

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

COMMITTEE: Aging Issues Committee (AIC)

DATE: December 13, 2021

LOCATION: Zoom

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Drs. Ken Dellefield, Cynthia Cotter, Darlene Townes, Ruth McKercher, Nicole Karst, Denee Lougeay, Debra Halliday, Andrea Karp, Bruce Sachs, Hugh Pates, Katherine Quinn, Katrin Seifert, Vic Frazao, Deborah Cosmetis, and Ms. Minola Manson. Dr. Sean Hodges was present but indicated he was just visiting. Members present represented a quorum.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Drs. Alanis, Coburn, Pickett, and Stanger.

PROCEEDINGS:

The minutes from the prior Board meeting dated 11/8/21 had been distributed prior to the meeting and a reading was dispensed with. A motion to approve the minutes was made and approved.

INTRODUCTION/ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Cotter reiterated for the new attendees the Committee established protocol of automatically including new attendees as members of the AIC on the SDPA website unless they specifically request not to be listed.

NEW COMMITTEE ATTENDEES AND AGING INTERESTS

Dr. Sachs introduced himself. He reported that he has worked for Jewish Family Services for 29 years and that he has been working more and more with OA in that setting. He also has a small private practice in which he sees OA. He particularly likes in his work the challenge of dispelling the viewpoint that you cannot teach an old dog new tricks. As a member of the OA cohort himself, he is interested in finding ways to maximize the benefits of life; he finds there is still a lot of life to be had.

QUOTE: It is not how old you are but how you are old. (Jules Renard)

Dr. Cosmetis introduced herself. She became interested in the AIC when she read the recent articles published by the Committee in the SDPA Office E-News. She is in private practice and sees a good number of college students and also OA. She commented that she learns a lot from her OA clients.

Dr. Frazao introduced himself. He is in private practice and sees primarily male clients. He finds interesting working with OA men who have become caregivers of family members and are challenged by the new roles, particularly emotionally.

Ms. Manson introduced herself. She is the Director of RIHS at the Academy for Professional Excellence that is a project of San Diego State University School of Social Work. RIHS (Responsive Integrated Health Solutions) provides training for contract and county staff of San Diego Behavioral Health Services. She was particularly drawn to the AIC due to her previous experience with Dr. Dellefield. She is interested in finding out what is new in the field related to OA.

DID YOU KNOW?

Dr. Seifert made the DYK presentation that included data from a 2009 PEW Research Center study entitled Growing Old in America. The study consisted of telephone interviews of individuals on attitudes about aging. The details of the presentation will be included in the January 2022 SDPA Office E-News. The presentation generated a discussion by Committee members on research and how often results are presented generally and not by diverse background even though the sample for the study might include diverse participants. Furthermore, the research approach itself may be biased towards one diverse group so that the questions presented to participants do not make sense to members of other groups and members of diverse groups may differ in their willingness to participate. Dr. Dellefield suggested to the group a 2013 book entitled Health, Illness and Optimal Aging: Biological and Psychosocial Perspectives by Aldwin, Igarashi, Gilmer and Levenson that includes a good deal of information by diverse group.

CASE PRESENTATION

Dr. Dellefield presented a case for possible referral for neuropsychological evaluation. An elderly woman with notable hearing and vision difficulties living in a retirement facility went for a walk and suffered a fall. The retirement facility suggested to the patient's PCP that he change the patient's diagnosis from mild cognitive impairment to dementia (no type specified). The change facilitated imposition of a higher level of restrictions upsetting both the patient and her son. Dr. Dellefield was concerned to find that the physician did not evidence in the record a proper evaluation of her cognitive status. He would like to see her properly evaluated. He commented that due to her sensory impairments and her unusual "artistic style" of thought processing that she might be difficult to evaluate. It was remarked in the Committee that diagnoses of dementia are often made by physicians not specialized in evaluation of brain states.

Dr. Sachs had planned to present a case as well, however, due to shortage of time, it was agreed that he would present at the next meeting.

AIC PROGRAMS

The Committee discussed the following programs in progress.

SDPA Office E-News/Website

Dr. Dellefield suggested possible topics for future articles including case presentations, experiences with OA clients, what draws us as psychologists to OA as clients, what causes us to avoid OA as clients, and what issues arising in practice with both young and old clients can be seen to apply to both populations.

Dr. Dellefield suggested that a topic for an article might be interviews with OA about how they feel moving into retirement and what are their plans and expectations. One Committee member commented that at this point in his life he feels much more comfortable being himself. He feels he is wiser and is now the best person he has ever been. He offered the following quote.

QUOTE: One doesn't grow older one only becomes older when one stops growing (author unknown).

Another commented that he particularly enjoys the benefit of freedom in his older age, he likes the idea of just hanging out. Fewer responsibilities is good. Boring is OK!

The Committee discussed creating a database of resources for OA that might be published to the members and the community. It was commented that there are so many different arenas of information to be considered. There appear to be currently a number of sources related to medical, caregiving, residential facilities, etc. Examples are Southern Caregiver Resource Center and the website caring.com. Several county resources were mentioned for investigation including Aging and Independent Services and the Older Adult Council. There appear to be fewer resources related to productive/entertaining activities for seniors. The project will be a big one that will require understanding where existing sources of information already are and determining the right software to use to organize the data. Also, the scope and parameters of the project needs to be worked out. Is the aim to just corral information for the reader or to offer any recommendations or reviews. Dr. Dellefield commented that perhaps the content might be limited to resources particularly needed by or useful to psychologists working with OA.

Dr. Cotter had suggested previously the possibility of doing a publication called Age in Action, published to both the membership and the community that is about OA but is more human interest in nature. She recalled the publication Members on the Move

edited by Dave DiCicco that included interviews, stories, poems, movie reviews, etc. on the general topic of SDPA members. She reported that she spoke briefly with Dr. DiCicco, an OA himself, at the SDPA holiday party the previous night about the possible project and he said he would be interested in hearing more about it. She plans to meet with him before the next meeting.

PRIORITIES AND VOLUNTEERS

Committee co-chairs continue to solicit articles to be published in the Office E-News. Dr. Halliday volunteered to work on the project of gathering resources for OA. Dr. Karst said she particularly enjoys creating computer spreadsheets or databases and would like to work on that aspect of the resources project.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned.

The next AIC Committee Meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 10, 2022 at 5:00 PM on Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Cotter, Ph.D.
AIC Co-Chair