

New Directions in Clinical Research Training
Paeella Research Center
Annual Report
June 25, 2021

The Pacella Research Center has grown tremendously over the last several years, since the Site Visitors noted that the Center is “a model for the country on the forefront of psychoanalysis.”

There are several initiatives that we would like to highlight.

1. The tension between science and practice is well known, with each group usually working in isolation from the other group. It has been shown that clinicians are most interested that researchers investigate: (1) Mechanisms of change/therapeutic relationships; (2) Therapist factors; (3) Professional development; and (4) Client factors.

An important goal of the Pacella Research Center has been to try to bridge the gap between clinicians and researchers. Therefore over the past several years we have conducted a Clinician/Researcher Collaborative Process Seminar. In very general terms, the project involves clinicians providing session material which might be verbatim transcripts or process notes, and researchers analyzing this material using the language measures developed by Wilma Bucci and colleagues. Clinical and research perspectives are discussed and compared. This protocol will be instituted in a candidate research course. Ultimately these collaborations may also lead to fruitful ways to address supervision as well as systematic ways to conceptualize some psychoanalytic constructs. We have begun to teach a version of the collaborative seminar to candidates. Included among the clinicians who have participated are Wendy Olesker, Charles Jaffe from Chicago, and Christopher Christian.

In June 2021, our group presented this work at the Rapaport Klein Study group. Our Pacella research group is continuing to meet electronically on a regular basis; the group includes graduate students from City College, Fordham and the University of Utah. We note that the training provided in our research program has provided a basis for several students to publish posters and papers and also to go on to further graduate work.

2. Wilma Bucci received the Leon Kupferstein Memorial Award for Innovation in Psychoanalysis and presented a lecture in March 2021. In addition, in 2021 two volumes were published: “[*Understanding Psychotherapy Through Multiple Code Theory*](#),” published by Bucci in collaboration with William Cornell. In addition, a special issue, the first of 2021, of the [*Journal of Psycholinguistic Research: Special Issue: Connecting Feelings, Thoughts, and Words: The Referential Process in Theory, Research, and Clinical Studies*](#) was published with guest editors: Wilma Bucci, Bernard Maskit, Sen Murphy, Leon Hoffman, and You Zhou. The issue includes both experimental research and clinical studies attempting to understand the connection between emotional experience and words.

We have had many publications arise from our work. This includes a report of our pilot study, *Why Is It Easier to Get Mad Than It Is to Feel Sad? Pilot Study of Regulation-Focused Psychotherapy for Children*, published in the *American Journal of Psychotherapy* in 2019

(<https://psychotherapy.psychiatryonline.org/doi/abs/10.1176/appi.psychotherapy.20180027>). Our randomized clinical trial has been completed, and we are in the process of analyzing the data.

3. The development of a complex database of more than 20 analytic and psychotherapy cases will enable us to evaluate clinical material (confidentially coded) from a variety of perspectives, including multi-level process outcome measures. As part of this project we have created computerized measures to evaluate the Reflection/Reorganizing (RR) phase and the Arousal Phase of the Referential Process. We are conducting a variety of process outcome studies with these cases. Visit <http://www.thereferentialprocess.org/theory/the-referential-process> for material about theory and research on the Referential Process.
4. We have collaborated with other academic institutions to further the development of our linguistic measures of psychoanalyses and psychotherapy. Our work on computerized linguistic measures supported by Pacella funding has led to affiliation with funded research at universities including the Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology of Yeshiva University, Adelphi, and City College. This work includes basic neuroscience and biological research, as well as psychotherapy research. We have also developed a manual to assess the defense mechanisms utilized by young children. The development of the manual was published at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15289168.2018.1565005> and the manual is available at https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/suppl/10.1080/15289168.2018.1565005/suppl_file/hic_p_a_1565005_sm2717.pdf.
5. Our manual for the treatment of children with externalizing behaviors, published by Routledge, has had a successful reception. You can read about the manual (Regulation-Focused Psychotherapy for Children with Externalizing Behaviors: A Psychodynamic Approach) at <https://www.rfp-c.com/publications>. The manual has received many positive reviews. In the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* [https://www.jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567\(17\)31162-0/fulltext/](https://www.jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567(17)31162-0/fulltext/) Aaron Krasner, M.D., from Yale School of Medicine, wrote:

“Overall, this book and the proposed treatment offer practitioners a concise and wieldy psychodynamic approach to the treatment of externalizing disorders in children. It is well researched and thoughtful. It is modern, making meaningful connections to neuropsychiatry and other medical disciplines in thinking about how to help these tricky kids and their families.”

We are very pleased to note that royalties from the sale of the book go to the Pacella Research Center. We also note that Pacella Funds provided seed money to support a pilot project to test the manual in children with Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) -- the most common diagnosis for children referred to mental health practitioners. As a result of these funds, one of our co-authors was able to receive a major grant to enable us to conduct a Randomized Clinical Trial (RCT) with children with ODD --

<https://www.rfp-c.com>. (This is an example of how seed money provided by the generosity of donors can lead to the development of further funding.) This work was presented at the Society of Psychotherapy Research June 2021.

We invite you to read more about our work at: <https://nypsi.org/the-pacella-research-center/>

Institutional Review Board of NYPSI: Francine Conway, Ph.D. Leon Hoffman, M.D. Bernard Maskit, Ph.D., Chair Daniel R. Rosell, M.D., Ph.D. Jane Albus, M.D., Alternate William H. Braun, Psy.D., Alternate

RESEARCH CENTER COMMITTEE: Wilma Bucci; Co-Director, Leon Hoffman, CoDirector; Bernard Maskit, Technical Director and Chair of NYPSI IRB; Sean Murphy, Projects Manager and Supervisor; Christopher Christian; Tehela Nimroody; Wendy Olesker; Timothy Rice; Lissa Weinstein

Research Assistant: Michael Peral
Research Consultant: Cody Jones, PhD

Sincerely,



Wilma Bucci, Ph.D.
wbucci@icloud.com
Co-Directors, Pacella Research Center at NYPSI



Leon Hoffman, M.D.
hoffman.leon@gmail.com