



Dear Brenda,

Happening today, May 25, 7-8:30 p.m., is the [Adjustment Matters: Community Forum Series: Language Development is Child's Play](#). Beth Salz, M.S. CCC-SLP, the Associate Clinical Services Manager with [UCLL](#) will be presenting.

Also, save the date for IHA's lecture on [Creative Longevity and Positive Aging](#), June 8, 7-8:30 p.m., with [Psychological Clinic](#) Director Todd K. Favorite, Ph.D.

Recently at IHA, we successfully completed our 2011 invited lecture series, "Cross-Cutting Clinical Problems." Paul Frick, Ph.D., George Bonanno, Ph.D., and Peggy McCardle, Ph.D., spoke on campus, encouraged discussion among participants, and met with our IHA trainees and faculty.

As always, we welcome any questions, comments, or concerns regarding both our programming and communications. To contact IHA, call (734) 615-7853 or visit us online at [www.umiha.org](http://www.umiha.org) for more information.

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## Cynthia Ewell Foster named new Director of the University Center for the Child and the Family (UCCF)

### UCCF proudly welcomes Dr. Foster to the team

Institute for Human Adjustment Director Cheryl A. King, Ph.D., has announced that **Cynthia Ewell Foster**, Ph.D., will become the new Director of the University Center for the Child and the Family (UCCF) at the University of Michigan, effective July 18, 2011.

UCCF searched for an individual who would work collaboratively with others to lead interdisciplinary approaches to clinical practice and training, to ensure the high quality of UCCF services, and to nurture a scholarly clinical environment that facilitates faculty collaboration and research.

Dr. Ewell Foster is currently a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Michigan. She completed her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Loyola University Chicago, her Clinical Psychology Internship at Children's Hospitals and Clinics, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Clinical Psychology at the University of Michigan Medical School. Since joining the faculty of the University of Michigan five years ago, Dr. Ewell Foster has established herself as a thoughtful and compassionate clinician with expertise in psychological/educational assessment and a broad range of evidence-based treatments. She has also established herself as an outstanding clinical educator and a researcher.

Please join us in welcoming Cindy Ewell Foster!

## New Employee Spotlight: Serene Koh

### UCLL welcomes UM grad Koh to its research staff

Last month, UCLL welcomed recent University of Michigan graduate Serene Koh to its research staff.



Serene's roots are in Singapore, where she lived until coming to U of M for her Master's degree in 2003. Serene finished her Ph.D. in December 2010, graduating from the School of Education with a focus in Foundations in Research.

For her dissertation, Serene studied child development, comparing 4th and 5th grade children from the United States and Singapore. Her key interest was finding how social studies formed the children's ideas of citizenship and national identity. She found that American children had more abstracted ideas of national identity, using words such as "freedom" and "liberty" as descriptors, while children from Singapore had more pragmatic views, citing things like housing and public safety.

It was for this dissertation that Serene was awarded the prestigious Stanley E. & Ruth B. Diamond Outstanding Dissertation Award.

"[The children's] ideas of government, democracy, monarchy, etc. were very large, and much deeper and more advanced than many people would expect from 10-year-olds. Hearing what they had to say about the world was very rewarding, and it sort of indirectly pertains to my work at UCLL."

After finishing at U of M, Serene taught Master's students at U of M and EMU, and then segued into her research for UCLL. Though she hasn't been here long, she already feels a part of an outstanding and truly unique organization.

"[UCLL is unique because] it's both a clinic and a research center; research is not divorced from practice here, and I love that symbiotic relationship. I've never worked in an environment like this before, where everyone works together; that's probably my favorite part about being here. Also, everybody is so nice!"

What's next for Serene? She hopes to publish as much of her research as possible.

"I want to carve out an academic identity for myself and find a niche in this field; I want people to think of me when a specific topic comes up, and the work I am doing at UCLL can help me to do that."

