



**Ninth Biennial Conference of the  
North American Personal  
Construct Network [NAPCN]**  
July 12-16, 2000 (including pre-  
conference workshops)

*Hosted by NAPCN and the Department of  
Psychology on the campus of the  
State University of New York at New Paltz*



## The Program

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***Constructivist Psychology at the Millennium: Future Directions in Research and Practice***



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Papers and Workshops  
**Alphabetical by Presenter**

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**Jack Adams-Webber**, *Brock University*  
**Sociality and Cognitive Complexity Among Couples**  
*Session #4; Thursday, July 13, 9:00-9:30 am; Paper*

Crockett's Role Category Questionnaire was completed by 40 couples (40 men, 40 women). A significant correlation was found between partners in terms of their overall cognitive complexity scores ( $r = 0.58, p < 0.001$ ). This finding was interpreted in terms of the individuality and sociality corollaries of personal construct theory.

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**Marla J. Arvay**, *University of British Columbia*  
**Putting the Heart Back Into Human Science Research**  
*Session #23; Friday, July 14, 10:55-11:25 am; Paper*

Writing embodied research is about putting our writing practices in the human sciences into question. How do we write research texts that reveal the emotionality, positionality, reflexivity and dialogical nature of the research process? How do we re-embodiment our research texts and move toward interactional forms of representation? And why do we want to? Why is it important to the enterprise of human science research?

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**Monica Bigler and Greg J. Neimeyer**, *University of Florida*  
**Counseling Methods with Bilingual Clients: Metaphorical Intervention and Client's Preference for Rationalist versus Constructivist Psychotherapy**  
*Session #34; Saturday, July 15, 9:00-9:30 am; Paper*

The purpose of this study is to investigate students' preference for rationalist versus constructivist psychotherapy and the role of language in counseling with bilingual Hispanic students. Constructivist orientations are expected to be related to more metaphorical interventions, particularly in contexts where English is a second language.

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**Sara K. Bridges**, *Humboldt State University*

**Constructions of Desire: Applications of Holonic Sex Therapy**

*Session #17; Friday, July 14, 9:00-10:05 am; Paper*

This presentation offers a constructivist approach to sexual desire difficulties in women by encouraging in-depth exploration of sexual meanings and their impact on sexual desire. The concepts of holonic constructivist sex therapy are presented as a scheme for mapping problematic sexual desire in a way that permits integration with other constructivist approaches to therapy.

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**Kevin Castro-Convers** and **April E. Metzler**, *Lehigh University*

**Positive Attitudes toward Gay Men: A Qualitative Investigation of Heterosexuals**

*Session #14; Thursday, July 13, 5:00-5:30 pm; Paper*

This paper presents a qualitative investigation to understand and describe the transformational nature of interpersonal experiences that have contributed to the formation of positive attitudes toward gay men, among heterosexual individuals. Exploring this question has social implications by helping to understand how people are continuously constructing and changing their realities to transcend societal norms and overcome prejudices.

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**Malcolm C. Cross**, *City University*

**The Appropriation and Reification of Deviance: PCP and Affirmative Therapy**

*Session #20; Friday, July 14, 10:10-10:40 am; Paper*

This paper examines the implications of affirmative appropriations of "deviant" sexualities from a Personal Construct Perspective. It is argued that the construction of self can only be impoverished when derived from an externally manufactured role, however enlightened or liberal that role may appear.

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**Jay S. Efran**, *Temple University*

**A Context-Centered Therapist's Toolkit**

*Session #18; Friday, July 14, 9:00-10:40 am; Workshop*

Practitioners frequently complain that constructivists and contextualists are long on theory but short on practical guidelines. In this workshop, I discuss concrete techniques and conceptual tools that have served me well in the consulting room, including constructs that I have found useful to teach directly to clients.

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**Franz R. Epting**, *University of Florida*

**PhiloCafe**

*Session #16; Thursday, July 13, 7:00-9:30 pm; PhiloCafe*

Continuing the tradition of recent constructivism conferences, the presenter will lead a PhiloCafe related to constructivism within a casual environment. The exact topic will be selected by those attending.

