

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING**

### **Editorial**

Some years ago I noticed an interesting phenomenon among my individual and group clients. Some people would come into treatment with certain presenting problems and issues; they would participate in the therapy process; they would terminate treatment looking and sounding changed; and they would go out into the “real world” and continue to grow. Others would come in with the same issues, participate in therapy in similar ways, and leave therapy looking and sounding equally changed. Yet these people were likely to return with the same issues later and did not maintain their changes within the context of their daily lives.

I began to believe that I was discounting the impact of the world in which my clients spent most of their time. I began to recognize that the kind of support clients did or did not illicit among the members of their network affected the client’s ability to sustain changes. In order to work in this new frame of reference, I needed to add assessment of the client’s network and strategies for change to my treatment model.

About the same time I developed another concern about therapy as I had been taught it. It seemed that techniques abounded for helping people to separate from others in the interest of autonomy. What I lacked was a large set of interventions to help people move beyond that stage into interdependence. At times, it seems that therapy may increase clients’ experience of isolation and alienation if the thrust of treatment does not include a bridge to the clients’ life beyond therapy. I now believe that as social animals, we have a basic need to give to each other as well as to get from each other and that the operation of such reciprocity has too long been ignored in therapeutic models.

It is with some excitement that I co-edit the sociometry section of this journal. I appreciate the opportunity to share some perspectives and approaches with you, and I hope that you join me in looking for ways in which our therapeutic work can fit more appropriately into clients’ daily experience. With all that we understand about human behavior, it would make sense that we offer guidance as our culture seeks solutions to its fragmentation.

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