



A SUMMARY OF THE COMMITTEE'S HISTORY

From its inception in 1977, AFTA has been a primarily white organization (originally established predominantly by male psychiatrists) dedicated to advancing systemic thinking and practices for families. In the 1980's, as there began to be more interest in integrating issues of diversity and social justice into the field of family therapy, AFTA began to question and address the lack of diversity in its membership.

1990: At the October Board meeting AFTA makes a commitment to focus on issues of diversity and multiculturalism. A number of writings in its newsletter reflect these concerns.

1991: Recommendations are made to promote the organization's commitment to social justice. A Committee is to be established which will be responsible for organizing a Forum at the Annual Meeting and developing policy and action proposals with the goal of making AFTA representative of the society of which it is a part. It also is to oversee a Diversity Fund which it will develop and sponsor a Cultural and Economic Diversity Award and Stipend. The newsletter continues to reflect social justice concerns.

1992-1994: Chair, Iris Cornelius

The Cultural and Economic Diversity Committee is formally established, and the following initiatives are put into effect: 1) increase racial and ethnic diversity in the membership by establishing a guest program for eligible professionals from minority groups, 2) integrate race and ethnic issues into presentations at the Annual Meeting, 3) encourage members to increase sensitivity to the multicultural society in which we live, 4) establish a Diversity Fund to sponsor guests to attend the Annual Meeting, 5) support an Award and Stipend to honor the work of an AFTA eligible professional who is a member of a minority group doing outstanding training, research, or clinical work designed to strengthen marginalized families. A resource packet is put out called "Honoring and working with diversity in family therapy."

1994-1996: Chair, Betty MacKune-Karrer

Diversity of membership increases. A Mission Statement describing the charge of the Committee is established and recommendations are made to address diversity at all levels of AFTA's organizational structure, including the composition of the Board, the membership of the organization, the newsletter, and the annual program. Fund raising efforts provide funds for the annual award and invitations to prospective members to attend the Annual Meeting. Awards are presented to invited AFTA eligible members in 1993 and 1994.

1996-1998: Chair, Nydia Garcia Preto

The Committee continues to work towards the integration of cultural and economic diversity issues into family systems theory, including being aware of the broader social context of interventions in clinical work, training, supervision, and research. The guidelines for the Cultural and Economic Diversity Award (CED) are added to AFTA's Operations Manual. The Diversity Forum brings together past chairs to give an historical perspective and other speakers to talk about specific clinical experience or ideas that relate to issues of cultural diversity.

1998-2000: Chair, Eliana Korin

The requirements for the Cultural and Economic Diversity Award change. The award will be made to an AFTA member or non-member who is directing, developing or deeply involved in a family clinical service, training program, or research project that is designed to enhance the quality of life and/or address injustices affecting people of diverse cultural and economic backgrounds or people oppressed on the basis of sexual orientation.

2000-2002: Chair, CharlesEtta Sutton

The Committee continues to make efforts to better infuse and integrate race, culture, class, sexual orientation and faith as part of the interwoven fabric of AFTA. It also works on clarifying guidelines for submitting proposals and funding the CED Award.

2002-2004: Chair, Mathew Mock

The work continues. A Forum called "Braided Conversations" is facilitated where members of different marginalized groups speak about their experience in AFTA.

2004-2009: Chair, Jane Ariel, with Sarah Stearns, Chair, 2005, Co-chair, 2007-2009

The name of the CED Award is changed to the Social Justice Award. A new mission statement is proposed and accepted by the Board. AFTA's Mission Statement is revised to include a specific focus on social justice. The Committee defines in writing its approach to social justice, and the Board agrees to put it and AFTA's Mission Statement on all printed documents. "Facilitated Learning Circles" are created for conference participants to be heard about any micro-aggressions they experience. A brochure to chronicle the Committee's history is proposed.

2009-2011: Chair, Pilar Hernandez-Wolfe

The Committee's brochure is published.



AFTA'S APPROACH TO SOCIAL JUSTICE addresses the structural oppression that plays out within families and at different levels within society. Structural oppression refers to the situation in which people are divided into groups which have unequal ability and opportunity to access power and resources. AFTA's approach challenges the institutional and interpersonal policies and practices as well as the underlying ideologies that perpetuate the continuation of these contemporary and historical injustices. It calls for personal and collective action to establish equitable social participation, allowing individuals, families, and communities the possibility to exist with dignity, self-determination, and physical and psychological well-being.



