

Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling & Psychological Association Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter: May 2025 – Volume 1, Issue 1

News, Views, Announcements, and Celebrations from RMHCPA



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Published quarterly, the newsletter for the Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling & Psychological Association explores what is transpiring in the worlds of the existential, humanistic, and transpersonal psychology, as well as celebrating the accomplishments of those in our community. It aims to promote civil discourse and discussion on topics such as the intersection of art, music, film, dance, poetry, and literature with psychology, counseling, philosophy, and other clinical practices. The newsletter is edited by Joseph Alexander Vanderhoff.

Letter from the Board Bringing Humanistic and Existential Psychology to the Rocky Mountains

Xochitl Vallejos – Board Chair

Dear Colleagues and Community Members,

Since 2016, the Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association (RMHCPA) has been more than just an organization—we've become a vibrant community dedicated to humanistic, existential, and transpersonal psychology.

Our Foundation: Community and Inclusivity

What began as a conversation at a housewarming party has blossomed into a transformative force in psychological practice. Our core mission transcends traditional boundaries, focusing on building a truly inclusive humanistic community that centers marginalized voices and challenges conventional hierarchies. We proudly have built a very diverse board of directors, have participated in many community initiatives such as supporting our unhoused neighbors and other direct community development work.

Landmark Achievements

In 2023, we reached a significant milestone by purchasing a building near downtown Colorado Springs. This space now houses:

- The International Archive of Existential and Humanistic Psychology
- The International Archives of Transpersonal Psychology
- The Center for Humanistic and

Warmly,

The RMHCPA Board

Interpersonal Psychotherapy (CHIP)

Our archives already feature remarkable donations from pioneering professionals like Tom Greening, Stanley Krippner, the late Ilene Serlin, Steve Pritzker, and Louis Hoffman.

Beyond Academic Boundaries

RMHCPA doesn't just discuss change—we live it. Our board actively engages in:

- Social advocacy
- Supporting gun violence prevention
- Serving unhoused community members
- Hosting groundbreaking conferences on critical topics like politics, love, and collective wellness

In addition to the professional and social work we do, we are actively working to build a community clinic that offers accessible depth psychotherapy to clients all across socioeconomic lines.

Looking Forward

As we continue to grow, our commitment remains unwavering: to create a humanistic community that embraces diversity, challenges existing paradigms, and truly practices what we preach. We want to be a part of our community, embedded and engaged, bringing the values of humanistic psychology to the people in the Rocky Mountain region and beyond.



Executive Director's Column
A Time for Humanistic Psychology
Louis Hoffman

The Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychology Association (RMHCPA) is issuing our first newsletter at an important time for our organization and the world at large. In this first newsletter article, I hope to highlight why RMHCPA is needed in the world today.

Exciting Times for RMHCPA

It was just a year and a half ago that RMHCPA purchased and began moving into our building on South 8th Street in Colorado Springs. Since this, it has been an exciting and challenging time. The most exhilarating aspect of settling into the RMHCPA building has been the opportunities for building community. We have heard over and over from people who have attended our social or continuing education events that they feel like they have found a community they want to remain a part of. This was our vision and hope from when we first started looking for a building!

One powerful example of the community we are building came at our first holiday party. As the day for the holiday party neared, the weather forecast began changing in an ominous direction. As this change came so close to the party, we decided to go with the party despite several inches of snow being predicted. We expected a modest turnout. To the contrary, nearly 50 people showed up, many driving from Denver, to be part of this community. And many did not want the night to end! Several people stayed until well after the scheduled time for the party to end to continue the conversations.

Our first two conferences since the building purchase revealed similar energy. Although the building is not large enough to house the full conference, we began a tradition of preconference events at the RMHCPA building. Both years, the pre-conferences sold out! At the conferences and our continuing education workshops, we have been able to bring in many leading figures in humanistic psychology to present,

including Kirk Schneider, Erik Craig, Ilene Serlin, Theopia Jackson, Mark Yang, and Brent Robbins. We are planning to bring several more leading humanistic psychologists to Colorado Springs in 2025.

As we moved into the building, we established the International Archives of Existential and Humanistic Psychology and International Archives of Transpersonal Psychology. We received donations from Tom Greening, Shelley Diamond, Ilene Serlin, Steve Pritzker, and Stanley Krippner. Already, we have a room full of books, videos, and memorabilia from the history of humanistic, existential, and transpersonal psychology filling the walls and shelves of the RMHCPA building.

In 2023, we also opened our clinic, the Center for Humanistic and Interpersonal Psychotherapy (CHIP), with our first practicum student. We began providing affordable therapy services to uninsured and underinsured members of our community. In late 2024, we also became a Medicaid provider to help us further meet the needs of our community. As we move into 2025, we now have three practicum students and a postgraduate therapist.

The excitement has not come without challenges. The building had more needs than originally expected, which stretched our budget thin and cut timelines close. The main archives room where we hold events was finished just 1 week before the preconference events. Due to a pipe issue in our building complex, there was a significant increase in our HOA fees for a year that has kept our budget tight.

We have survived the challenges due to our membership and board. As we prepared to open the clinic, several members and board members volunteered to help paint and move items from storage, including Matt Thelen, Nathaniel Granger, Jr., H. Luis Vargas, Theo McClatchey, Ashton Toler. Members and board members

have given single and monthly donations to help meet our budget needs. We have had many wonderful volunteers for CE events and conferences that helped for them to be a success.

