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## The Battle of the Brains



Men and women are different. Sounds simple. However, until recently many researchers in the Social Sciences avoided even suggesting there could be innate psychological differences between the sexes. Many feared a painful death by Political Correctness. But, with the exploding technology of PET scans and functional MRIs, a substantial body of scientific evidence has accumulated showing measurable differences in the neural wiring and psychological makeup of men and women.

It all begins in our fetal brains which, up until the eighth week in utero, are essentially “female”. By week nine, if you are carrying XY chromosomes, a substantial testosterone surge begins the process of “sculpting” neural pathways to create a “male brain”. Over the next ten weeks in utero, specific neural circuits are pruned out of the previously

“female” brain (called apoptosis) while other circuits are added.

Ultimately, the differences between men’s and women’s brains prove to be complex and widespread. The mature female brain, on average, has about 11% more neurons in the language, communication, and hearing centers than the male brain. The hippocampus, a hub for emotion and memory, is measurably larger in women explaining why women, on average, tend to be better at expressing emotions and remembering the details of emotional events. By contrast, the mature male brain has two and a half times more space devoted to sexual drive as well as larger centers for action and aggression.

What does this have to do with practicing psychotherapy? A lot. Because whether the wiring comes by nature or nurture, our understanding of how the brain develops and operates is fundamental to our clinical practice and this leads to one more emerging scientific fact. Our brains are “plastic”. Simply, this means we can fundamentally change throughout our lives. Although we may be inherently born with certain wiring, we have the capacity to continuously create new neural pathways for thinking, feeling, and reacting. And science is now demonstrating that what we consider becoming a psychologically “integrated” person literally requires cultivating integrated connections between the various parts of our brain. This means activating more than just the centers responsible for insight and understanding. Engaging the brains of people in psychotherapy in their centers of feeling, language, touch, sensation, sight, and even movement are all important parts of the therapeutic process. The challenge here at the Institute is to create a richness and depth in our work with patients to help them connect and integrate these diverse aspects of themselves. Amazingly, as we walk through this process with them, we end up creating the same effect in ourselves.



—David Fogel, MD

*Dr. Fogel is a psychiatrist practicing in Bethesda, MD and received extensive training at the Institute.*

## Fellowship Program

The cornerstone of our unique approach to psychotherapy training is our interactive apprenticeship model. The Fellowship Training Program offers a rare opportunity to regularly observe experienced therapists in their day-to-day work with patients. Each Fellow accepts responsibility as a co-therapist in at least one ongoing, well-established psychotherapy group, working side by side with experienced faculty members. We choose our Fellows' placements from more than the 20 long-term therapy groups operating in six psychotherapy practices. This offers a rich venue for the student to experience, *in vivo*, the demands and rewards of our profession.

Our faculty includes psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers, all of whom have made significant contributions to various professional organizations, including the American Group Psychotherapy Association, the American Academy of Psychotherapists, and the Michigan Group Psychotherapy Association. These practitioners have presented internationally and made numerous contributions to our field's literature. They subscribe to the highest ethical standards, supported by the use of a co-therapy model with ensures that the treatment of all patients is overseen by a team of professionals. More information can be found at our website [www.iigp.org](http://www.iigp.org).

## Reuven Bar-Levav Scholarship

The RBL Scholarship is awarded annually to post-graduate students in the final year of their psychiatry, psychology or social work programs who show promise in the field of psychotherapy. Applicants are required to submit an original work with a clinical focus, typewritten in APA format, with a maximum of 4000 words. The Scholarships consist of a \$500 cash award and a paid placement in a time-limited group supervision series.

- Papers are judged by a panel of faculty members.
- The deadline for submission of papers is February 29, 2008
- Authors' name(s) and academic affiliation(s) are to be included as part of a separate attached MS-Word or PDF document. This document should also include the submitter's mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address.
- Scholarship winners will be notified by May 1.
- Questions about the program and submissions should be emailed to Leora Bar-Levav, MD at [leora.bar-levav@iigp.org](mailto:leora.bar-levav@iigp.org)

## Who we are

The Bar-Levav Educational Association (a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization) was originally founded in the 1970's. Over the past 30 years, we have trained dozens of professionals in the practice of combined individual and group psychotherapy. However, in the 1990's, a "quick fix" focus became popular and treatment mostly by medications (many advertised on T.V.) became widespread. Hoping to buck this trend, we decided to broaden our scope. We changed our name to the more descriptive Institute for Individual and Group Psychotherapy (a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization) and we began to aggressively promote our training program. We want to let many more people know what the Institute is and what we have to offer. We hope you find what we do interesting and important.



From left: Pamela Torracco, ACSW; Natan HarPaz, PhD; Paul P. Shultz, ACSW; Leora Bar-Levav, MD; Ronald J. Hook, ACSW; David A. Baker, ACSW; Marcia B. Stein, ACSW.

**“The wish to live without fear is synonymous with the wish to be mothered perfectly by oneself and by others, and it continues to be every person’s basic goal throughout life.”** Reuven Bar-Levav, M.D. (TISF, p. 326)

In *Thinking in the Shadow of Feelings*, Dr. Bar-Levav calls this wish the “pull of regression.” It is a normal part of all of us, like when we want to hit the “snooze” button. But the pull of regression is easy to confuse with something not so normal: “The ‘push against progressing’ is the persistent refusal to grow up and to acquire mastery, and it may be conscious or unconscious.” (TISF, p. 328) This refusal is obvious when a person hits the snooze button so many times he’s late for work.