**This session held at "The Gilded Otter,"  
a wonderful local restaurant and micro-brewery  
that is an easy five minute walk from the SUNY New Paltz campus.  
Chicken wings, pizza, and nachos will be provided!**

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**Christopher R. Erbes and Stephanie Lewis Harter**, *Texas Tech University*

**Constructions of Abuse: Understanding the Effects of Childhood Sexual Abuse**

*Session #13; Thursday, July 13, 4:25-5:30 pm; Paper*

Constructivism has provided a useful framework for conceptualizing the long-term effects of childhood sexual abuse, the family context in which it can occur, and subsequent therapeutic processes. This paper will review theoretical and empirical contributions to understanding abuse survivors' constructions of themselves and their world.

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**Joseph Eron and Thomas Lund**, *Catskill Family Institute*

**Narrative Solutions: Toward Understanding the Art of Helpful Conversation**

*Session #24; Friday, July 14, 10:55 am-12:00 pm; Workshop*

This workshop introduces the narrative solutions approach developed by the presenters in their work at the Catskill Family Institute (CFI). This approach applies constructivist principles to the practical art of being helpful to people, focusing on how to bring out their best through planful conversation and how to mobilize creative solutions. The presenters will use clinical examples to demonstrate their approach.

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**J. Edward Hazelton**, *Meharry Medical College*

**Constructs and the Dynamics of Speech and Gesture in Communication**

*Session #37; Saturday, July 15, 9:35-10:40 am; Paper*

Constructivism has been assumed to be dependent on verbal language. Recent research by Iverson and Thelin has shown that the relationship between gesture and verbal language are closely coordinated in the brain. Practical work will be experienced by members to clarify the significance between the words and gesture in communication.

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**Marie Hoskins**, *University of Victoria*

**Using Constructivist Theory as a Conceptual Bridge for Expanding Human Science Research**

*Session #25; Friday, July 14, 11:30 am-12:00 pm; Paper*

Constructivist thinking about the nature of truth and the nature of science has real effects on how research is conducted and valued. This presentation will focus on questions such as: "What are the links between constructivist thinking and new sciences?", "How can we promote new paradigms of human science research?", "What is the relationship between knowing and research?" and, ultimately, "What is science?"

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**Jack S. Kahn**, *Curry College*, and **Scott T. Meier**, *SUNY Buffalo*

**Constructivist Assessment and the Self-Report Scale: A Contradiction in Terms?**

*Session #32; Friday, July 14, 3:30-4:00 pm; Paper*

This paper addresses the application of constructivist philosophy to the use of self-report scale methodology. This study examined whether altering the linguistic presentation of items could significantly change the self-report of participants. The results have ramifications for the use of self-report scales as a tool for expressing the human experience.

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**Darla J. MacLean** and **Jack Adams-Webber**, *Brock University*

**Beating the Odds: Do All-Girls' Courses Provide an Inoculation Against Failure to Continue in Mathematics and Science?**

*Session #31; Friday, July 14, 3:30-4:00 pm; Paper*

We evaluated a special program designed to encourage girls' participation in advanced mathematics and science courses. Women instructors taught all-girl mathematics and science classes during grades 9 and 10. Girls in this program subsequently completed significantly more advanced science and mathematics courses than did coeducational male and female controls.

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**James C. Mancuso**, *University at Albany–State University of New York*

**Claiming Giambattista Vico as a Narrativist/Constructivist**

*Session #12; Thursday, July 13, 4:25-4:55 pm; Paper*

Giambattista Vico “dared to challenge received views of a singular, stable, external reality known either by the senses or by reason” (Mahoney, 1988, p 16). Vico also proposed that through social interactions, persons acquire categories (constructions) that their reference groups had developed to tell a “good story” about putative “realities.”