On a personal note, I want to share my deep appreciation for the many members and others who have given of their time or made monetary donations. In particular, I want to voice my appreciation for Dr. Nathaniel Granger, Jr. and Dr. H. Luis Vargas, who have given extensively of their time. Nathaniel is the other board member who has an office in the building. Without his support, encouragement, and many talents—including grant writing, painting (at a professional level!), presenting, leadership, and more—RMHCPA would not have survived the first year. Luis has taken on the role of Director of Clinical Training, helped recruit and vet practicum students, drawn in many members, and much more. As a young nonprofit, all our official roles are still volunteer roles without compensation. While we hope that eventually we will be in a financial position to provide some compensation, currently everyone who serves RMHCPA does so out of a commitment to RMHCPA's mission. This includes many regular hours of volunteer work each week that sustains the organization.

The World Needs RMHCPA

In these turbulent times, the world needs RMHCPA—and we stand by ready to help! RMHCPA has always been committed to impacting the world and people in need. This is reflected in our Board's discussion about purchasing a building. The decision to purchase a building began when we were approached about creating an archive for existential and humanistic psychology with an initial donation of books from Tom Greening. While the archive was something

the board believed in, when we started talking about a clinic that would offer low fee therapy and a practicum site for students interested in humanistic, existential, and transpersonal psychology, the Board became excited!

As we enter 2025, we have several commitments that we believe will make a positive impact upon our community and the world. At the CHIP, we are working to meet the needs of more clients, including starting to promote our therapy services via TeleHealth to underserved regions of Colorado. Additionally, we are writing grants to expand the services that CHIP can offer. We offer monthly CE trainings, many of which focus on providing therapy and counseling services to marginalized populations.

Our biggest commitment is to host the Fourth World Congress of Existential Therapy in 2026. This is an enormous undertaking that entails years of planning. We will be bringing many leading scholars and practitioners from around the globe to Colorado. It is a great learning opportunity for many clinicians in Colorado.

We are continually talking about more and more ways that we can serve our community, the profession, and suffering people. Our board and our membership are inspiring groups of people who want to make an impact.

Our Board

I am continually inspired by the RMHCPA Board. This is a group of people who strive to live the values of humanistic psychology. We currently have 13 board members, including L. Xochitl Vallejos (Board Chair), Ian Wickramasekera, II (Board Vice Chair), Nathaniel Granger, Jr. (Board Treasurer), H. Luis Vargas (Board Secretary), Aja'Dae Trent, Alfredo Palacios, Brittany Varisco, Dan Johnson, Francis Kaklauskas, Justin

Walmsley, Shawn Rubin, and myself as Executive Director. These individuals will always hold a special place in my heart. It is their commitment and vision that empowers RMHCPA toward its mission.

Assuring Our Future

Beginning at our commitment to purchase a building, our goal has been to assure that RMHCPA will still exist after those of us who currently are on the board are dust. We want this to be a home for humanistic psychology for generations to come. This is an ambitious goal. Without our membership, we could not accomplish this.

There are many ways that members can support RMHCPA and help us achieve this vision. First, we encourage members to consider giving a one-time or monthly contribution to RMHCPA. There are several funds that you can contribute to discussed on our website (<https://rmhcpa.org/support-rmhcpa/>). Even giving \$5 or \$10 a month makes a significant difference. For the equivalent of purchasing one morning coffee a month, you can make an impact on the legacy of RMHCPA! You can also join or become a lifetime member of RMHCPA (<https://rmhcpa.org/join/>). We keep our membership fees low—just \$10 for students and \$30 for professionals. You can also attend our CE events and socials. If you are a member, you will receive regularly announcements on our events. May referrals to CHIP, our clinic (<https://www.rmhcpa-chip.com>). Helping to sustain CHIP benefits RMHCPA, our community, and our practicum students and interns.

Conclusion

RMHCPA has a bright future. We know, too, there will be many challenges—and we are prepared to take them on. If you are reading this newsletter, we hope that you are excited

to be an active member of our community. We believe that community is the heart of RMHCPA. Without community, we would

not be doing what we are doing. I hope to see you at one of our events in the near future.



Treasurer's Column

Nathaniel Granger, Jr.

Through many challenges, as would be expected with the purchase of a new building, RMHCPA has become a beacon light of hope for many, particularly marginalized clients who are seeking help to cope with unforeseen changes in times of uncertainty, and for our clinicians, who are in the struggle with our clients, who find strength in consoling one another as we carry the burdens of our clients while carefully navigating the many systemic hurdles imposed upon all of us.

Hope in the saving power: "But we are thereupon summoned to hope in the growing light of the saving power. How can this happen? Here and now and in little things, that we may foster the saving power in its increase. This includes holding always before our eyes the extreme danger." ~Martin Heidegger

As a 501c3 nonprofit, we operate by donations, CE workshops, Medicaid clients,

gifts, pledges, and grants—unfortunately, grants for which we have applied and have been denied. Nevertheless, we were excited to secure a grant from KeyBank for \$2,000 dollars during Hispanic Heritage Month for our commitment to working with diverse groups. Also, our monthly pledges are continuing to increase. Although, we are not where we would like to be financially, we are continually applying for grants and seeking donations. This is especially important as many programs that provide culturally sensitive services have been under fire. Your donation will help perpetuate our aim in the continuation of providing mental health services to the un/under insured and other marginalized groups.

