March 24, 2022

Dear VA Psychologists and VA Psychology Trainees:

We are very pleased to invite you to our 25th Annual VA Psychology Leadership Conference (VAPLC) that will be held in San Antonio, Texas from Tuesday, May 31, 2022 through Friday, June 3, 2022. The conference is sponsored by the Association of Veterans Affairs Psychologist Leaders (AVAPL), the American Psychological Association (APA), and APA Division 18: Psychologists in Public Service. The Office of Mental Health Services and Suicide Prevention at VA Central Office also collaborate with the sponsoring organizations to support content for the conference. The theme this year is “Together Again: Recharging Our Community and Reimagining Our Next 25 years as Psychology Leaders”.

This conference has historically played an important role in improving mental health and behavioral care for our nation's Veterans by fostering leadership within the VA psychology workforce. We invite you to join us for this year’s conference which will focus on: 1. Renewing and rebuilding VA psychology community in light of COVID; 2. Strengthening and reimagining our healthcare system; and 3. Retaining highly qualified psychologists to lead us into the next 25 years. Our overall goal is to continue to prioritize Veteran healthcare, while providing a sense of “re-charging” and reconnecting for VA psychologists. Specifically, speakers will be focusing on insights, strategies, and wellness for our psychology community. Most importantly, in addition to enriching psychologists as leaders, this conference will provide an opportunity to be “Together Again.”

We have planned keynote addresses, panel presentations, and breakouts on topics such as: setting the tone for the future in mental healthcare and psychology; continuing the focus on improving diversity, inclusion, and equity; reimagining healthcare to increase sustainability while improving the quality of care. Additional topics covered include: delivery of care to Veterans’ at high-risk for suicide in the context of COVID; building strength and resilience within the VA Psychologist Community; the role of VA in community care; technological advances to enhance care delivery; VA Psychologist retention; and updates/aspirations for the future by the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention at VA Central Office. These are just a few highlights from our exciting agenda. We look forward to seeing you in San Antonio!

The committee is still working on additional topics and finalizing the agenda, so be sure to visit the conference website regularly to see the most recent agenda: http://conference.avapl.org.

The VAPLC will host a poster session again this year, which has proven to be a popular feature of the conference. The theme for this year’s posters is the same as the conference theme (“Together Again: Recharging Our Community and Reimagining Our Next 25 years as Psychology Leaders”) and preference will be given for posters consistent with this theme. Posters may present original research, descriptions of clinical programs, best practices, or implementation of programs within VA. We also welcome and will consider other quality presentations, including research that has been presented elsewhere. Interested presenters should submit proposals via email to Dr. Kaela Joseph, Poster Session Committee Chair at conference.chair@avapl.org using the “Poster

APA Ψ Association of VA Psychologist Leaders Ψ APA Division 18-Psychologists in Public Service
Finally, we will have an open plenary session. We invite all VA psychologists and psychology trainees to consider submitting a proposal for a brief presentation on novel or innovative best practices for improving mental health care for Veterans through recharging our psychology community and reimaging the best practices that could help us to move forward. Topics may include, but are not limited to: ideas for ensuring a sustainable workforce of psychologists by focusing on wellness; using the past two-year pandemic as inspiration to move forward in specific ways to elevate Veteran mental health care; best practices for shifting the delivery of healthcare during the pandemic; using measurement based care for the purposes of enhancing the quality of care for our Veterans in the future; learning lessons, during the pandemic, for offering quality mental healthcare services to specific populations, including Veterans at high-risk for suicide; Veterans with PTSD; etc; Again, these are just a few ideas but please do be creative, as this is truly part of “Reimaging Our Future.” We will select three to five proposals for this open session. Proposals should be submitted via email to Dr. Kaela Joseph at VAPLC Conference Chair <conference.chair@avapl.org> using the “Poster and Open Plenary Submission Form” found at the website. Again, the deadline for early consideration is March 15, 2022.

The schedule for the conference is similar to those of recent years; activities will commence on Tuesday, May 31, 2022 with an informal evening social hour and registration from 4:30pm – 6:30pm. The social hours have always been an ideal time to meet and network with fellow psychologists. Participants should plan to arrive on Tuesday in time for that activity. The main conference starts the morning of Wednesday, June 1, 2022 with the option of activities related to self-care (yoga, etc.) and breakfast at 7:00am. The conference continues through the end of the day on Thursday, June 2, 2022. A social hour, including the poster session and networking dinners will follow the Wednesday and Thursday sessions. Our CEU (4 CEUs Total) Leadership Workshop: Professional Development and Growth Across the Career Span: What’s YOUR Next Move as a VHA Psychologist? This event will be held from 8:00am to 12:15pm on Friday, June 3, 2022, beginning with breakfast at 7:00am.

We are offering two $300 scholarships to VA trainees (i.e., VA predoctoral interns and/or VA postdoctoral fellows/residents) who are planning to pursue a career in the VA and who are willing to assist with administrative support for the conference. Scholarship recipients are selected randomly from trainees who indicate on the conference registration form that they would like to be considered for the scholarship. Those selected will be expected to be present for the entire conference (through Friday) in order to fulfill their duties. Trainees who would like to be considered for the scholarships should register for the conference by March 15, 2022. A random selection of the scholarships will be announced by March 18, 2022.

This year’s conference will be held at The Westin Riverwalk – San Antonio, located at 420 West Market Street, San Antonio, Texas, 78205; (210) 224-6500. Please use the following link to reserve your room: Book your group rate for VA Psychology Leadership Conference or call 1-888-627-8396. If you call to register, please note that you are calling as part of the “2022 VA Psychology Leadership Conference.” Our negotiated room rate is $ 127/night + 16.75% tax, but please make sure to bring the Texas tax exempt form with you; otherwise, you may be
charged at the non-federal rate. This form can be downloaded at: https://www.comptroller.texas.gov/forms/12-302.pdf

Conference registration is as follows:
- AVAPL, APA, and Division 18 members: $375
- Non-members: $500
- Postdoctoral fellows: $150
- Predoctoral interns: $115

The post-conference workshop will be $100. Registration fees includes breakfast, lunch, and refreshments on Wednesday and Thursday; and breakfast on Friday for those who register for the CEU workshop. Dinners are on your own and a wonderful chance to socialize and see the sites of San Antonio’s River Walk.

Attendees will receive approximately 10 hours APA-approved CE credits (subject to final APA approval) for attending all of the sessions on Wednesday and Thursday. Those staying for the Friday workshop will receive 4 additional APA-approved CE credits.

For individuals seeking travel funding, information for the conference is as follows:
Course name: VA Psychology Leadership Conference
Vendor’s mailing address:
Association of VA Psychologist Leaders
4150 Clement St. (116B)
San Francisco, CA 94121
Telephone number: 601-364-7871
Email: conference.chair@avapl.org

Please share the above information widely with all VA psychologists (administrators, clinicians, and researchers) and trainees at your station. Information on how to join AVAPL or APA Division 18 prior to the conference (to receive the reduced rate for registration) and additional conference information can be obtained from Dr. Kaily Clark., Chair, VA Psychology Leadership Conference Planning Committee (conference.chair@avapl.org).

This is a wonderful conference energized by the dedication, expertise, and vision of VA psychologists nationwide. We are certain you will find it both informative and inspiring, and we look forward to seeing you in San Antonio!

Sincerely,
Dr. Kaily Clark, VAPLC Conference Chair
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Sponsoring Organizations