



## Letters from the Co-Presidents



### Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As I sit down to write my final letter as Co-President, I am full of gratitude for this organization and the people who make up our community. The thoughtfulness, dedication, and humor so many of you bring to your volunteer efforts within PCFINE are greatly appreciated. In particular, I would like to thank my Co-President Wendy Caplan for her vision, hard work, and friendship throughout our tenure. I also want to thank Alice Rapkin for her deep knowledge of and attention to the needs of our organization. I am excited to welcome Magdalena Fosse, who will replace me as Co-President. She brings her own passion, intellect, and energy from which we will all benefit.

I joined PCFINE in 2009 as a part of enrolling in year 1 of our training program. I was excited to learn more about working with couples and inspired to be around so many people who knew so much. I was also intimidated by the friendships, connections, and history that people seemed to have with each other. At times I felt like an outsider.

I started volunteering for committees and looked for ways to get involved, meet people, and contribute. Over the years, PCFINE has become a rewarding professional home to me. I share this to say that PCFINE belongs to each and every one of

you, and to encourage you to create the experience you want for yourself within our organization. It is often uncomfortable and difficult to cultivate a feeling of belonging. I hope those of you looking to get more involved will also seek out such opportunities, and will know that the people who help to lead PCFINE will continue to examine ways we can make our community more inclusive, welcoming, and responsive.

**Dan Schacht, LICSW**  
[danschachtmsw@gmail.com](mailto:danschachtmsw@gmail.com)

Co-President, PCFINE

### Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am writing to you as we say goodbye to my Co-President, Dan Schacht, and hello to Magdalena Fosse. Dan has been a steady and inspirational co-president. I have benefitted greatly from his experience, perspective, and commitment. I look forward to the partnership with Magdalena as we transition into 2023/24.

Looking back to 2020, PCFINE is evolving from the organization it was then. The societal challenges that erupted at that time continue to influence changes in our programming and training program. When the NAACP convention took place in Boston this summer, former Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick said, "We are not in the Promised Land yet, but we are not where we were either." His words resonate with our reality.

On Juneteenth this year the Holmes Commission Report on Racial Equality in the American Psychoanalytic

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## Celebrating 20 Years of PCFINE's Couple Therapy Training

**Saturday, October 28, 2023**

9:00am–12:30pm

Reception 12:30-1pm

### An Affair to Remember: How the Psychodynamic Model Has(n't) Met the Moment

**Chair:**

Joseph Shay, PhD

**Presenters:**

Magdalena J. Fosse, PsyD,  
 David Goldfinger, PhD,  
 Sejal Patel, PsyD,  
 John Rosario, PsyD

In person at Regis College –  
 Continuing Education  
 Credits Available

Register at [www.pcfine.org](http://www.pcfine.org)

## PCFINE Newsletter

Co-Editors	Jennifer Stone, PhD Deborah Wolozin, PhD
What Now?	Randy Blume, LICSW
Member News	Dasha Tcherniakovskaia, LMHC
Meet a Member	Linda Kramer, LICSW
Cartoon Contest	David Goldfinger, PhD
Designer	K. White designer_solution@comcast.net

## PCFINE Board Officers

Co-Presidents	Dan Schacht, LICSW Wendy Caplan, LICSW
Co-President-Elect	Magdalena Fosse, PsyD
Secretary	Jenn Bortle, PhD
Treasurer	Dasha Tcherniakovskaia, LMHC

## PCFINE Mission Statement

The Psychodynamic Couple and Family Institute of New England (PCFINE) is a nonprofit organization offering post-graduate professional training, public education, and consultation to community agencies.

PCFINE was created and is sustained by mental health professionals who are committed to an integrated conceptual model that includes psychodynamic ways of understanding unconscious functioning in couples and families and systemic insights into the organization and structure of interpersonal conflict.

The Psychodynamic Couple and Family Institute of New England endeavors to:

- Train licensed independent clinicians in psychodynamic couple and family therapy,
- Sponsor public outreach and education in areas of significance to couples and families, and
- Offer professional consultation to community-based agencies.