Our future depends on you! For instance, RMHCPA is the proud host of the 2026 World Congress of Existential Therapy (WCET). To host this auspicious event requires sponsors. If you or anyone you

know are willing to sponsor the 2026 WCET, please contact us at Treasure@rmhcpa.org. One easy way to support RMHCPA is through a one-time

donation or a monthly pledge by clicking the link below. Your tax deductible donation is greatly appreciated!



Director of Clinical Training's Column

H. Luis Vargas

The Center for Humanistic and Interpersonal Psychotherapy (CHIP), the Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association's clinic, recently celebrated its first anniversary. Like many new businesses, launching CHIP required substantial support, collaboration, time, and effort. Before the official launch, Dr. Matt Thelen, Dr. Nathaniel Granger, Dr. Louis Hoffman, Ashton Toler, and I volunteered our time to paint the office suite designated for CHIP in the RMHCPA building. Additionally, Ashton designed the CHIP logo and painted the RMHCPA logo in the archive library.

During its inaugural year, the CHIP office suite was furnished through generous donations. Dr. Ilene Serlin, a Fellow of the American Psychological Association who sadly passed away recently, was a primary source of the artwork that adorns CHIP's walls and the area rugs on the floors; she thoughtfully boxed and shipped these items from California. Dr. Jim Ungvarsky, a

former President of the Colorado School of Professional Psychology, contributed furnishings, including lamps and bookshelves. Zachariah Garney from Mt. Carmel Military Services installed the TV mount that holds the flat-screen TV in CHIP's reception area. Despite the many demands on Dr. Louis Hoffman's time, he measured, drilled, and installed window coverings, replaced locks, made keys, and posted signs. Louis's contributions were crucial to the launch of CHIP.

Dr. Cathy Calvert from the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs assisted with administrative matters by providing support to ensure compliance with the required standards of care set by the State of Colorado and the Department of Regulatory Agencies. Rosemary Leone, Chair of the Rocky Mountain Family Therapy Network in Denver, furnished an office she rents within CHIP for her private practice. Rosemary rents the space and

drives to Colorado Springs from Thornton in support of RMHCPA and CHIP. No business can thrive without the backing and support of others, and CHIP is immensely grateful for the contributions made by so many.

Before the start of CHIP's first year, we successfully hired a postdoctoral researcher, Dr. Theodora Malinowski, and our first intern, Edbury Enegren. Although Edbury completed his internship at CHIP, Theodora had to return to her home state before finishing her postdoctoral program. She remains in touch with us and is fondly remembered for her enthusiasm during her brief time at CHIP.

As we enter our second year, there is still much work to be done. We aim to soundproof the therapy rooms, install sound machines in front of each office door, and improve comfort for our new interns: Denver University doctoral students Olivia Michael and Jeff Singer, Saybrook University doctoral student Tyler Gamlen, and Denver University post-graduate intern Joe Vanderhoff. Olivia, Jeff, and Joe commute from the Denver area to CHIP in Colorado Springs, while Tyler travels from Las Vegas, NV. Each of them demonstrates a strong commitment to becoming the best clinicians they can be and is highly motivated to anchor their clinical work in existential-humanistic psychology, even if it means driving from Denver or flying from Las Vegas to CHIP. Their dedication means a lot to us, so we are purposeful about building a foundation for sustained long-term connections that will extend well beyond their practicums and internships.

We want to provide opportunities that are not available at other field placements, including chances to engage in scholarship, attend our annual RMHCPA conference and monthly continuing education workshops, participate in service to the profession, be part of a growing existential-humanistic community, and build

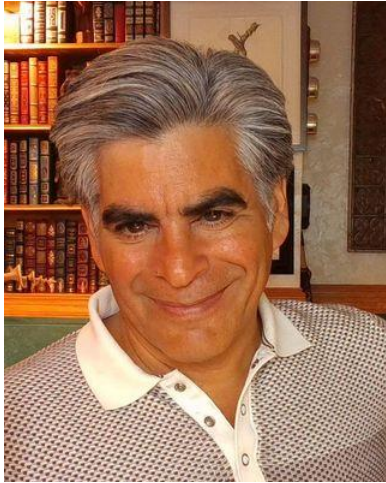
connections with notable existential-humanistic scholars and experienced clinicians.

Increasing the number of incoming referrals to CHIP remains our top priority. We strive to ensure that our interns meet the required contact hours expected by their graduate programs while also providing the necessary client contact hours for quality training. We've established local community partnerships Mt. Carmel Military Services and other community organizations; however, referrals are slowly growing. Recently, we became approved Medicaid providers and an authorized site for Medicaid, but CHIP's phone isn't ringing as much as we had hoped.

Like many ventures, we have faced ups and downs, twists and turns, and moments of doubt. However, we continue to move forward, anticipating more surprises along the way. Our commitment to serving the mental health profession remains strong as we aim to provide quality training that addresses gaps often found in higher education regarding the clinical practice of existential-humanistic psychology and systemic interpersonal psychotherapy. We are also dedicated to serving the community by offering low-cost, high-quality care.