## IHA supports successful conference of the National Education Association for Borderline Personality Disorder

### Conference provides opportunity for open discussion, new perspectives

On April 14 and 15, the 7th Annual Conference of the National Education Association for Borderline Personality Disorder was held at Yale-Haven Hospital. Thanks to the support of IHA, the conference was attended by Dr. Jeff Urist, one of the Clinic's senior supervisors and teachers, who has a long-standing interest in the treatment of Personality Disorder. The focus of the conference, "Common and Distinguishing

Aspects of DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy) and MBT (Mentalizing Based Therapy) for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder" was of particular interest for a number of reasons.

The diagnosis of BPD has undergone a dramatic change in recent years. Once considered a life-long "condition" of unstable relationships, unregulated emotion, and a fragmented sense of self, BPD has in recent years been shown in multiple studies to respond to treatment in convincing and enduring ways. The two treatment approaches that have been most carefully studied, DBT and MBT, come from very different theoretical orientations, and on paper represent very different technical approaches, yet both have been shown to be clinically life-changing.

The conference, then, was an opportunity not only to review the most up-to-date findings in this fascinating and challenging area, but to integrate these findings, using clinical data based on these two very different conceptual approaches, one very behavioral at its roots, and the other based in psychoanalytic attachment theory. Among the highlights of the conference were the role-played therapy sessions, where world-renowned practitioners of their respective approaches would take turns treating the same "clients," and then discuss the "sessions." Equally powerful were presentations by individuals, as well as family members of individuals struggling with BPD giving their perspective on the state of the field. In all, the conference was an enriching experience for participants, who were able to share their integrated perspectives.

## Specialized Services: Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

### New service in diagnosing and treating ASD now offered by UCCF

The University Center for the Child and the Family (UCCF) at the University of Michigan's Institute for Human Adjustment (IHA) is proud to offer a new service specializing in diagnosing and treating Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

UCCF's new service specializing in Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is for individuals 1 year of age and older began May 1, 2011.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) include a range of developmental disorders with autism at the core. Individuals with ASD experience difficulties in communication and social interaction along with restricted and repetitive behaviors and interests. Symptoms typically develop before the age of three and may range from mild to severe, depending on the individual. Symptoms may challenge an individual's ability to function in multiple settings and pose unique demands to caregivers and families.

Dr. Fiona Miller, a licensed Clinical Psychologist at UCCF will administer and supervise ASD service provision. Diagnostic assessments involve parent interviews and direct child observation using standardized "best practice" measures for ASD diagnosis. Treatment involves a feedback meeting regarding test results as well as intervention recommendations. UCCF will also be offer individual therapy, social skills development, school consult, and parent support services.

Dr. Miller has held clinical and clinical training appointments in the University of Michigan Autism and Communication Center (UMACC), the Child and Infant Psychiatry programs at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and the Hospital for Sick Children (HSC) of the University of Toronto. She is also an Autism Phenotyping Consultant on the Simons Structural Variation in Individuals Project (Simons VIP), and previously on the Simons Simplex Collection, which are multi-site studies examining genetic and behavioral factors characterizing ASD. In addition, Dr. Miller provides training to healthcare professionals throughout North America in the assessment and diagnosis of ASD using the ADI-R and ADOS, the NIH-recognized "gold standards" in autism diagnosis, developed by Dr. Catherine Lord and her colleagues.

Specialized Services in Autism Spectrum Disorders is available at UCCF by appointment only. Our services aim

to diagnose and treat ASD in hopes of intervening early on and facilitating optimal development. For more information, please visit [www.umiha.org](http://www.umiha.org). UCCF is a BCN provider and the self-pay rate for ASD testing is \$870.00.

## Enhancing resilience for graduate students preparing for fieldwork

**By Todd K. Favorite, UM Psychological Clinic**

Over the past several years, senior staff and trainees at the Psychological Clinic have become concerned about the surge of students returning from foreign fieldwork seeking mental health services. A core group of clinicians at the Clinic began to study the particular difficulties that these graduate students faced with reintegrating into university life, and the struggles they expressed with completing their studies. Although there is a general recognition that graduate school is a stressful endeavor under the best of conditions, students returning from foreign fieldwork, who had experienced stressful and often traumatic events, appear to be at risk for developing anxiety and mood related problems.