## PCFINE Office

c/o Alice J. Rapkin  
PO Box 920781  
Needham, MA 02492  
781-433-0906  
781-433-0510 (fax)  
Email Alice Rapkin: [pcfine1934@gmail.com](mailto:pcfine1934@gmail.com)  
[www.pcfine.org](http://www.pcfine.org)

## Letters From the Co-Presidents

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Association was published. This summer I participated in an eight-week national reading group of the Report that went step by step through all the findings and recommendations. (<https://apsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Holmes-Commission-Final-Report-2023-Report-rv6-19-23.pdf?ver>)

The Commission Report sheds light on the issues of racism and exclusion in analytic institutes. Unsurprisingly, the problems identified in the Report mirror the ones that PCFINE has been confronting. One of the most important recommendations is that we apply our analytic understanding of the unconscious to the phenomena of racism and othering. Racism exists both in our unconscious and in our institutions. The sense of community that PCFINE can offer will provide a holding environment for working through these difficult conversations.

As we begin the 2023/24 year, we extend a warm welcome to our new trainees along with new and established members. The next generation of PCFINE offers an opportunity for change as we continue to build our vibrant community.

With warm regards,

**Wendy Caplan, LICSW**  
[wscaplan@aol.com](mailto:wscaplan@aol.com)

Co-President, PCFINE



## Launch of PCFINE's Circle of Security Parenting (COSP) Project

This spring, Susan Phillips and K.C. Turnbull conducted a five-session Zoom series with an interdisciplinary group of clinicians interested in learning about Circle of Security Parenting (COSP)—a reflective, experiential program designed to help parents develop the relational capacities to nurture secure bonds with their children. Participants included PCFINE members, faculty from MIP's Stechler Fellowship and William James College, clinicians from the Brookline Center, and a pediatrician. PCFINE's COSP Project grows out of PCFINE's original mission of outreach to and collaboration with the broader community.

Circle of Security Parenting was originally developed for caregivers of infants and children. It is rooted in attachment theory, object relations and self-psychological principles. Central to the model is an emphasis on increasing a caregiver's capacity for self-reflection, including the ways their own experience of being parented influences their current parenting. It is now being used to bring an attachment lens to caregivers and professionals in pediatric, classroom, community and public health contexts, with applications to parenting from infancy through adolescence.

Susan and K.C. believe this theoretically rich yet accessible curriculum effectively promotes secure foundations for children and teens and can help to repair derailments in parent-child relationships. They hope to offer more COSP groups in the future. If interested in learning more, contact [shphillips56@gmail.com](mailto:shphillips56@gmail.com) or [kcturnbull@yahoo.com](mailto:kcturnbull@yahoo.com).



## What Makes It An Affair?

**Jennifer Bortle, PhD**

The essential aspect of an affair is sex, right? No! Affairs are about so much more than sex. They're about emotional intimacy, attachment, security, money, time—so many things beyond a physical sex act are important aspects of an affair, and of what makes it so painful to the betrayed partner. Emotional affairs and cyber affairs illustrate that a serious relational rupture doesn't require sexual contact at all.

Affairs occurring in consensually non-monogamous (CNM), or polyamorous, couples can highlight themes relevant to all couples. Affairs are rifts in the fabric of a relationship, and relationship rifts occur even in relationships where sex with others does not necessarily constitute a betrayal. A friend once told me “the great thing about poly[amory] is that everything is negotiable, and the challenging thing about poly is that everything is negotiable.” As couple therapists, we know very well that every relationship is built on a unique set of agreements and expectations that may be more or less articulated.

Sam and Luke are a polyamorous married couple who began seeing a new partner, Lily. While both Sam and Luke have a relationship with Lily, recently Luke and Lily have been spending more time together and having more sex together. Sam described feeling frustrated recently when, asking Luke how he'd like to celebrate his birthday, Luke replied that Lily had already made plans for the two of them to go to dinner.

Sam wasn't upset about the sex Luke and Lily were having *per se*; romantic and sexual relationships with other partners had long been a part of their life together. The imbalance of sexual activity with Lily also wasn't a problem for Sam—he noted that she and Luke both had much higher sex drives than

he did. But the birthday plan felt to Sam like not just a snub, but a loss of something important about his relationship with Luke: “I don't want to have to schedule time with my live-in primary partner.”

Emily and Adam are an engaged couple who describe their relationship as “open.” In contrast to Sam and Luke, Emily and Adam are not out to their friends, family, or workplaces about being in an open relationship, and so Emily requested that, to protect their privacy, they agree not to hook up with anyone in their social or work worlds.