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**Jason A McCray**, *University of North Dakota*

**A Constructivist Model of Math Anxiety**

*Session #15; Thursday, July 13, 5:00-5:30 pm; Paper*

Math anxiety has been the focus of a variety of research in the last 30 years, but there have been few comprehensive models to explain its phenomenology. By combining the notions of structural arrest, Leitner (1997), and Kellyian (1955) anxiety we can see the beginnings of a comprehensive constructivist model for conceptualizing math anxiety.

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**April E. Metzler, Troy H. Seidl and Kimyata Gallman**, *Lehigh University*

**The Effects of Self-Concept Differentiation and Self-Concept Clarity on Psychological Adjustment for African-American Women**

*Session #21; Friday, July 14, 9:35-10:40 am; Paper*

This paper explores how self-concept differentiation (SCD) and self-concept clarity (SCC) are relevant constructs for the African-American female population. The researcher intends to demonstrate differentiation as an adaptive feature amidst many necessary roles for women, rather than a predictor or antecedent of psychological maladjustment as has been suggested in past research.

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**Robert H. Mole**, *University of Calgary*

**User Impressions of the Repertory Grid as a Decision Aid**

*Session #30; Friday, July 14, 2:55-3:25 pm; Paper*

Case studies revealed user impressions of the repertory grid as a decision-making and problem solving aid. Results indicated a beneficial experience with the grid on a number of variables. Important practical issues are discussed in terms of the grid's utility for decisions and problems.

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**Robert A. Neimeyer**, *University of Memphis*

**New Directions in Constructivist Psychotherapy**

*Session #1; Wednesday, July 12, 8:30-11:45 am; Pre-conference workshop*

This workshop will acquaint participants with the essential intervention strategies of Depth-Oriented Brief Therapy (DOBT) and Narrative Therapy approaches, and foster some familiarity with them through a blend of videotaped demonstrations, didactic presentation, and participant exercises.

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**Nancy Pike and Mark Schlutsmeier**, *Miami University*

**Ownership and Research: The Appropriation of Psychological Data**

*Session #19; Friday, July 14, 9:00-9:30 am; Paper*

This paper draws attention to unscrutinized assumptions regarding the researcher's role as data owner. We discuss the origin of these assumptions, as well as how they are implicit in current research ethics policies. We then discuss the negative consequences of these assumptions and conclude by presenting a constructivist approach to rethinking the researcher's relationship to participants and the data they provide.

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**Carol Powell and April E. Metzler**, *Lehigh University*

**What Influences Body Satisfaction for African American Women?**

*Session #28; Friday, July 14, 2:20-3:25 pm; Paper*

Research has shown that African American women experience their bodies in a healthier fashion than their European American counterparts, and that these differences may be due to cultural differences. Results suggested that environment, rather than acculturation, was found to have a significant relationship with level of body satisfaction for the sample.

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**Jonathan D. Raskin**, *SUNY New Paltz*

**Constructivist Approaches to the Rorschach**

*Session #35; Saturday, July 15, 9:00-10:05 am; Paper*

A constructivist perspective on the Rorschach is outlined. Ways the Rorschach can be adapted for use as part of pyramid and laddering procedures, the self-confrontation method, narrative solutions work, and social constructionist therapy are discussed.

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**Sandra Rigazio-DiGilio**, *University of Connecticut*

**Systemic Cognitive-Developmental Supervision: Accessing and Extending Meaning and Options within the Supervisory Triad**

*Session #2; Wednesday, July 12, 1:45-5:00 pm; Pre-conference workshop*

Participants will be introduced to the basic tenets of Systemic Cognitive-Developmental Supervision (SCDS), and to two core techniques that can be used to augment their current supervision approach.

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**Jennifer Rigsby, Stephanie Lewis Harter, and Kristine T. Wagner**, *Texas Tech University*

**Trauma Narratives as Personal Constructions**

*Session #38; Saturday, July 15, 10:10-10:40 am; Paper*

This paper will review narratives of traumatic events from a Personal Construct framework. It will compare clinical content analyses of trauma narratives to previously used computerized word count programs, for more sensitive and theoretically relevant assessment of personal responses to traumatic events and beneficial aspects of written trauma disclosure.

