paved the way to bring me to where I am in my career today as a therapist and life coach. Having worked in a variety of fields, including business, brewing coffee, constructing homes, office management, and diamond jewelry sales I've had the opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding of a number of different trades. My broad view of how interconnected our inner worlds are with the environment we interact with gives me a working framework of how I can best utilize my skills and thought processes to contribute meaningfully to other people's lives. Because of my extensive background in developing websites and my passion for the world of psychology, I volunteer as part of the website management team for SGVPA.

I really enjoy using my spare time to volunteer with a variety of organizations. I have been very fortunate to engage with some of the most brilliant minds of our time. I seek invigorating interactions at conferences, meetings with colleagues, and in conversation with people from all walks of life. From these experiences, I find opportunities where I can be a helpful part of any burgeoning process.

I am honored to be a part of SGVPA's website management team because my work helps make the member/user's experience easy and enjoyable. By keeping the SGVPA homepage and calendar up to date, I provide members and

general website users with news and information. The work I do behind the scenes isn't something that the end user is necessarily aware of, but everyone who visits the website experiences the effects of the work that Dr. Dustin Plattner and I do.

A couple of other organizations that I volunteer doing website development and management for The Cancer Care Network Foundation, and The Global Association for Interpersonal Neurobiology Studies. I take pride in the work I do and feel very privileged to be able to give back to communities that I highly respect and value.

Over the years, I have found that through my work, not only are the lives of my clients noticeably improved, but so are the lives of those around them... at home, at work, at school, and everywhere in between. I believe that when any aspect of a system changes, the system itself intrinsically changes. My hope is that through the work I do for SGVPA, I contribute in a unique way that makes our members want to stay committed to the association, and give back to it in their own individual ways.

I find that there is no end to what we can learn in a lifetime. I hope to continue to be successful at imparting the knowledge I gain from my ongoing studies and insights to my clients, as well as create lasting changes to the SGVPA website that will endure well into the future. I hope that I have inspired some of you who are reading this column in the newsletter to go out and find novel ways to give back in your own part of the world.

Michelle Garami, MFT, can be reached at michelle@thelalifecoach.com.

Psychology and Family Law

Parents Should Think Twice Before Engaging in a Custody Battle Over Their Children

By Mark Baer, Esq.



When parents engage in custody battles over their children, they do so under the guise that they are fighting for their children's best interests, but is that generally true? Please don't misunderstand, I am not

suggesting that parents don't sincerely *believe* that what they want is in the best interests of their children. I am, however, suggesting that not all *beliefs* are fact-based, regardless of how sincerely held such beliefs may be. According to legal expert Bill Eddy, "Much of today's legal disputes are about what I call Emotional Facts--emotionally-generated false information accepted as true and appearing to require emergency legal action."

Allow me to share a comment made by Frank P. Cervone, Esq. in a presentation at the American Bar Association this year, as part of a program titled, "The Preferences and Voices of Children--How Do You Protect the Child?" He said, "In *the adversarial construct*, an attorney's job is to advance their client's position--not to advance what is in the best interest of the child, which is the role of the judge." (Mind you, the exact same thing can be said for those parents who opt to represent themselves, not using an attorney.)

Not a day goes by in which at least one potential client doesn't contact me because they are looking to "get full custody" of their child or children. It's obvious that these folks are attempting to obtain 100% custody, as well as sole decision making authority. In essence, they want to eliminate the other parent from the child's life. Usually, the open question is, how can that be in the children's best interests?

While both parents battle each other, they spend their child's college tuition, exacerbate the conflict, increase the distrust between them, destroy their ability to effectively co-parent, and ultimately harm the child. As Mr. Cervone so astutely pointed out, when parents act in such a manner, the only person involved in the case ultimately responsible for assessing what's actually in the child's best interest is the judge. Furthermore, the judge has such limited knowledge of the family that his or her subjective determination may or

may not actually *be* in the best interest of the child.