This agreement worked well for Emily, who preferred one-off encounters while traveling for business. Adam, however, found himself again and again drawn to socially proximal women. Recently, he admitted to an affair with a coworker who was also a mutual friend. Emily was furious.

***“The injury...was not from the sex...she felt betrayed by the breach of their agreement and by the lying...”***

The injury Emily described was not from the sex itself, which would have been acceptable with a different partner. Rather, she felt betrayed by the breach of their agreement and by the lying to cover up that breach. The fact that this partner was Adam's coworker added insult to injury, as Emily had been feeling deprioritized in favor of Adam's work.

Some aspects of these cases might feel familiar to therapists who work with monogamous couples—the image of the man having sex with a coworker while his partner waits, neglected at home, is cliché. Work with polyamorous and CNM people, however, encourages us to look past the sex itself to see different aspects of relational ruptures. As our own Magdalena Fosse writes,

“transgressions in polyamory can be emotional or sexual in nature, but are often a mixture of both” (2021, p.128). In exploring the relational ruptures in each of these couples, we can surface previously unarticulated and unmet needs or desires. Sam shared how looking forward to time with Luke made his challenging job more bearable, and how hard it was when he couldn't predict when or whether Luke would be available. Emily voiced her wish for Adam to hold her in mind more, both when he was deciding whether to stay late at work and when considering a sexual invitation that might ‘out’ her as CNM.

Part of our work as therapists is to help couples like these find the words for their wants, needs, and expectations. An agreement around sexual exclusivity is a poor shorthand for a broader sense of security, attachment, and validation. As these CNM couples illustrate, when we take monogamy out of the picture, we still see the import of betrayals that happen in non-sexual realms. Our job remains to help couples understand and articulate their needs and expectations and to navigate their inevitable mismatches or missteps.

Fosse, M. J. (2021). *The Many Faces of Polyamory: Longing and belonging in concurrent relationships*. Routledge.

## What Now?

The “What Now?” column is a regular feature in the PCFINE Connection. Clinicians in the PCFINE community respond to complex clinical questions about couple and family therapy. The cases presented are based on a variety of issues submitted by members and disguised or fictionalized to preserve the confidentiality of clients. If you have a clinical question you would like considered in this column, or if you would like to respond to a question, please contact Randy Blume at [randy@tashmoo.com](mailto:randy@tashmoo.com).

### Dear What Now?

*I've been seeing Ellen and Rob, (late forties, married twelve years, parents of one child,) for six months. They are a pleasure to work with. They listen and reflect calmly in our sessions, do their homework, and thank me for my time. I look forward to our meetings without fear of yelling, name-calling, or anyone punching a wall. Yet things don't seem to be improving.*

*Ellen found out about Rob's affair when she saw a text on his phone from a woman she didn't know. “Generally, I don't care what's on Rob's phone,” she said in our first session. “But Rob was on the treadmill and he asked me to see who kept texting. It was a woman I'd never heard of, wanting to schedule a playdate. When I asked Rob about it, he started getting vague, so I scrolled through his texts. I saw that he and this woman had been “playdating” for a year.”*

*When Ellen shared this story in the first session, Rob hung his head, sighed, and said, “I'm sorry I hurt you. I don't want to get divorced, and the playdates are over. What more do I need to do to prove that I made a mistake and that it won't happen again?”*

*Ellen said she wasn't sure there was anything Rob could do because their “trust bond” was broken. It made no sense that Rob would want to have sex with someone else. They had the*

*exact life they'd planned when they were dating. Ellen worked at a job she enjoyed, and Rob was a stay-at-home dad who was writing a screenplay. They had a clean, comfortable, and organized household. Their daughter was a delight, and they co-parented harmoniously. They had a weekly date, regular sex, and family dinner every night. They were both low-conflict people, and they never fought about “stupid things” the way their friends did.*

*Rob agreed that “on paper” he had everything he'd ever wanted—which was to be nothing like his family of origin. He was the youngest of three and felt that neither parent had ever “made time” for him. His parents were “always busy” with their work, their social life, and his sisters' many extracurriculars, leaving Rob alone and lonely within the family.*