There is little research examining the influence of stressful and traumatic fieldwork experiences on the psychosocial functioning of graduate students who are completing their academic work abroad. The research related to specific groups (i.e., students completing fieldwork) who are placed in high risk areas is limited, though trauma is frequently reported. Much of the existing literature is qualitative in nature and suggests that students are 1) ill prepared for the stressors they will be exposed to and 2) may experience psychiatric symptoms as a result of the traumatic exposure (Pollard, 2009).

The Clinic's research group spent time with Dr. Bonanno, a pioneer in the field of trauma, loss, and resilience, from Colombia University. His recent lecture on resilience, sponsored by the IHA Annual Lecture Series, pointed to the complexity of individual trajectories of post-traumatic symptom expression. He also presented evidence that when specific groups received training for high risk environments that they demonstrated more flexible coping strategies during and after trauma exposure. In collaboration with Dr. Bonanno the group is developing a model for preventative intervention using Stress Inoculation Training (SIT) (Meichenbaum, 1996; 1988), which is an evidence based coping skills training model that may improve protective factors for this under-identified, at risk group.

A feasibility study is currently underway at the Psychological Clinic to adapt this training into a group format that can be offered to graduate students preparing for fieldwork. The goal of this study is to enhance psychological resilience for potential traumatic experiences and therefore reduce the expression of symptoms for U of M students during and after their return from fieldwork. The members of the research group are: Sue Watts, MSW, Gary Brown, MSW, Jen Sarafin, MSW, Carolyn Dayton, MSW, Ph.D., Cheryl King, Ph.D., and Todd Favorite, Ph.D.

## Adjustment Matters lecture "Figuring Out Friendships" illuminates community on issues of bullying

**Attendee Autumn Campbell discusses highlights**

On April 13, the University of Michigan Institute for Human Adjustment (IHA) hosted Roberta Hirshon's "Figuring Out Friendships" lecture at the Ann Arbor District Library, as part of IHA's Adjustment Matters: Community Forum Series for spring 2011.

"Figuring Out Friendships" was an engaging presentation and dialogue to help parents understand relational bullying—that is, the use of hurtful behaviors to undermine another person's self-esteem. Parents were given the opportunity to learn how to guide their daughters in dealing with issues such as cliques, bullying, and cyberbullying.

Autumn Campbell, an art teacher for Dexter Schools, found out about the "Figuring Out Friendships" lecture through her sister who works for the University of Michigan. Autumn attended the lecture with her husband

and daughter.

"My family found the topic of Relational Bullying / Aggression, rather than physical bullying, to be the most intriguing," said Autumn after the lecture.

The Adjustment Matters: Community Forum Series has proved to be both thought provoking and beneficial for educators, researchers, and community members at large.

"The lecture illuminated and clarified the issues we were dealing with at my daughter's school, and we were encouraged to ask questions," Autumn said. "The lecture empowered us with specific words and labeling that we later used with her principal."

Roberta Hirshon, M.A. L.C.S.W., coordinates the Strong Moms Strong Girls Program with the University Center for the Child and Family ([www.umuccf.org](http://www.umuccf.org)). Roberta has been in private practice for 25 years. She has worked with children, families, and couples in a variety of settings. She has expertise in addictive disorders, brief treatment, and infertility. She also is a certified therapeutic horseback riding instructor and equine facilitated psychotherapist and works with adults and children with various physical, emotional, and mental health issues.

The Adjustment Matters Community Forum Series runs from September through June. The series is designed to educate and inform about a range of topics related to mental health, learning, and communication difficulties. There is ample opportunity for questions and discussion with our presenters. For more information, please visit [www.umiha.org](http://www.umiha.org).

## About Us

The Institute for Human Adjustment serves the University and the broader community with intervention programs of the highest quality to assist individuals, couples and families with difficulties in adjustment, learning and communication. We provides state of the art educational opportunities for providers-in-training in these areas, and conducts research on important facets of these activities.

The Institute is comprised of three units: [University Center for the Development of Language and Literacy \(UCLL\)](#), [Psychological Clinic](#), and [University Center for the Child and the Family \(UCCF\)](#).



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