We appreciate any client referrals to CHIP. We offer a sliding scale for clients anywhere in Colorado for Telehealth services, and for Medicaid, we can accept clients from El Paso, Teller, and Douglas counties. If you're on Psychology Today, please consider providing an endorsement for CHIP.

We understand that with risks come rewards, and like most long-term ventures, persistence and patience are essential virtues. Navigating the uncertainty of whether CHIP will achieve its goals can be challenging, but we remain committed to our mission.



Letter from the Editor

Joseph Alexander Vanderhoff

In a world where hatred and divisiveness seem to be growing by the day, it is more important than ever to bolster the voices of the humanistic movement and disseminate our message to the world at large. We are lucky enough to have many brilliant thinkers and human beings as a part of our global community who encourage us to approach our experience of the world with depth, compassion, and understanding. The Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling & Psychological Association (RMHCPA) is not only an organization, but a community which fosters just that.

I will never forget my first experience of RMHCPA: I was a graduate student at the University of Denver and had recently connected with a classmate—Jeff Singer—who shared my love and passion of existential-humanism. He invited me to come to a conference that would have a profound effect on me: the seventh annual RMHCPA conference of 2023 (pictured at the end of this newsletter). From the moment I walked through the door, there was a palpable shift in my body. I was finally surrounded by people who

encouraged each other to think and connect deeply. My first encounter with Luis Vargas involved him approaching me and saying how much he appreciated my questions and contributions to the conversations transpiring and that he implored me to continue to do so. This was deeply moving and his enthusiasm and support have never waned.

Not only was RMHCPA a place where I was encouraged to show up honestly and authentically, but it created a community where graduate students like me could engage in deep and meaningful conversations with luminaries in the field such as Kirk Schneider, Illene A. Serlin, and Theopia Jackson. At the time, I had no idea that I would continue to connect or even work with all of them in the future. When Ilene passed unexpectedly last year, I found myself deeply affected by this and ultimately touched to have known such an incredible person during the last years of her life. And it was not only luminaries I connected with at RMHCPA, but other students and ardent existentialists, most of

whom I still talk to and share a close friendship with today.

I decided to share my origin story with RMHCPA because I want people to know what a profound impact that experience continues to have on my life and that I want other people to have the opportunity to share in experiences such as these. I want people to know how important RMHCPA is, not only how the academic pursuit of humanism, but for human beings in general: clinicians, clients, and everyone alike. Since my first RMHCPA conference, I have been lucky enough to start working as a clinician at the Center for Humanistic & Interpersonal Psychotherapy as a post-graduate clinician and even have Louis Hoffman as my clinical supervisor.

I am so very grateful to be a member of this community, which plays such an integral role in the international humanistic movement. I was deeply honored when the RMHCPA board offered me the opportunity to be the editor of this newsletter. I hope that RMHCPA can continue to extend its hand to offer meaningful experiences and opportunities to others, as they have to me. I see this newsletter not only as a place to disseminate information about the happenings of RMHCPA and celebrate the

accomplishments of its members, but equally as a place to bolster the voices of its people, people like you.

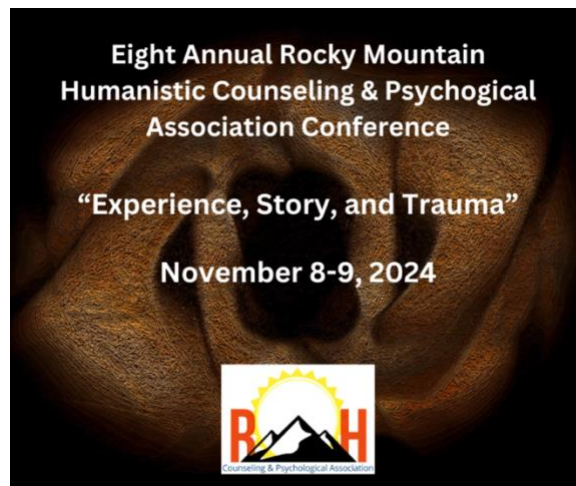
We want this to be a platform for sharing not only philosophical and psychological ideas, but one where we can grapple with art, film, literature, poetry, and music. If you have recently watched a film that spoke to you, write about it. If a new album has shaken you to your core and you want to share this experience with others, reach out to me. Have you read a new book that deserves a review, or an old book that should be brought back into the conversation? Please reflect and write about it. Any medium of art which engenders a moving experience in you is worth writing about to share your phenomenological experience with this community.

I look forward to continuing to connect with this community as a whole, and each of its members individually. These kind of discussions, and this kind of community, is something deeply meaningful to me. If you have any questions, thoughts, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly. I look forward to our future discussions, connections, and shared experiences. Thank you for being a part of this community.



Awards from the 8th Annual RMHCPA Conference:

- ❖ Poster Award: *Awe as an Antidote to an Epidemic of Isolation*
by *Joseph Alexander Vanderhoff, Jeff Singer, & Olivia Michael*
- ❖ COSPP Alumnus Award: *Cathy Calvert*
- ❖ Lifetime Achievement Award: *Ron Valle*
- ❖ Student Humanistic Exemplar Award: *Brittany Varisco*
- ❖ Emory G. Cowan and Susan Cooper Lifetime Service Award: *Dick Gee*



<https://www.corpsofdepthhealers.com>

Center for Humanistic & Interpersonal Psychotherapy Clinicians:



The Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association is very proud to have four wonderful therapists and counselors providing services at our clinic, the Center for Humanistic and Interpersonal Psychotherapy!