*Ellen asked what was “not on paper,” then, because Rob was not alone anymore. He had a lovely family and she had been “beyond reproach” as a wife. Her own mother had been depressed and anxious, “essentially bedridden” for most of Ellen's childhood. Ellen remembers the house being a mess, her grandmother bringing over dinner nightly, and her parents constantly screeching at each other until they finally divorced. Ellen had made sure that her marriage to Rob was the opposite of her parents' marriage.*

**“...insight appears not to be enough for this couple.”**

*It has been well-established in our sessions that Rob wants to be “seen” by Ellen and that her “respectful” (her word) lack of caring about the contents of his phone (literally and metaphorically) left him feeling invisible. And it has been well-established that Ellen's fear of abandonment for not being a good enough wife somehow happened despite how hard she tried*

*to be perfect. But insight appears not to be enough for this couple. They say they are unable to move ahead because Ellen “needs to understand” Rob's infidelity before she can “trust” again, and Rob needs Ellen to “trust” that he will never “cheat” again. And I, their therapist, can't figure out how to get them to trust each other and trust the relationship. I almost think they need some sort of cathartic experience, but I don't know how to get them there and whether I could even tolerate what it might be like.*

*What now?*

**Sincerely,  
Drama Averse**

### Dear Drama Averse

How delightfully contradictory that one member of this no-drama couple is writing a screenplay! Drama is longed for, though perhaps it can be imagined only outside of the couple. I think the ways in which drama is desired, feared, and enacted are central to this couple's struggles. It's no wonder that you as their therapist are feeling torn about it!

I hope that in your frustration you don't underestimate the work you all have done; these months of finding ways to feel safe together in the therapy will be a necessary foundation for the work to come.

I do agree that Ellen—and Rob also—needs to understand what this affair was about, though I don't think understanding will lead instantly to the full trust they both are seeking. If the meaning of the affair has been a tough subject to tackle with them, Esther Perel has some useful “investigative questions for couples experiencing infidelity.” I'd wonder what parts of himself Rob feels were expressed in his affair but are unseen by Ellen, and how each may feel alone in the marriage. (Perhaps Rob has a sense of repeating his childhood experience of being left at home because

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**What Now?**

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everyone was “busy,” while Ellen is re-experiencing the abandonment of having a depressed and “bedridden” mother?).

Rob sure seems to be seeking drama in some ways. I’ll take his profession of writing screenplays to indicate that Rob uses his imagination to enliven his well-ordered home life. And asking Ellen to check his phone was a surefire, if unconscious, way to stir the pot! Using “playdates” as the term for his affair makes me wonder whether the drama he is seeking is especially a more playful interaction.

However, the couple also fearfully avoids drama. Ellen recounts parental “screeching” and chaos in her childhood, and she wishes to achieve “the opposite.” If Rob is looking to enliven himself and the marriage with some excitement, (sexual excitement? the excitement of being seen? of going off-script?), Ellen may feel pushed to risk the stability she has labored to put in place for herself.

As their therapist, you share their ambivalence, which seems to have been divided between them. You appreciate that sessions are calm and predictable, but also want to shake things up. You worry not only whether they could tolerate more intense affect, but whether you could as well. This is an opportunity to voice that dilemma and to talk with them about these fears, which are surely theirs as well as yours.

It’s telling that I feel the conflict too, and feel pressure to suggest a dramatic intervention to produce that “cathartic experience” you say is lacking. I found myself entertaining all kinds of ideas, each more dramatic than the last. (Maybe they could write a play together? What was that sculpting exercise a colleague recommended that I haven’t tried? How about those soft oversized boxing gloves I’ve heard some therapists use...?) Some therapists might prescribe directed interactions, but what’s notable is the need I felt to

**“It’s telling that I...feel pressure to suggest a dramatic intervention...”**

provide a jolt to the system—which of course makes me wonder how the couple feels this themselves. Ellen is trying so hard to be “good” yet might feel relief and even pleasure if she and Rob can be freer with each other without anyone screeching or needing to take to bed with depression.

I would make ambivalence about drama (theirs, yours, mine) a central, explicit focus of the treatment. Catch some hint of more intense affect or avoided subjects, explore their worries and wishes, and the affect itself. They each may be wondering whether their marriage has room for angry, messy, shameful, hopeless, desirous parts of themselves. I think both the trust and the excitement they are looking for can come about by feeling they can be more fully themselves with each other, and perhaps the marriage can be enlivened without more drama offstage.