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**Ketrin Saud and James J. Hennessy**, *Fordham University–Lincoln Center*

**Personal Construals of Nonviolence and Developmental Stages of Belief Systems: A RepGrid Analysis**

*Session #11; Thursday, July 13, 3:50-4:20 pm; Paper*

The study examined whether personal construals of nonviolence vary systematically according to "conceptual systems." A total of 100 adults from diverse fields of study were rated for stage of conceptual functioning using Harvey's "This I Believe" test. Data from a RepGrid designed to represent crucial dimensions of nonviolence were analyzed through FOCUS.

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**Finn Tschudi**, *University of Oslo*

**Conflict Transformation: Facilitating Movement Towards Intimacy (Kellian Role Relations) Between Adversaries**

*Session #22; Friday, July 14, 10:55 am-12:00 pm; Paper*

In the "restorative justice" movement conflicts are seen as property belonging to the adversaries; not to be arrogated by lawyers or health professionals (labeling offensive behaviour "illness" or "disorder"). One such approach, from Australia, will be described in detail, emphasizing the remarkable transformations in group affects that may take place.

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**Beverly Walker**, *University of Wollongong*

**Nonvalidation vs. (In)validation: Implications for Theory and Practice**

*Session #27; Friday, July 14, 2:20-2:50 pm; Paper*

This paper aims to extend Kelly's views on the validation cycle (involving validation and invalidation) and the metaphor of the scientist by proposing that nonvalidation strategies are also frequently adopted. The implications of nonvalidation for theory and practice are explored.

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**William George (Bill) Warren**, *University of Newcastle*

**The Notion of "Applied Psychology" from a Personal Construct Psychology Perspective**

*Session #3; Thursday, July 13, 9:00-10:05 am; Paper*

Kelly took a somewhat radical view of "applied psychology," arguing that our understanding of human behaving should start from the manner in which human beings actually engage with the world. This paper explores the personal construct psychology view of applied psychology, and the implications of it for fields such as health and education.

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Neill Watson, *College of William & Mary*

**Using Personal Constructs to Test Theories of Self-Concept**

*Session #5; Thursday, July 13, 9:35-10:05 am; Paper*

Research has shown that measures of self-concept using personal constructs are more strongly related to a criterion than are measures using conventional constructs. Also, studies have used personal constructs to test theories of self-consistency, self-enhancement, and self-discrepancy, demonstrating the reliability and validity of this method.

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Plenaries and Symposia  
**Alphabetical by Title**

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**Constructivism in the New Millennium: Where Do We Go From Here?**

*Session #39; Saturday, July 15, 11:00 am-12:30 pm; Plenary*

Chair: **Franz Epting**, *University of Florida*

**Vivien Burr** and **Trevor Butt**, *University of Huddersfield*

**Making a Difference**

**John Shotter**, *University of New Hampshire*

**At the Boundaries of Being: Refiguring Intellectual Inquiry**

**Robert A. Neimeyer**, *University of Memphis*

**Embracing Multiphrenia: Toward a Post-Kellian Constructivism**

What does the future hold for constructivist approaches to psychology? The participants of this session grapple with this issue and offer some ideas about the directions in which they would like to see constructivist, constructionist, and narrative psychologies move in the new millennium.

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## **Disorder as the Constructivists Construe It**

*Session #6; Thursday, July 13, 10:25-11:55 am; Plenary*

Chair: **Jonathan D. Raskin**, *SUNY New Paltz*

**Larry Leitner**, *Miami University*, and **April J. Faidley**, *Flagstone Psychology, LLP*  
**Disorder, Diagnoses, and the Struggles of Humanness**

**Sheila McNamee**, *University of New Hampshire*

**The Social Construction of Disorder: From Pathology to Potential**

**Vivien Burr** and **Trevor Butt**, *University of Huddersfield*

**Psychological Disorders: Discovered or Invented?**

Presenters will compare constructivist and constructionist critiques and alternatives to the DSM conception of mental disorder. The question posed: Do constructivists and constructionists have anything in common in their critiques of DSM diagnosis and their respective approaches to problems-in-living?