Practicum/Intern Students:



Olivia Michael



Jeff Singer



Tyler W. Gamlen

Post-Graduate Clinicians:



Joseph Alexander Vanderhoff

New Roles:

- ❖ Louis Hoffman, PhD, has been selected as the Incoming Editor of *The Humanistic Psychologist*, which is the journal of the Society for Humanistic Psychology. He will serve as Incoming Editor in 2025 and assume the role of Editor in 2026.

Announcements:

- ❖ Congratulations to Samuel Kohlenberg, who was accepted into the 2024-25 Society of Behavioral Medicine Diversity Institute for Emerging Leaders.
- ❖ Congratulations to Brittany Varisco, who received an internship placement at Aurora Mental Health & Recovery.
- ❖ Congratulations to Jeff Singer, who received an internship placement at the Gallogly Recreation and Wellness Center at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.
- ❖ Congratulations to Louis Hoffman, PhD, who was accepted as a Fellow of the Society of Clinical Psychology (American Psychological Division 12), beginning January 1, 2026. He is currently a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and Divisions 1, 10, 24, 26, 48 52.



The Fourth World Congress of Existential Therapy will be hosted by the Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association June 3-6, 2026. The Congress will be held in Aurora, Colorado. The [Call for Papers](#) is out with proposals due November 1, 2025. Registration will begin within the next month. If you want to get involved, please let us know. To stay up to date on the Congress and its preparations, follow us through the resources below:

The World Congress website is at <https://www.wcet4.com>

Sign up for or Email List at <https://www.wcet4.com/sign-up-for-updates/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FourthWorldCongressofExistentialTherapy/>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/wcet4_existential/

Threads: https://www.threads.net/@wcet4_existential

Twitter: https://x.com/WCET4_exist

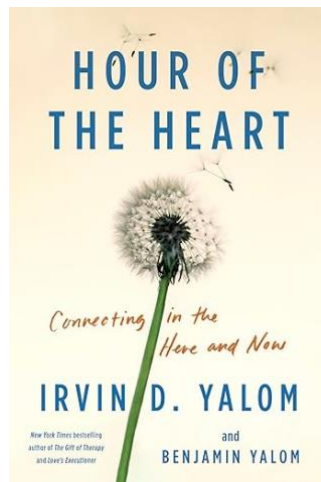
Bluesky: <https://bsky.app/profile/wcet4.bsky.social>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/fourth-world-congress-of-existential-therapy>

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@FourthWorldCongressofExi-nu9zr>

Art Space: Reviews of Books, Poetry, Film, Art, & Music:

**Review of *Hour of the Heart: Connecting in the Here and Now*
by Irvin D. Yalom & Benjamin Yalom
by Joseph Alexander Vanderhoff**



Irvin D. Yalom, an existential psychiatrist born in 1931, is arguably one of the most famous writers of the existential psychotherapy movement. He is the author of copious seminal texts, from textbooks like *Existential Psychotherapy* (1980) and *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy* (1970)—now on its sixth edition (2020)—to award winning fiction novels like *When Nietzsche Wept* (1992) and best-selling clinical texts like *Love's Executioner* (1989) and *The Gift of Therapy* (2001). Although there is disagreement amongst the existential-humanistic community as to whether he himself in fact utilizes an existential-humanistic approach to therapy, there is no denying his pervasive influence on the field.

Yalom's newest book, *The Hour of the Heart*, is familiar in tone, yet refreshing and new for copious reasons: death is no longer just a concept, but a real and lived everyday experience as he navigates his late eighties and early nineties; he is pushed to face life directly and surrender to his own limitations of old age; he has brought in his son Benjamin to join him on this literary endeavor; and he introduces the completely new and brave clinical challenge of trying to connect deeply and authentically with clients—to elicit insight and change—through a single one hour encounter. This book takes you along on a clinical journey as you get to experience the perspectives of both the psychotherapist and the clients. It is remarkable to bear witness to many of these interactions and see how powerful a single encounter can be.

A familiar theme in this book is Dr. Yalom's focus on *process*—"the dynamic between [people], the patterns of communication, and the emotions that arose and were expressed or avoided" (p. 37)—to promote depth and authenticity in the interactions, instead of getting stuck on *content*—"what happened, how we responded, and what happened next, etc." (p. 37). This focus gives rise to the three main themes and interventions explored throughout this book: using curiosity, empathy, and vulnerability as a guide; providing honest feedback that the client does not usually have the opportunity to hear in everyday life; and focusing on the interpersonal relationship by connecting in the here and now—as indicated by the book's subtitle.

Right from the introduction, Irv—as he encourages his clients to refer to him—stresses the ubiquitous longing in human beings for deeper connection and the salience of intimacy through vulnerability: "One thing that has been consistent in my now *six* decades as a therapist is that the longing for human connection is a main force that drives those seeking help. People crave closer, better relationships" (p. XIII). He elaborates by explaining the integral nature of vulnerability and intimacy that is necessary for deeper connections: "Intimacy requires vulnerability: you can't expect your friend, relative, or partner to be open to you unless you are willing to be open to them. And such vulnerability, almost by definition, does not feel safe" (p. XIV). Throughout this book, Irv implores his clients to try this themselves.