**Debora Bolter, PhD**  
[dbolter@comcast.net](mailto:dbolter@comcast.net)

**Dear DA,**

Your lovely query feels like the map to a treasure hunt. The map invites us down one obvious path, while hinting that maybe that path might be a misdirection, and one that, when appreciated, points us towards a greater payoff.

The map organizes around an evocative macguffin; trust. How, you ask, do you help your stuck and deadened couple learn to “trust each other and trust the relationship?” You start us off in this direction, and right away you give us the next clue: your name is “conflict averse!” Need we know more?

What are you all agreeing to avoid? What, in the words of the Barrangers,

is the “bastion” that you have co-created with your couple? Your job must be to see and dissolve this bastion. Then, what is kept at arm’s length by them can be invited by you into the shared space of your relationship, can be absorbed and metabolized by you, and can be returned to the shared space in more digestible form; then, they can make a relationship with what they fear in themselves, and in each other. They can undo the relational contortions they have co-created in order to avoid what they fear.

Meh. This path feels bland to me. Actually, its blandness seems, in a fractal way, an enactment of the very problem you are describing.

What if we flip the map. Maybe the idea behind the above path, opening to what you fear, is correct, but maybe the treasure lies not in helping them to trust, but in the opposite direction?

I’m no fan of Esther Perel. It’s not because I have a problem with her plea for sexual openness, or the excitement that can be attached to what is conventionally illicit. It’s because I think she binaries the ubiquitous attachment/sex dialectic, and in doing so she does a disservice to what may be the more radical option: going towards the danger, vitality and risk that can be found in long term intimacy.

Some part of the chemistry of attraction grows from the possibility of getting closer, through the other, to the parts of ourselves that we fear, and that we have cut ourselves off from. We hope that we will be reunited with ourselves, and this will become more whole. But over time fear wins out, and we co-construct contorted relational patterns through which we enable each other to continue to banish these feared parts. These contortions are vitality’s Kryptonite. But Perel’s affair, like polyamory, is all too often a flight from confronting the vitality-killing bastions that bulwark

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## Introducing PCFINE Training Fellows

**Tanya Farrar Brooks, LMHC** works as a licensed mental health counselor in a private practice in Hopkinton, MA. Starting out in community mental health, she has nearly 10 years of experience in the field, engaging clients in family and individual therapy. She is looking forward to deepening her knowledge and experience in couples therapy within the PCFINE program. Tanya finds solace in nature and enjoys hiking, running, and swimming.

**Katherine Epstein, MD** trained in adult Psychiatry at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, and in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Boston Children's Hospital, where she developed a strong interest in working with families. She is an attending child and adolescent psychiatrist in the outpatient department at Boston Children's Hospital, and an Instructor at Harvard Medical School. She is in the process of starting a private practice. She is also a second-year candidate in the joint Child and Adult Psychoanalytic Training Program at the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute.

**Nina Foushee, LSW** is a couple- and family-focused therapist in Somerville. She currently works as a fellow at a couple therapy oriented practice in Boston. She previously worked as a psychodynamic therapy fellow at a practice in Chicago that accepted public insurance and made depth-oriented therapy available to people of varied income levels. Before entering graduate school at Boston College, she worked in nonprofit advocacy and writing-related endeavors. She is fascinated by the role of ethics, absurdity, and human dignity both within and outside of the therapy hour.

**Piero Goytizolo, LICSW** realized he would become a couple therapist within just a few minutes of his first class in Couples Therapy at Boston College. He was also part of the Latinx Leadership Initiative, in which half of his MSW classes were conducted in Spanish and focused on the Latinx community.

Piero has started seeing 9 couples since getting his LICSW this summer. He would like to be part of a community that shares his passion for work with couples and can provide support for improving his clinical skills.

**Sima Kaplan, PhD** is a licensed clinical psychologist with a private practice in Brookline. She trained in community mental health at Pennsylvania Hospital, psycho-oncology at Abramson Cancer Center, and long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy in the two-year Program for Psychotherapy fellowship at Cambridge Health Alliance. Prior to private practice, she worked in community health. Her areas of interest include coping with the psychological effects of trauma, cancer and other medical illness, and immigration stressors. Outside of the office, Sima enjoys reading novels and spending time outdoors.

