

Empowering relationships...



JUNE 2021

# The Redwood Empire Therapist

## JUNE ONLINE MEETING

### Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Evidence Based Treatment Strategies That Work!

Presented by **Dr. Robin Zasio, Psy. D., LCSW**

- **Friday, June 4th, 2021**
- **10:30 AM – 1:45 PM**
- **Zoom Webinar**
- **3 CEs**



Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a commonly misunderstood diagnosis that many therapists are fearful to work with. Hearing that your client is distressed by thoughts of harming themselves or others, or fears of hurting children, can cause therapists to wonder if they should take action for safety. The key discernment in treating OCD is understanding that these thoughts are unwanted and intrusive and that the client with OCD will not act out on them. Knowing how to address thoughts like these is important for successful treatment. This presentation will describe the differences in OCD thoughts versus actual harm thoughts and learn how to communicate treatment to a client as well as execute a treatment plan. Above image taken from this [YouTube video](#).

OCD is the most common anxiety disorder and one that requires very specialized treatment. Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) is an evidence-based treatment modality that has been scientifically proven to demonstrate a reduction of symptoms through the process of desensitization to the fears. This presentation will outline the various ways in which OCD can manifest, the differences in the use of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and ERP, the principles of ERP, and how to execute a hierarchy and treatment.

You will learn how to identify common themes of obsessions consistent with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and how to differentiate between the use of cognitive behavior therapy and exposure and response prevention. Very importantly, you will be able to explain the biological cycle of anxiety and how it relates to a diagnosis of Obsessive Compulsive.

Dr. [Robin Zasio](#), Psy. D., LCSW is a specialist in treating OCD and anxiety disorders utilizing CBT and Exposure and Response Prevention techniques. She developed The Anxiety Treatment Center of Sacramento, Roseville, and El Dorado Hills. Dr. Zasio serves on the Scientific Advisory Board, Clinical Advisory Board, and Speakers Bureau for the International Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Foundation, and is also faculty for their Behavioral Training Institute. She is the author of [The Hoarder In You: How to Live a Happier, Healthier, Uncluttered Life](#). Dr. Zasio is a featured doctor on the A&E hit series "[Hoarders](#)" and host of "[My Extreme Animal Phobia](#)" on Animal Planet.

**Zoom Webinar - \*Please note that once you have RSVP'd for this event you will receive a link to register for the Zoom Webinar. You must complete this second step to gain access to the event link.**



## 2021 Acting President's Message

### *The Hoarder in Me?* *By Laura Strom*

The only time I had seen more colorful whirly-gigs, salt-water taffy and toys were being sold. I had no idea how 76 (I counted) colorful gyrating spinners could fit in a 4-foot square front yard. In retrospect, this should have prepared me for what I was about to see inside the double-wide trailer.

I was a new case manager meeting an older childless, widow with no family for the first time. She greeted me cheerfully as I admired the array of color outside her home. She invited me inside where she had cleared a tiny 12-inch square spot on her couch for me to sit, after maneuvering sideways through the tiny path. She sat across from me with a stack of newspapers in front of her that hid her chair completely. She could just peek over it by tipping her head up to make occasional eye contact as we spoke. I sat very still so as not to tip the stacks of paper on the couch, over onto me. Every space was filled, piled high. When she gave me a tour of her home, one bedroom could not even be entered as it was filled with clothes racks and boxes. The bathtub was filled with magazines. The stovetop had magazines and boxes on it. Her bed had apparently lost some of the slats under it, and one corner dipped down onto the floor. Mouse droppings were all over the place. It smelled of mold and mildew.

Somehow, over time, I was able to encourage her to agree we had to create paths through her house that were at least 12 inches wide so emergency responders could render services. I had the fire department come over to explain why they felt the 6-inch pathways throughout the home were inadequate. I engaged a home care agency that knew about hoarder clean-ups, and they suggested an outdoor shed as a staging area to go through things and sort them. I hired a mold expert to come test the mold which revealed a variety of penicillins, and black stachybotrys mold (the dangerous kind) in entryways where the lady regularly hosed the walkways. I also insisted she bathe at least weekly, and got a very wonderful caregiver to help her adjust. The caregiver later told me the first time she bathed the

woman, mouse droppings came out of her long, voluminous grey hair.

Although this woman was quite upset with me about the cleanup I insisted was needed for her safety, she eventually appreciated the extra help, caring, and sense of friendship she received from caregivers. A few months later she felt proud to show me how much progress had been made as we spoke now able to see each other clearly in her living room, with the paper stacks reduced in half. She was now benefitting from some additional services, including meals.

This insightful experience gave me respect for the complication of hoarding. In March through May 2020, I found myself, like many others engaging in a degree of hoarding as a safety measure to prevent unneeded trips to stores in the middle of a pandemic. Why not buy three bottles of shampoo? And heaven forbid we run out of toilet paper!