We all struggle to some degree with the push against progressing. Peter Pan had his “Never Never Land” where he would never have to grow up. Our *WISH* to have such a place for ourselves reflects the “pull of regression” – a wish to be mothered perfectly and be free from fear. But when we start to *DO* things to try to convert everyday reality into Never Never Land we are doomed to fail. Many marriages begin with a fantasy that being married to the “right one” will by itself bring happiness. But marriage, especially when kids come along, involves a lot of hard work. Disappointment and frustration must be overcome in order to make the partnership work well. Sadly, many are unwilling to tolerate the frustration and disappointment. They expect to live in “Never Never Land.” Refusing to accept the demands of adult living, they may seek another partner with whom they hope to live in bliss, only to be again disappointed. The pattern often repeats itself.

Marriage is merely one of countless arenas in which the “push against progressing” expresses itself. Maybe a person moves from job to job to job. Maybe he repeatedly mismanages his financial concerns, despite repeatedly seeking counsel on how to do it better.

Why would someone have such a persistent refusal? As Dr. Bar-Levav writes, the push against progressing blossoms in those who as children were not nurtured properly, or didn’t get adequate limit-setting, or both. Here at the Institute, we teach a model of combined individual and group psychotherapy with two or more therapists. This approach provides ample opportunities to address and correct both kinds of childhood deficit. Sometimes it is demanding, difficult work for both psychotherapist and patient. When it works, and it usually does, the results are gratifying.

## Faculty and Graduate Newsbites



David Baker, ACSW

Several faculty members recently traveled to their alma mater’s to present on our fellowship program. Pam Torracco and Paul Shultz traveled to the University of Michigan, School of Social Work. Ron Hook and Marcia Stein spoke to a group of graduating social work students at Wayne State University, their alma mater.

**David Baker, ACSW** (IIGP Faculty Member) has been elected as the President of the Institute for Individual and Group Psychotherapy.

**William Yochim, ACSW** (an IIGP Graduate) is practicing psychotherapy part-time in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He is considering consulting with a forensic practice on referrals from the U.S. Justice Department, but is trying to remember he is semi-retired.

**James Stanislav** (an IIGP Graduate) recently presented a seminar on how feelings can influence thinking at the Center for the Family in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Jim recently went on a hiking trip in Kentucky.

**Leora Bar-Levav, MD** (IIGP Faculty Member) is trying to find time to work on her next degree of Black Belt in Karate. She serves on the Institute steering committee. She also serves as Vice-President of the Zionist organization of America, Events Chairperson of the Michigan Chapter of the Jewish National Fund, and recently helped her husband organize a successful fundraiser for the America Diabetes Association. Her husband, Dr. Gary Edelson, serves as the President of the Southeastern Leadership Council.

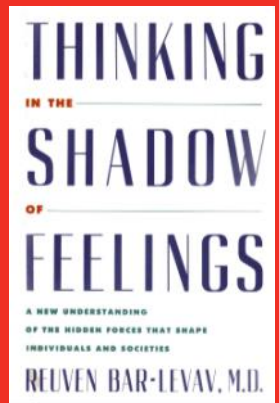


Leora Bar-Levav, MD

### *Thinking in the*

### *Shadow of Feelings* (1988: Simon and Schuster)

The founder of the Institute, Dr. Reuven Bar-Levav, wrote the book *Thinking in the Shadow of Feelings*. The book defines the theory of human motivation that guides our clinical work at IIGP. Each issue of *INSIGHTS* includes a brief discussion of an excerpt from the book. The book is available in its entirety on our website [www.iigp.org](http://www.iigp.org).





## TUESDAY SEMINARS WORKSHOPS

### ***The Substance Abuser in a Traditional Psychotherapy Group: Prognosis?***

#### **Tuesday Seminar**

Tuesday, January 8, 15 & 22 – 12:15pm to 1:30pm  
3.5 CEU's - \$50.00

#### **Workshop**

Tuesday, January 29 – 12:00pm to 2:00pm  
2.0 CEU's - \$25.00

### ***Using Alternative Physical/Martial Arts Techniques for Dilemmas in Psychotherapy***

#### **Tuesday Seminar**

Tuesday, February 5, 12, 19 – 12:15pm to 1:30pm  
3.5 CEU's - \$50.00

#### **Workshop**

Tuesday, February 26 – 3:00pm to 5:00pm  
2.0 CEU's - \$25.00

### ***Introduction to Combined Individual and Group Psychotherapy***

#### **Workshop**

Tuesday, February 5 – 7:30pm to 9:30pm  
2.0 CEU's - No Charge

#### **General Information**

Each of the Institute's trainings are offered in two formats: Tuesday Seminar - 3 sessions 3.5 CEU's - \$50.00 & Workshops - 1 Session 2.0 CEU's - \$25.00 (Discounts for students.) All seminars are held at 29600 Northwestern Hwy, Ste 100, Southfield, MI. The Institute offers these classes for physicians, psychologists and social workers. IIGP is approved by the Michigan State Medical Society and by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for physicians and psychologists. IIGP maintains responsibility for the programs and its content. Our programs are approved by the Michigan Social Work Continuing Education Collaborative for Social Workers for Continuing Education. **Reservations are required.** Please send an email to seminars@iigp.org or call (248) 353-5333 for reservations or for special accommodations.



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