**Audrey Kiely, LICSW** is a clinical social worker in Northern Vermont. They previously worked in community mental health in Worcester, MA, focusing on trauma, perinatal mental health, and queer and trans healthcare. Audrey enjoys taking on frustratingly intricate baking projects and spending time in the garden with their dog.

**Sara Kleinberg, PsyD** is a psychotherapist in private practice in Newton Centre. A graduate of MSPP (now William James College), she has over twenty years of clinical experience, and until 2021 was a staff psychologist on the Latino Mental Health Team at the Cambridge Health Alliance. She works with adults of all ages and diverse backgrounds, primarily in individual therapy, in Spanish and English. She uses a relational psychodynamic approach and integrates concepts and interventions from trauma-informed work, mindfulness, IFS and DBT. She has lived locally since she came from Colombia to go to college. Sara enjoys get-togethers with family and friends, walking, reading, and travelling.

**Claudette B. Pierre, PhD** is a clinical and research psychologist who has held academic positions at Harvard Medical School, Tufts Medical School and Boston University. Her research and clinical work focus on severe psychological abuse and recovery from mood disorders and psychological trauma. Dr. Pierre worked as a forensic evaluator for high conflict divorce cases and for asylum seekers. She is the current chair of the Disaster Resource Network for the Massachusetts Psychological Association and serves as a member of the Ethics Committee for MPA. She is past president of the Massachusetts Association of Guardians ad Litem. She maintains private practices in Newton, Cambridge and Los Angeles.

**Kate Powers, LCSW** recently graduated from Smith School of Social Work and is beginning her fellowship at Clinical Alliance Services in Cambridge MA. Kate's clinical experiences and social work training have centered around queer and gender-expansive individuals, survivors of sexual violence, and folks with emerging psychosis. Kate is particularly excited about working with couples who are navigating alternative relationship structures and varied forms of non-monogamy. Kate lives in Portland, Maine, where she enjoys swimming, playing ultimate frisbee, rock climbing, and surfing.

**Emily Schweitzer, LCSW** is excited to join the PCFINE community after completing a fellowship at the Danielsen Institute, a psychodynamically oriented clinic with a focus on the intersection of mental health and spirituality, culture, and religion. Emily is starting her private practice and has begun a fellowship with the Psychotherapy Institute of Back Bay (PIBB) to further her psychodynamic training. Keenly interested in trauma and somatic work, Emily seeks to integrate the felt sense and movement into therapy as an essential part of the healing process. (Somatic credentials: Licensed GYROTONIC® instructor, Franklin Method Level 2 Educator, TCTSY 20 hour training).

## Meet A Member

*We are delighted to have two of our members introduce themselves to the wider PCFINE community. If you would like to do the same, please contact Linda Kramer of the Membership Committee at [lindamkramer17@gmail.com](mailto:lindamkramer17@gmail.com).*



**Ben Herbstman, MD:** Like many of us, the seeds of my interest in couples and family work probably began early on when I became curious about the dynamics of my first group—my family of origin. Initially in my training and early career, I found myself increasingly drawn to understanding how groups worked: what contributed to their function and dysfunction, how I related to them, how I perceived that they related to me. Looking for answers (but usually finding more questions), I immersed myself in several groups. I became a regular member of my psychiatry residency Training group (a.k.a. T-group), ran interpersonal and men's groups at McLean, and immersed myself in weekend group conferences. As I ended my psychiatry training and delved into intensive individual work through psychoanalytic training at the Boston Psychoanalytic Society & Institute, I continued to explore smaller groups by working with couples and families as a part of my private practice in Cambridge. As an early career psychiatrist, I also had the privilege of working with wonderful supervisors such as Maureen Smith,

LICSW, Richard Schwartz, MD, and Joe Shay, PhD. I feel fortunate to have discovered PCFINE several years ago through its conferences and listserv and have found it to be both a wonderful resource and a warm, inclusive, thoughtful community. I look forward to hopefully getting to know many of you over the years to come.