One way that he does this is by providing honest feedback about his experience during the session—in the here and now—and encouraging the client to do the same. For instance, when Irv finds himself having difficulty connecting with a client, he says "[l]et me share my honest personal reaction to you in our session so far" (p. 32) and then asks the client to do the same: "[C]an you take a risk and tell me more of your feelings about our meeting so far? Try not to hold back. Don't worry about offending me" (p. 33). This allows the client engage authentically and create a microcosm to be examined in the here and now, which reflects the macrocosm of interpersonal dynamics arising in the client's life.

One of my favorite didactic moments of this book is when the author makes a mistake by overstepping with a client in a moment of hubris. Shortly after the rupture, Irv asks the client "how are you and I doing this session?" (p. 47)—another salient intervention used throughout the

book—to which the client points out the problematic moment. Dr. Yalom uses this opportunity to be sagaciously honest with the client by saying that he made a mistake and did so because of his own ego. He reflects on this later in the text saying: “It’s funny how often my missteps provide excellent openings. Once again I was reminded that being present, sharing myself as a full and flawed human, always seems the most helpful position—much more so than being an unreachable expert” (p. 49). Therapists too often become mired in the mud of believing that it is their intellect and elegant interpretations that provide good therapy, but Yalom continues to show us that it is the relationship that heals. Or as he says upon further reflection of the aforementioned encounter, “[t]herapy, good therapy, is not about invading the other but helping them discover themselves” (p. 49).

Something unique about Yalom as a writer is his ability to weave seemingly disparate threads together seamlessly: Although the book is about his encounters with clients and how he helps them to discover themselves with more depth, it is also about his personal experience of discovering himself with ever more depth and dimension. The author plumbs the depths of his own being by not only embracing his own finitude, but by endeavoring to discover who he is following the death of his beloved wife of 65 years. His explorations are both brave and vulnerable. Death is no longer a distant cry, but a close and contiguous reality. Clients often ask him about the loss of his wife, and he answers sincerely. It is this ability to weave the author’s personal narrative within the clinical encounters that makes it as unique as it is enjoyable to read.

Although Yalom is undoubtably a gifted writer and storyteller, no book review would be complete without the tinge of critique. I imagine that some readers may find certain aspects of Yalom’s approach and methodology to be out of touch with modern times. For instance, the author continues to use the language of patient, rather than client, even though he does diligently explicate his reasoning for doing so in the introduction. He reports not liking either term very much, and preferring the idea of being a “fellow traveler,” but ultimately chooses to use the term patient. Additionally, I imagine some readers may feel that the here and now approach to therapy may be helpful but does not address other systemic issues the client may be facing due to their race, gender, or socioeconomic status.

With that being said, I found myself deeply moved and inspired by this book. I immediately found myself utilizing concepts explored throughout this text and have found many of the interventions to be quite efficacious: I recently started working with a client who has had difficulty trusting clinicians—and people in general—who I continued to have difficulty connecting with. After considering all relevant clinical factors, I asked the client if he had any questions for me, to which he eagerly responded, with a question he had been pining to know. I looked at the client while answering as honestly and authentically as I could. His whole demeanor changed, and a rare smile graced his face. Our relationship shifted dramatically after that encounter.

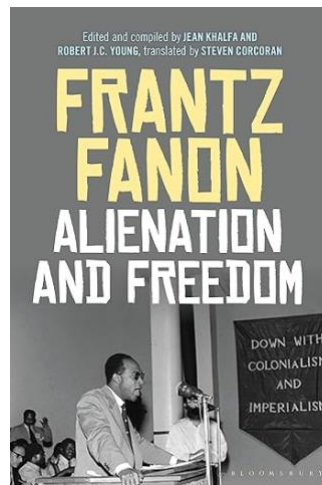
I highly recommend this book to clinicians looking for a new and fresh perspective of working with clients. It is a must read for anyone looking to grow as a clinician and as a human being. As Irv tells us:

“... ‘it is the relationship that heals.’ What drives change is not a worksheet that the patient fills out, a brilliant question the therapist poses, or a behavioral change the patient must chart daily. In my approach to therapy the honest connection between the therapist and patient is the medium through which we discover, learn, change, and heal.” (p. 4)

While reading this book it is not only apparent that Yalom’s clinical work is deeply meaningful to him, but also that writing itself is a lifelong love affair for him: “In many ways, I make sense of my living through writing, which does not solve, but has often seemed to lesson, the isolation of existence” (p. 250). This book is a helpful pedagogical tool, but it is also an attempt to bridge the existential gap between each other.



**Fanon for Today:
Review of *Alienation and Freedom* by Frantz Fanon**
by Louis Hoffman



Frantz Fanon, a psychiatrist from the Caribbean Island of Martinique, was born in 1925 and died at the age of 36 years old. Despite his short life, his contributions have sustained a lasting, even growing, impact on various academic fields, including psychology. To date, his writings have had a more significant impact on colonial and postcolonial studies, political theory, and social justice movements. Until recently, many of his writings, particularly his psychological writings, were not available in English.

