

Welcome from the Program Chair

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Welcome to San Diego! As the 2017 Program Chair, I am thrilled to welcome you to the **Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) 51st Annual Convention!** San Diego is an outdoor-extravaganza with its magnificent climate, pristine beaches and diverse terrain, numerous dynamic neighborhoods, enchanting attractions (e.g., “the largest urban cultural park”, world-class zoo, major port), “rich military history”, and adjacent to Mexico. Local Arrangements Committee chaired by Aaron Blashill and Tiffany Brown will introduce you to the many outstanding sites and events including the ABCT Saturday Night Dance Party!

The theme of the convention this year is “Applying CBT in Diverse Contexts.” Presentations will address the social and cultural aspects of CBT including contextual cues that inform our hypothesis development and treatment strategies with clients. Our program will showcase research, clinical practice and training that increases our understanding of mental health problems and mechanisms, improves the efficacy and effectiveness of CBT for diverse groups, and enables us to disseminate these evidence-based treatments across professions.

I am incredibly honored and excited to have five luminary invited speakers discuss their groundbreaking work that highlights our theme. Stanley Sue from Palo Alto University and UC Davis (Emeritus) will speak on “*Cultural Competency: Political Correctness or Necessity?*”, raising and reflecting on controversies and dilemmas associated with research on cultural competency and consider the effects on practice and psychological science. Steven Safren from University of Miami will focus on the need for integrated interventions that address both health behavior change and comorbid mental health challenges in his talk on “*Applying evidence-based CBT principles to disease prevention and self-care in diverse, sexual minority and global populations: Lessons learned from HIV/AIDS*”. Next, Jeanne Miranda from UCLA will present her work on improving disparities in health care, reviewing outcomes and gaps in her address on “*Cognitive Behavioral Therapy with Low-income and Minority Communities*”. Marsha M. Linehan from the University of Washington will present her Lifetime Achievement Award Address “*DBT: Where we are, where we were and where we are going*”. She will discuss DBT as “a trans-diagnostic modular behavioral intervention” and consider mechanisms of action and the guidelines for the use of treatment components. Finally, in her presidential address, “*Team Science across Disciplines: Advancing CBT Research and Practice for Hoarding*”, Gail Steketee will highlight the challenges and essential roles played by academic colleagues, trainees, and community partners in opening the door to understanding and treating a complex mental health problem from multiple perspectives.

It has been an honor to serve as Program Chair. I am grateful to President Gail Steketee and the ABCT Board for inviting me and supporting me through this process. Working with President Steketee is a privilege and genuine pleasure. I would like to thank the record 360 members of the 2017 Program Committee for their expertise, careful reviews, and flexibility during the peer

review process resulting in a well-rounded exceptional program (and an extra thanks to the “Super Reviewers”). Additionally, I thank the chairs of the Convention and Education Issues Committees for their dedication and exceptional job developing this year’s exciting program: Barbara Kamholz (CIT), Aidan Wright (AMASS), Lauren Weinstock (Workshops), Sarah Kertz (Master Clinician Seminars), Risa Weisberg (Research & Professional Development), Christina L. Boisseau (Institutes), Kiara Timpano (2018 Program Chair), and Aaron Blashill and Tiffany Brown (Local Arrangements). I sincerely appreciate the valuable insights and support of Mary Jane Eimer, Executive Director, Barbara Kamholz, Coordinator of Convention and Education Issues, and Sandra Pimentel, Representative-at-Large and Board liaison to Convention and Education Issues. A hearty thanks to Tammy Schuler, Barbara Mazzella, and all of the ABCT Central Office Staff for their extraordinary devotion to the Convention planning and ABCT. I am especially grateful to past Program Chair Katharina Kircanski and past Coordinator of Convention and Education Issues Jeffrey Goodie for their invaluable guidance. A special thank you to Linda Still, Director of Education and Meeting Services and Annie Dantowitz, Assistant Program Chair for their industriousness and support that has been crucial to this process and the success of this Program. Linda’s wisdom and instrumental support facilitated this entire process. I am also incredibly thankful for Annie’s diligence, unwavering commitment, and humor throughout the planning process. Thanks to the many others (too many to name individually) for the countless efforts and gestures that contributed to this program. Finally, a heartfelt thanks to my spouse and children for their patience, cheer, and teamwork!

Wishing you all a fun and stimulating convention!