Dr. Robin Zasio's book is entitled *The Hoarder in You: How to Live a Happier, Healthier, Uncluttered Life*. I can honestly say there is a hoarder in me, and she stocked our home to the brim with anything and everything a person could need or want during last year. It was the answer to my coronavirus anxiety, and I imagine many of my colleagues and clients can completely understand. If you're being honest.... 😊

RECAMFT is privileged to have Dr. Zasio giving us a 3-hour presentation on June 4, 2021 on Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Thank you again to our RECAMFT Programs Committee for bringing us this outstanding educational opportunity!

With gratitude,

Laura Strom, PsyD, LMFT  
2021 Acting President, RECAMFT  
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## **2021 Schedule At-A-Glance**

\*Subject to change: details will appear on our events page as they are finalized\*

**June 4 10:30 1:45 Dr. Robin Zasio OCD & Hoarding 3 CEUS**  
**June 25 L&E Series A – Testifying & Record Keeping**

**FREE TO RECAMFT MEMBERS ON ZOOM**  
**REGISTRATION REQUIRED – [WWW.RECAMFT.ORG](http://WWW.RECAMFT.ORG)**

**RECAMFT has lots more events coming up but for the sake of space, please check out the website.**

## **Considering a residential treatment or outdoor program?**



**C**ollaborating with referring professionals, we are nationally respected educational consultants who specialize in providing recommendations for students with special needs of an emotional, behavioral or psychological nature. We travel extensively throughout the year and have personally toured over two hundred schools and programs. As Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists, we credit our clinical training and experience in deepening our understanding of a student’s needs.



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# Taking the Next Steps Together Toward Anti-Racism

Dan Wile 1938 – 2020

By Kevin Russell, LMFT

We are inviting Sonoma County mental health professionals to gather monthly for a  
**Zoom Salon,  
Taking the Next Steps Together Toward Anti-Racism**

On the 3rd Monday of Each Month - Next Meeting

**Monday, June 21st, 2021 from 12:00-1:00**  
to invite discussions on racism, White privilege, and how to be anti-racist practitioners.

We are excited to facilitate conversations and curate documentaries, podcasts & readings such as 13th by Ava DuVernay, the classic White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack by Peggy McIntosh, My Grandmother's Hands by Resmaa Menakem and How to be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi. We will then discuss how we can apply these ideas to our daily work.

Together we will think about and discuss big questions such as:

- ~How do we address and illuminate race and racism in our therapeutic conversations?
- ~What does it mean to be an anti-racist professional in the mental health field?
- ~What can we do to ease access to therapy services?
- ~ What are the issues that impact people of color in Sonoma County? For example, education, sense of belonging, policing, work, housing, and representation?

**Without inner change, there can be no outer change.**  
**Without collective change, no change matters.**  
Reverend Angel Kyodo Williams

**Hosted by (and for more info)**  
**Linda Block, LMFT & Katharina Kienböck, LMFT**  
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If memory serves, back in 1999 RECAMFT arranged for a presentation on couples therapy by East Bay psychologist and writer, Dan Wile. Being a relative newbie to the field of psychotherapy, having only been in practice for ten years at that point, I eagerly attended the training with great hopes of learning not only something about how to help the couples who found their way to my door, but also how to understand my own romantic relational life. I arrived hoping to find a good teacher. I did not anticipate finding a mentor and friend as well. But I did.



His talk was enlivening, insightful brilliant even. I'd never heard anyone talk with such com-passion and under-standing of the patterns and problems that permeate relational life. Inspired, I asked Dan if he'd be willing to come meet for a monthly consultation group if I found others who shared my interest and, to my surprise, he smiled and gave an easy, "yes". For the next twenty-two years he would travel from his East Bay home to my office in Santa Rosa and teach us the fundamentals of Collaborative Couple Therapy, while inviting us to share cases and quandaries of our couple work.

Though perhaps not as well known as John Gottman or Susan Johnson, his masterful approach to couples' work was acknowledged and honored by both of them. Indeed, so much so by Gottman that, in recent years he even refers to one intervention now taught in the Gottman training as The Dan Wile Intervention. Even referring to Dan at one point as "a genius and the greatest living marital therapist". Those familiar with the Collaborative Couple Therapy approach know that both the Gottman Method and Sue Johnson's Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy dovetail nicely with Dan's work.

A little over a year ago we lost Dan as a result of a number of health issues he'd been dealing with the last few years. The loss of his influence for seasoned therapists, and the next generation coming up, is incalculable. Fortunately, his three previous books are still available. And, now they are joined by perhaps his magnum opus: **Solving the Moment**. Completed shortly before his death and recently made available by his wife, therapist Dorothy Kaufman, **Solving the Moment** is filled with his brilliant insights and deep understandings of couple dynamics. He calls it a manual, and rightly so, for here is a practical workbook offering a concrete framework on how to be with and help couples who desperately need to learn how to talk with each other.