**Barbara Kellman, JD, LCSW:** Around 2009, before pandemic was a word in use outside of public health circles, I was browsing in a public library and took out a book by Kohut, or maybe Kernberg. I hadn't seen these names since I finished my MSW in 1980, but I decided to see if I could read at least a little bit. My memory is that while carrying this book, I ran into Susan Phillips in the post office, and she asked why I had this book. She knew me as a lawyer and a parent since our children were in school together. One thing led to another, and Susan asked me to come to a PCFINE brunch to speak about divorce law and mediation. I had been practicing law since 1983, first in health care business and regulatory law and later in divorce. At my first PCFINE brunch I realized that I missed being part of a group of people who think compassionately about human motivation and how people can change. I decided to dust off my

old MSW. I joined the Psychotherapy Institute of Back Bay as a part-time associate and joined the PCFINE training fellowship. Several years later, I am now happily employed at Clinical Alliance Services in Cambridge where I am completing my hours to become an LICSW. I maintain a smaller divorce law and mediation practice and feel incredibly lucky to be continuing my training this fall at BPSI in the ATP. I enjoy travel, singing, my human family, and my cockapoo pups.

### **What Now?**

*(continued from page 5)*

against those feared parts, into the superficial excitement of ground hog day newness.

So back to the map. Yes, D.A., to the idea that the solution to the puzzle involves reckoning with your aversion to conflict, and in making a space for your couple to go towards their fears. But maybe “no” to the idea that the goal is to help them to trust. Maybe Trust in this puzzle is a misdirection. Having trust as a goal is a recipe for more deadness. In fact, trust can't be a goal. Becoming alive together

***“Maybe Trust in this puzzle is a misdirection.”***

requires going towards not yet known places in each other, and when we venture towards these places, we can't yet know who we will be, and we can't yet know who our others will be. Trust may come after the adventure, but it can't precede it.

So, Yes, D.A., maybe the first question for you is this: Is having this as a goal, as opposed to accepting it as an uncertain outcome, a window into the fear that you need to face in yourself?

**Mark O'Connell, PhD**

[Markoconnell99@gmail.com](mailto:Markoconnell99@gmail.com)



## Member News

■ **Laurence Chud**—was awarded the Swartz Teaching Award for 2022-23 by the Boston University Medical School Department of Psychiatry.

■ **Mark Dávila-Witkowski**—has found some equilibrium in our world of distance and in-person treatment options, and has become interested in embedding treatment delivery decisions in therapy goals. His paper “Do Bodies Matter? The Rush to Abandon In-Person Treatment” was published in March by the NASW Committee on Private Practice. He is developing a trauma seminar to teach at the Psychotherapy Institute of Back Bay, and he continues his Institutional Review Board work at the Fenway Institute.

■ **Joe DeAngelis**—is having a blast playing guitar and singing in a band through The Real School of Music in Burlington. See Joe far left: [https://youtu.be/\\_dG4VqD52B8](https://youtu.be/_dG4VqD52B8)

■ **Helen Hwang**—completed psychoanalytic training at the Massachusetts Institute for Psychoanalysis and will be joining the faculty this fall. She continues to specialize in Asian and Asian American mental health, presenting on this subject and bringing social justice into her practice and work. A new addition to her family is a Staffordshire Bull Terrier named “Clementine,” with whom she is in love.

■ **Aaron Kook**—has just completed the Advanced Training in Psychotherapy program at BPSI and is planning to enter analytic training in the fall. Aaron will be training to become an adult analyst and jointly as a child analyst. He just got his couch and can’t wait to use it!

■ **Marina Kovarsky**—is happy to report that this year she will be joining the faculty at BPSI, co-teaching Relational Theory with Joe Schwartz in the analytic training program, and a clinical seminar in the ATP. In the meantime, in no small part due to the incredible support of the PCFINE community, the Psychotherapy Institute of Back Bay ([backbayinstitute.org](http://backbayinstitute.org)) is thriving as they enter their sixth year in existence with 9 enrolled fellows and a robust new didactic component.

■ **Jody Leader**—retired in July, but she is calling it “rewirement” NOT “retirement.” She is excited for this new phase in her life, but also sad to say goodbye to folks she has worked with for many years. She is taking more modern and ballet dance classes (hopefully performing, too) and spending more time with family. Jody and her spouse have developed a Brookline neighborhood Indigenous history tour, drawing on the work of local historians and Indigenous writers. She is so grateful to PCFINE—she was in the first class of the training program! Jody thanks PCFINE for giving her a rich, exciting career with new ways of thinking and working, and many treasured friendships.