After fighting for France in World War II, Fanon studied psychiatry at the University of Lyons in France. Upon graduation and a period of time at Saint-Alban, he accepted a position at hospital in Algeria where he became involved with the Algerian liberation movement, particularly the FLN (National Liberation Front). He left Algeria, in part, because his involvement with the FLN meant that he was no longer safe in Algeria. With his family, Fanon moved to Tunisia where he continued his work as a psychiatrist while becoming a spoke person for the FLN. Fanon always intended to continue practicing psychiatry in Algeria after Algeria had attained its independence. His psychiatric writings were written primarily during his time in Algeria and Tunisia.

The 2018 publication of *Alienation and Freedom*, compiled by Jean Khalifa and Robert J. C. Young and translated by Steven Corcoran, have made many of his psychiatric writings available in English for the first time, creating new opportunities in Fanonian studies. This thick volume includes three sections: 1) Theatre, 2) Psychiatric Writings, and 3) Political Writings. While each section is filled with powerful writing that deepens the understanding of Fanon, the psychiatric writings are particularly illuminating. They demonstrate that Fanon was decades ahead of his time in regard to multicultural and social justice perspectives in psychology.

While the psychiatric writings provide new insight into his contributions to psychiatry and psychology, all of Fanon's writings were deeply influenced by his psychological perspectives. His identity as a psychiatrist remained central to who he was even as he became more involved in the struggle for Algerian freedom. For example, in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963/2004), arguably his best-known book, the final chapter contains detailed case studies of his clinical work, including work with French soldiers who were perpetrating torture and violence against Algerians and Algerians who were subjected to this torture and violence. These stories demonstrate his commitment to provide the best possible care to all of his clients.

Two chapters of *Alienation and Freedom* provide powerful examples of his contributions to psychiatry and psychology.

First, in Chapter 19 on the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), Fanon and his colleague, Charles Geronimi, countered the narrative that the TAT was ineffective for Muslim women because of their impoverishment of understanding and cognitive abilities. Instead, Fanon pointed out that the TAT was comprised of images often unfamiliar to Muslim women in North Africa. Furthermore, the test was typically given by a White psychiatrist from France during a time when France had colonized Algeria and other countries in Africa. Thus, there was a healthy lack of trust in these White psychiatrists who they associated with their colonizers and oppressors. This demonstrates sensitivity not just to cultural issues but also to the importance of developing a trusting relationship. Furthermore, it demonstrates an awareness of how culture and power dynamics impact assessment and psychotherapy.

Second, Fanon brought institutional psychotherapy, or sociotherapy, to Algeria, after being trained in this at Saint-Alban in France under François Tosquelles. He was in charge of two units at Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital: a unit of French women and a unit of Algerian men. Fanon initially implemented institutional therapy at Blida-Joinville as he had learned it at Saint-Alban. While the result on the French women's unit was very successful, it was not effective with Algerian men. As illustrated in chapter 10 (with Jacques Azoulay), in assessing the results Fanon quickly recognized that the lack of success was because he had not adapted it to the Algerian culture. Thus, he pursued learning more about Algerian culture, including traveling to different places in Algeria. He began adapting the implementation of institutional therapy and began seeing positive outcomes as he had on the French women's unit.

As these examples for the chapters on Fanon's psychiatric writings illustrate, he was implementing multicultural adaptations in the late 1950s that much of the field was struggling to learn decades later. Maybe, had Fanon's writings been available in English earlier and taught in psychology training programs, multicultural psychology could have advanced much more rapidly.

Also included with Fanon's psychiatric writings was his resignation letter from Blida-Joinville (Chapter 20). His letter of resignation demonstrates the depth of his integrity and profundity of his thinking in what could rightly be considered a piece of literature. The letter is both beautiful and sophisticated. In the letter, he illuminates how psychiatry as being practiced in Algeria was contributing to the problems of alienation and injustice. He forcefully condemns the mental health system in ways that foreshadow the much later development of critical psychology. The power of this letter, which was written when he made the decision to leave Algeria for Tunisia, warrants the inclusion of some quotes. Fanon noted,

If psychiatry is the medical technique that sets out to enable individuals no longer to be foreign to their environment, I owe it to myself to state that the Arab, permanently alienated in his own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization.

What is the status of Algeria? A systematic dehumanization. (p. 434)

It is important for us, today, to consider what is happening in United States culture (as well as other countries around the globe) and how it may be moving in a direction where, again, the mental health system, due in part to its embeddedness in United States culture and its political system, is contributing to or potentially promoting a systematic dehumanization.

Later in the letter Fanon makes a powerful statement on the integrity required to be a mental health professional in a system that intentionally or through complicity contributes to dehumanization and alienation for many of its clients:

The function of a social structure is to set up institutions that are traversed by a concern for humankind. A society that forces its members into desperate solutions is a non-viable society, a society that needs replacing. A citizen's duty is to say no. . . . There comes a time when silence becomes a lie. . . . For long months, my conscience has been the seat of unpardonable debates. And their conclusion is the will not to lose hope in man, that is to say in myself. My decision is not to bear a responsibility, at whatever cost, on the false pretext that nothing else is to be done. (p. 435)

This quote may be hard to read for some—and even harder to discern. If the system is corrupt, harmful, or complicit, how long must one try to engage it with hope of changing it before it becomes a lie? As no system is perfect, what degree of imperfection is tolerable? Or maybe, what imperfections can be tolerated? Easy answers do not exist, especially in a changing system. The hope is that reading these questions leaves one with a healthy dis-ease that drives one to reflection.