A deep bow of gratitude to RECAMFT for bringing Dan into my life and to Dan for the many lessons offered, and received, in how to be a compassionate therapist and person.

## WHAT YOU MISSED

by Michael Krikorian

We had a very thought-provoking presentation on May 7th by Ofer Zur, Ph.D., on “23 Ways to Protect Your License from Licensing Board Investigations and Civil Lawsuits.” Dr. Zur started by clarifying that to be practicing within our Standard of Care is not to be perfect – “it is a C+ standard -- you’re not expected to be free of mistakes or follow psychoanalytic principles of no self-disclosure” or to “follow rigid risk management principles of don’ts.” He said we are expected to be reasonable and prudent. And, that a lot of what might initially be thought of as “don’t” behavior all depends on context. For instance, the rightness or wrongness of accepting a gift from a client all depends on context such as culture of the clients, the meaning expressed, the value of the gift.

Dr. Zur talked about the importance of seeking consultation whenever questions arise in the course of treatment (especially with suicidal, violent or psychopathic clients or clients that trigger the therapist). He takes a broad view of consultation as he describes 5 types: 1) “hallway” consultations or phone calls to colleagues, 2) posting on list-serves or chat rooms while protecting your client’s privacy, 3) peer consultation groups, 4) consulting a risk-management expert or attorney, and 5) contacting a clinical expert or ethicist. He emphasized documenting these consultations in your record as the Board operates on the “if it is not in your notes, it didn’t happen” premise.

Dr. Zur went on to list some obvious and some not-so-obvious things to avoid. Among the more obvious were don’t drink and drive, don’t have sex with current or recently terminated clients, don’t break confidentiality, don’t alter your written records or create new documents if contacted by the Board, don’t engage in business dual relationships and don’t ignore a letter from the Board. Other strong recommendations included do not make custody recommendations as that is not in our purview unless you have special training and doing that kind of work is different from being a client’s therapist. He recommended against turning debt over to a collection agency as he felt it is likely to lead to client anger and retaliation which can create costly problems. Dr. Zur also warned against getting “carried away” with interacting with clients on social media as it is easy to blur boundaries. Protecting the client’s privacy and confidentiality is foremost while protecting your own privacy can be done by having a separate professional and personal Facebook profile. He noted that the APA and NASW forbid accepting clients as Facebook friends. Dr. Zur recognizes that digital “natives” use texting and the like almost exclusively, therefore he suggests you include a section in your office policies regarding texting that covers such things as appropriate and inappropriate content, what response time can be expected and clarifying that texts can become part of the clinical record. He said that some licensing boards require that you retain all texts with clients.

In terms of record keeping, Dr. Zur recommended keeping only one set of records. He said to document boundary crossings such as gifts, bartering, self-disclosure, home visits and touch and then document how you thought about what you did.

If you get contacted by the Board regarding a complaint, do not respond to them without getting legal representation from an expert on Board matters. Contact your liability insurance carrier right away and you may get legal help from them. Don’t contact the client that filed the complaint as this is now a legal matter.

Thank you, Dr. Zur, for this very informative presentation on understanding what is needed to practice the art of healing while reducing the likelihood of being sanctioned by the Board if a client were to file a complaint. Dr. Zur offers many trainings on issues relevant to practicing psychotherapy through his institute which can be found at [www.zurinstitute.com](http://www.zurinstitute.com) or by calling (833) 961-1344.

*Michael Krikorian, MFT has over 40 years experience providing both individual and couples psychotherapy from his Santa Rosa office. More information can be found at [www.krikorianmft.com](http://www.krikorianmft.com).*

### **RSJC EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**“Systemic Racism Explained”** a four minute video by Act.Tv on [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrHIQIO\\_bdQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrHIQIO_bdQ)

**Me & White Supremacy** by Layla F Saad

**How to Be an Anti-Racist** by Ibram X. Kendi

**Raising White Kids: Bringing up children in a racially unjust America** by Jennifer Harvey

**White Fragility** by Robin DiAngelo

**My Grandmother’s Hands** by Resmaa Menakem

**Between the World and Me** by Ta-Nahisi Coates

**Race, Politics, and Pedagogy Education in a Time of Crisis** by Henry A. Giroux

**13<sup>th</sup>**, free on YouTube courtesy of Netflix. A must see to grasp how slavery exists today.

**Coded Bias** on Netflix. A documentary on racial and gender bias in AI and facial recognition software

**“Racism is Real”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTcSVQJ2h8g>

**Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pM-HpZQWKT4>

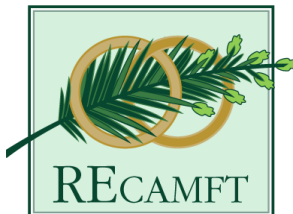
**Miss Representation** full documentary on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/3syOGI2nbbs>

**Positive Images** <https://www.posimages.org/>

support, advocacy and education to Sonoma County’s LGBTQIA+ community

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**JUNE ISSUE**

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