Not only do judges handle a great many cases, and therefore not have the time or ability to develop a clear understanding of any given family, but their decisions are only based upon the "*legally relevant and admissible evidence*" submitted to the court. In other words, it is the job of a judge or jury to determine the facts based upon conflicting evidence, and then to apply the law to the facts. Significantly, such factual findings are based only upon the "legally relevant and admissible evidence" before them, *not all the facts*. Yet facts not admissible as evidence might be crucial to the child or children's best interests.

The job of an attorney is not to ferret out the truth, but to do everything legally possible to have facts that are *harmful to their client* excluded from evidence through legal technicalities, if at all possible, or to otherwise spin the evidence. Attorneys are gladiators who are brought on to effectuate a "win" for their client. Winning is not about the truth, even though people tend to believe otherwise. The law is not about right and wrong--It is about winning and losing.

As I have said before, it is a grave mistake to confuse "legal justice" with actual "justice."

In any event, Connecticut attorney and filmmaker Larry Sarezky has produced an award winning film about custody battles titled "Talk to Strangers," which explores the negative impact on children of the custody evaluation process, from the children's perspective. I am absolutely thrilled to see this film about child custody disputes being distributed by the American Academy of Matrimonial Attorneys. Sadly however, parents will likely continue ignoring such information because they all *believe* that what they want is in the "best interests of their children," no matter what the cost of the fight to any involved. The emotions which lead to these convictions are complex, and more in the domain of psychology than law.

For what it's worth, and even though I believe it will continue to fall upon deaf ears, parents, I would think twice before engaging in a custody battle over your children! Far better to work through the decision process outside the court system, and perhaps utilize a psychologist or professional mediator.

Mark Baer, Esq., can be reached at Mark@MarkBaerEsq.com



You're invited to the annual

J a n u a r y J u b i l e e ! !



Friday January 29, 2016
6:00 p.m.

Honoring our rich cultural diversity and the history of the San Gabriel Valley, the January Jubilee 2016 will be celebrated at the historic and exquisite

Luminarias Restaurant
3500 Ramona Road
on a hilltop in Monterey Park,
overlooking our sparkling scenic Valley
(just 20 minutes from central Pasadena)

Come early for yummy hors d'oeuvres and drinks (cash bar), with plenty of opportunities to schmooze and network with friends and colleagues, visit our exhibitors, of course-- renew you SGVPA membership at a discount!

Stay for the 2016 Board Installation, *a full dinner buffet*, and more cavorting with friends. Stay later for dessert and coffee... and for anyone interested in further entertainment, there is optional dancing to live or DJ'd music in the Luminarias bar area! (Hosted by the restaurant)

Any new or renewed membership will be discounted!
So be sure to invite colleagues and potential new members to this stupendous *free* party event!



Let's party!

Happy Holidays

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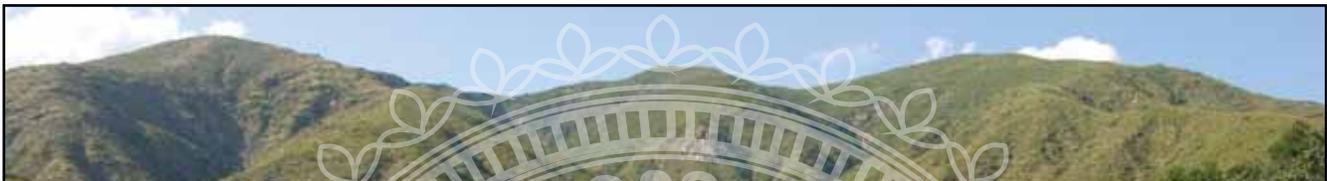


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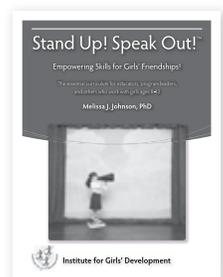


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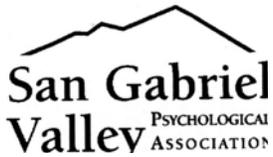
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