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## **Embodiment and Sexuality**

*Session #29; Friday, July 14, 2:20-4:00 pm; Symposium*

Chair: **Trevor Butt**, *University of Huddersfield*

**Vivien Burr**, *University of Huddersfield*

**The Extra-discursive in Social Constructionism**

**Trevor Butt**, *University of Huddersfield*

**The Construction of the Erotic**

**Kenneth W. Sewell**, *University of North Texas*

**The Experience Cycle and the Sexual Response Cycle: Conceptualization and Application to Sexual Dysfunction**

**David M. Mills, *Seattle, WA***  
**A Kinesthetic of the Unknown**

In this symposium, we bring a psychological perspective to bear on the body-subject. We attempt to understand the intentionality and practical knowledge of this embodied person in broadly constructivist terms.

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**Experiential Personal Construct Therapy: Four Case Studies**

*Session #36; Saturday, July 15, 9:00-10:40 am; Symposium*

Chair: **Larry Leitner, *Miami University***

**Linda Endres, *Miami University***

**Experiential Personal Construct Psychotherapy with an Adolescent**

**Derek C. Oliver, *Miami University***

**Experiential Personal Construct Psychotherapy with a Family**

**Amberly Reid Panepinto, *Miami University***

**Experiential Personal Construct Psychotherapy with a College Student**

**Sally Phillips, *Miami University***

**Experiential Personal Construct Psychotherapy with a Graduate Student**

EPCP addresses the process by which individuals engage in and assign meaning to interpersonal relationships; such meaning-making can be construed along three axes (Leitner, Faidley, & Celantana, 2000). We will present four case studies conceptualized upon these axes. The therapies of two adolescents, an adult, and a family will be discussed.

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**Meaning and Abnormality: Constructivist Alternatives**

*Session #9; Thursday, July 13, 3:15-4:55 pm; Symposium*

Chair: **Adam M. Lewandowski**, *The Center for Youth*

**Caroline M. Stanley**, *SUNY New Paltz*

**Abnormality: Does It Define Us or Do We Define It?**

**Susanne Lake**, *SUNY New Paltz*

**Meaning in Auditory Hallucinations**

Discussant: **Jonathan D. Raskin**, *SUNY New Paltz*

Conceptual and practical issues concerning constructivist perspectives on abnormality will be discussed. After addressing whether definitions of abnormality are constructed or discovered, compulsive eating and auditory hallucinations will be analyzed from a meaning-based orientation.

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**Narrating Lives: Toward a Dramatistic Approach to Psychological Activity**

*Session #7; Thursday, July 13, 1:30-3:00 pm; Symposium*

Chair: **Michael F. Mascolo**, *Merrimack College*

**Michael F. Mascolo, Janet Kimball, and Louise Boucher**, *Merrimack College*

**Selves in Transition: Narrating the Dramas of Everyday Life**

**Robin Pearce**, *Boston University*

***Rushmore: A Storied Place***

**David Vogel**, *New Hampshire Hospital* and **Leigh McCollough**, *Harvard Medical School*

**Gee Whiz! Everybody's a Critic**

Discussant: **TBA**

Why does literature seem to reveal more about the human condition than much academic psychology? Where psychologists often strive for objective and reductive descriptions of discrete processes, literature offers interpretive accounts of whole persons interacting over time. This symposium explores ways to develop narrative analyses human action over time without compromising traditional concerns for precision.

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### Lifetime Achievement Award

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**Franz Epting**, *University of Florida*

*Session #40; Saturday, July 15, during Gala Banquet; Lifetime Achievement Award*

Franz Epting will be honored for his lifetime achievements in personal construct psychology. Several of his colleagues and former students will speak. Franz also will be presented an official award from NAPCN. Greg Neimeyer will "MC" the festivities.

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