CONFERENCE FORUMS SPONSORED BY THE COMMITTEE

- 1992:** Discussion of the Committee and Issues of Diversity
- 1993:** Discussion of the Committee and Issues of Diversity
- 1994:** Discussion of the Committee and Issues of Diversity
- 1995:** Discussion of the Committee and Issues of Diversity
- 1996:** Conflict and Choice Points for Clinicians and Researchers As They Engage Diversity Issues
- 1997:** How our Personal and Political Values and Attitudes Concerning Diversity Affect Our Work
- 1998:** The Role of Community Practice in the Field of Family Therapy
- 1999:** Healing in Cross-Cultural Dialogues (with attention to the multiple contexts of diversity)
- 2000:** The Complexities of Compassion
- 2001:** Complexities of Race (across the Americas): The Dialogue Continues
- 2002:** Insidious Trauma and the Politics of the “Us” and “Them” Dichotomization (following the events of 9/11)
- 2003:** Braided Conversations (led by representatives of various marginalized groups)
- 2004:** A Dialogue Among Researchers and Clinicians on Cross-Cultural Adoption
- 2005:** Visions of Collaborative Family Therapy Training for Underserved Areas Throughout the World
- 2006:** Systemic Responses to Disaster (Joint Forum with Human Rights and Family Policy)
- 2007:** Creating an AFTA Action Group for Best Practices in Response to Disaster (Joint Forum with Human Rights and Family Policy)
- 2008:** Multi-layered Challenges to Social Justice Accountability in a Community-Based Adolescent & Family Counseling Program
- 2009:** Looking Forward: Social Justice for Communities and Families (Joint Forum with Human Rights and Family Policy)



RECIPIENTS OF AFTA'S SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARDS

- 1993:** Luis H. Zayas, Comprehensive Health Care Center of Montefiore Medical Center, New York. Also honored for outstanding work were Rhea Almeida (Somerset, New Jersey) Peter Chang (Berkeley, California), Frieda Hopkins-Outlaw (Haverford, Pennsylvania), and Carey Wright (Chicago, Illinois)
- 1994:** Matthew Mock, Associate Professor, John F. Kennedy University, Alameda, California
- 1995:** Jose Luis Flores, East Los Angeles Community Health Center, Los Angeles, California
- 1996:** Ramón Rojano, Director, Institute for the Hispanic Family, Hartford, Connecticut
- 1997:** Deniece Reid, Cathedral Community Counseling Center, Perth Amboy, New Jersey
- 1998:** Marietta Harvey Collins, Department of Psychiatry, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia
- 1999:** Lillian Comas-Diaz, Executive Director, Transcultural Mental Health Institute, Washington, D.C.
- 2000:** William Turner, Associate Professor, Family Studies, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky
- 2001:** Paulette Hines, Director, Office of Prevention Services, University of Medicine and Dentistry, and Associate Professor, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School of New Jersey, New Brunswick, New Jersey
- 2002:** Maria Root, Clinical Psychologist. Seattle, Washington
- 2003:** Hugo Kamy, Professor, Simmons School of Social Work, Boston, Massachusetts
- 2004:** Martha Adams Sullivan, Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, New York, New York
- 2005:** Kenneth V. Hardy, Professor, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York
- 2006:** Nydia Garcia-Preto, Clinical Director, Multicultural Family Institute, Highland Park, New Jersey
- 2007:** The “Just Therapy” Team: Waldegrave C, Tamasese K, Tuhaka F and Campbell W. Wellington, New Zealand
- 2008:** Jack Saul, Professor, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, New York, New York
- 2009:** Marlene Watson, Director, MFT Training Program, Drexel University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

For general information about AFTA, please visit www.afta.org



The History of the Cultural and Economic Diversity Committee 1990-2009

The Committee's Mission Statement

The function of the Cultural and Economic Diversity Committee, in alignment with AFTA's mission, is to ensure AFTA's accountability in maintaining economic and cultural diversity and upholding its agenda of social justice.



AFTA's Mission Statement

Founded in 1977, the American Family Therapy Academy is a non-profit organization of leading family therapy teachers, clinicians, researchers, program directors, policy makers, and social scientists dedicated to advancing systemic thinking and practices for families in their social context. Through diversity in its membership, continuous dialogue, collaborative interchange, and commitment to social justice, AFTA flourishes as a learning organization that offers value to its members and those whom they serve.