We entered 2025 with an imperfect mental health system. Already in first weeks of 2025, new challenges are emerging. The challenges are particularly relevant to the care of minoritized and marginalized individuals. It is critical for each therapist to struggle with what this means for their practice, teaching, supervision, and other levels of involvement with the mental health

system. Clearly, for mental health professionals, there is a risk of silence (i.e., complicity) becoming a lie.

There is much more to the nearly 800-page volume than could be covered in a brief book review. For anyone interested in Fanon and his relevance to contemporary psychology, *Alienation and Freedom*, particularly the psychiatric writings, is a must read. It, too, may be that for anyone pursuing practicing as a mental health professional rooted in integrity in 2025, Fanon is one of the most important and instructive sources for one's own reflection on what it means to be a mental health professional today.



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Memorials:

In Memory of Erica Palmer By Louis Hoffman, Steve Fehl, & Matt Thelen



On January 24, 2025, Erica Palmer, a longtime member and former board member of the Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association (RMHCPA) died after a several year battle with cancer. Erica graduated from Lipscomb University in 1992. Erica was a graduate of Colorado School of Professional Psychology/University of the Rockies in 2011. Her dissertation was “A Qualitative Study of Existential Issues in Postpartum Depression: An Unspoken Truth.” She completed her internship at the Center for Growth under the supervision of Louis Hoffman and Heatherlyn Cleare-Hoffman. During her time at the Center for Growth she developed interests in existential psychotherapy, postpartum depression and women’s wellness issues. After becoming licensed, she worked as a psychologist until her diagnosis with cancer.

Erica joined the RMHCPA board as we were considering seeking to purchase a building in Colorado Springs. She supported this vision and remained on the board through the purchase.

Shortly after RMHCPA moved into our building, she took a leave of absence due to her cancer diagnosis and later decided to leave the board to focus on her battle with cancer. She remained in contact with several members and continued to voice support and appreciation for our mission until her death

A deeply passionate person, Erica cared deeply about her clients. She was known for advocating for what she believed was the best possible care for her clients. Through her care, commitment, and skill as a therapist, she made a significant impact on the lives of many people who came to see her. She was also a treasured colleague and friend to many.

Erica had four daughters, who she loved and was deeply devoted to. When talking about her children, Erica almost always had a big smile on her face. She was deeply proud of them and sought to spend as much time with them as she could.

Throughout her life Erica was an exceptional friend to many people. Even in the midst of her own personal struggles she gave time and attention to friends who themselves were facing difficulties. She enjoyed meeting friends for lunch or a cup of coffee, and found great pleasure in sharing fun times with friends and family. Erica will be remembered for her compassionate and caring spirit.

RMHCPA and many of its members are grieving the death of our friend, who is dearly loved.

In Memory of Ilene Serlin

By Louis Hoffman



Dr. Ilene Serlin, a lifetime member of the Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association, died on November 25, 2024. Ilene was a strong supporter and close friend to RMHCPA and many of our members. She was one of the first people to make a significant donation to RMHCPA. Many of her books, videos, paintings, and musical instruments are now housed in our archives. We are preserving many of the awards and recognitions she received as well. Our clinic, the Center for Humanistic and Interpersonal Psychotherapy, is decorated with many of her paintings, artwork, rugs, and furniture. Ilene will always be a part of RMHCPA.

Dr. Serlin had a long history with humanistic psychology. She was a student of Rollo May's and was one of three interviewers in a famous video of Dr. May late in his life. In her

own career, she built from the work of the founders taking it in new directions. She applied humanistic and existential principles to dance and movement therapy, and other forms of art therapy. She provided trainings in dance and movement therapy around the globe, cultivating a movement of dance and movement therapy in humanistic and existential psychology circles and beyond.

Ilene edited a three-volume set of books on Whole Personal Healthcare and championed holistic approaches to health and mental health. Her work in holistic approaches to health care and dance and movement therapy deepened humanistic psychology's connection with the body. Ilene also was a powerful advocate of feminist perspectives, too. Throughout her career, she advocated for greater recognition of the contributions of women and illuminated contributions of women who had been ignored.

In the later years of her career, Ilene increasingly focused on trauma. Her contributions to trauma drew from prior work on holistic healthcare and feminist perspectives. She collaborated with leading feminist psychologists, humanistic psychologists, and trauma psychologists to advance perspectives that deepened the recognition of humanistic contributions to trauma.

While Dr. Serlin's contributions remained underappreciated in many spaces where she contributed, she still received numerous honors for her work. These included the San Francisco Mayor's proclamation of Ilene Serlin Day on September 22, 2018, receiving the Rollo May Award from the Society for Humanistic Psychology, receiving the Outstanding Accomplishment Award from the San Francisco Psychological Association, and being named a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and several of its divisions. In November of 2023, Ilene was one of the first presenters at RMCHPA's building during the preconference of the Seventh Annual RMHCPA Conference. We are glad she had an opportunity to see our building, including her many donations that have helped fill our archives and brighten our building. The memory of seeing her excitement viewing her paintings on the walls of our clinic, the Center for Humanistic and Interpersonal Psychotherapy, is something that I will long remember. At RMHCPA, we will continue to preserve the memories of Dr. Ilene Serlin and her contributions.



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