■ **Robin Ohringer**—spent ten days this summer traveling abroad to new places. With the company of her 31-year-old twin sons, she visited Stockholm (Sweden), Tallin (Estonia), and Helsinki (Finland). Robin says it is wonderful to keep exploring the world!

■ **Claire Beth Steinberger**—has been continuing her analytic interest in the inter-generational transmission of trauma, particularly the repetitive enactment of unresolved loss and absence (see Pauline Boss, 1999). Along this line, Claire offered a couple therapy presentation at Mount Sinai Faculty Conference (Spring 2023) on the Ambiguous Loss of the Black Father, where a white therapist (herself) enacts the role of the unsymbolized rejected/rejecting father. She is hoping to publish this clinical paper soon.

■ **Marsha Vannicelli’s**—family team scrambled to mobilize their 5th postcard campaign, this time to encourage a NO vote on the Aug 8 Ohio Ballot Issue. With the help of 80 wonderful East Coast volunteers (more than a quarter of whom came from PCFINE!), they sent out 65,000 cards from California and Massachusetts. Their collective efforts happily contributed to the defeat of this ballot issue (making it more likely that the November abortion access amendment will pass).







Mary Kiely and David Goldfinger



Wendy Caplan and Jenn Bortle



Rivka Perlmann and Sejal Patel

### Graduation June, 2023

Joe Shay's beautiful backyard was the setting for a joyful graduation celebration of our talented fellows. Faculty and Board members joined the trainees in schmooze, song, and ceremony.



Carolynn Maltas



Paul Efthim, Mary Keily and Justin Newmark



Dan Schacht



Sarah Kelly, Sherry Dickey, Stacey Moyer and Brent Reynolds

## Committees and Contacts

PCFINE committees are always looking for your ideas and your participation. Please contact the chairs to share your thoughts. They will be glad to hear from you.

**Brunch Committee** Chair:

Penelope Moore  
[Penelope.moore@gmail.com](mailto:Penelope.moore@gmail.com)

**Inclusion & Belonging** Chair:

Wendy Caplan, [wscaplan@aol.com](mailto:wscaplan@aol.com)

**Membership Committee** Chair:

Rachel Segall, [raesegall@gmail.com](mailto:raesegall@gmail.com)

**Newsletter** Co-Editors:

Jennifer Stone and Debbie Wolozin  
[Jenniferastone1@gmail.com](mailto:Jenniferastone1@gmail.com)  
[deborah.wolozin@gmail.com](mailto:deborah.wolozin@gmail.com)

**Ongoing Learning (ONGOL)**

Co-Chairs: Carolyn Maltas and Rivka Perlmann  
[carolynmaltas@gmail.com](mailto:carolynmaltas@gmail.com)  
[rivkayp7@gmail.com](mailto:rivkayp7@gmail.com)

**Program Committee** Co-Chairs:

Susan Phillips and K.C. Turnbull  
[Shphillips56@gmail.com](mailto:Shphillips56@gmail.com)  
[kcturnbull@yahoo.com](mailto:kcturnbull@yahoo.com)

**Technology Committee** Chair:

Joe DeAngelis  
[Joe.deangelis.licsw@icloud.com](mailto:Joe.deangelis.licsw@icloud.com)



## Cartoon Caption Contest



Cartoon by David Goldfinger

Send your captions to Alice Rapkin at [pcfine1934@gmail.com](mailto:pcfine1934@gmail.com). Two weeks after this Newsletter’s publication, entries received will be posted on the PCFINE listserv for members to enjoy. (Entries may be submitted after that but will not be posted.) The winning entries will be announced in the Newsletter’s next issue. Judging by David Goldfinger will be based on the creativity, humor, and originality of the captions. Enjoy!



Cartoon by David Goldfinger

## Spring 2023 Cartoon Caption Winners

**Winner:**

*I'd like to familiarize you with a dynamic sometimes referred to as "splitting."*

**Mary McDonald**

**1st Runner up:**

*"Marriage being something between tragedy and farce" was an expression, not a suggestion!*

**Alistair McKnight**

**2nd Runner up:**

*So, tell me about your initial attraction to one another...*

**Mary McDonald**