



# Roll Out the Red Carpet: The 3rd Annual Awards for the Most Valuable Contributions to Psychotherapy

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## Abstract

Every spring, media coverage emphasizes the "award season", highlighting contributions made by musicians, actors, and professional athletes. Unfortunately, psychologists are not included in these gala celebrations. It seems appropriate to take time to praise the hard work and dedication that is required to publish in an academic journal. The present article summarizes the results from the 3rd annual psychotherapy award program designed to highlight the valuable contributions made in eleven different categories. A total of 81 academic journals were reviewed for their articles published during 2019, and 150 papers were found useful and relevant to the field of psychotherapy. The list was then shortened to 44 articles that were organized into eleven award categories, and the best paper in each category was selected by a panel from the journal's editorial board. The hope is that all psychotherapists will value the contributions being made in these articles.

**Keywords** Psychotherapy · Treatment · Assessment · Research

Every year during springtime, media coverage highlights assorted annual award ceremonies. The celebrities (actors, musicians and professional athletes) stop to recognize their achievements through a wide spectrum of elaborate award ceremonies. At these glamorous events, celebrities acknowledge the recent accomplishments of other celebrities and receive awards (e.g., an Emmy, an Oscar, a Grammy, an Espy, a Tony a Golden Globe) for their talent during televised banquets and elaborate post-ceremony galas. I believe it is time to add the "Psyche" to the list of awards, as we highlight the heroes of psychotherapy. It seems important to highlight the contributions being made by psychotherapists each year, recognizing heroes within the field of mental health providers, who work quietly to help improve the lives of their patients. Colleagues who publish valuable articles that help to improve our understanding of mental health and its treatment deserve our profound respect and sincere appreciation.

Work as a psychotherapist can be rewarding yet challenging. Effective psychotherapy typically relies on an

integration of theory, research, and experience as an active clinician. The field of psychotherapy moves forward through scholarly publishing that helps to refine ideas, clarify strategies, and test hypotheses. Publishing journal articles on psychotherapy requires an integration of science and practice (Overholser 2007), usually combined with innovative ideas and thoughtful integration across theories (Overholser 2008). Furthermore, publishing scholarly articles requires skill in communicating ideas in written form (Overholser 2011). It is essential for scholarly journals to advance the field of psychotherapy by publishing articles that confront, explore, and refine important issues in psychotherapy without simply chasing the latest fad topic (Overholser 2014a).

Unfortunately, much of the work that goes into scholarly publications goes unnoticed. To publish a journal article on psychotherapy requires creative ideas, skillful writing, clinical experience, and endless persistence to deal with the process of peer review. Many psychologists work their entire career without ever publishing a single article in a peer reviewed journal. Starting in 2016, the *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy* initiated an award program to celebrate and highlight the creative ideas and important advances in the field of psychotherapy. Previous awards (Overholser 2019; Overholser and Beale 2018) have highlighted important contributions across different theoretical styles and various psychiatric disorders. The goal is to

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review some of the most useful papers that were published in the previous year.

In an effort to remain informed and unbiased, the JCP editorial staff reviewed numerous journal articles published during 2019 in the following 81 academic journals: *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, *Addictive Behaviors*, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, *American Psychologist*, *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, *Archives of Clinical Psychiatry*, *Assessment*, *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, *Behavior Modification*, *Behavior Research and Therapy*, *Behavior Therapy*, *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, *Clinical Psychology Review*, *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, *Contemporary Family Therapy*, *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, *Counselling Psychology Review*, *Death Studies*, *Depression and Anxiety*, *Ethics and Behavior*, *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, *European Journal for Qualitative Research in Psychotherapy*, *European Psychiatry*, *Group Analysis*, *Group Dynamics*, *International Journal of Cognitive Therapy*, *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, *International Journal of Law & Psychiatry*, *International Journal of Mental Health*, *International Journal of Psychology and Counselling*, *International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*, *International Journal of Psychiatry in Clinical Practice*, *International Journal of Psychological Research*, *Irish Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, *JAMA Psychiatry*, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *Journal of Affective Disorders*, *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *Journal of Attention Disorders*, *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *Journal of Clinical Psychology in Medical Settings*, *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *Journal of Humanistic Counseling*, *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, *Journal of Obsessive–Compulsive and Related Disorders*, *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *Journal of Personality Disorders*, *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, *Journal of Rational-Emotive and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy*, *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, *Personality and Individual Differences*, *Personality Disorders: Theory Research and Treatment*, *Philosophy Psychiatry & Psychology*, *Professional Psychology*, *Psychiatric Annals*, *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, *Psychology and Psychotherapy*, *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*,

*Psychoanalytic Psychology*, *Psychological Assessment*, *Psychological Bulletin*, *Psychological Medicine*, *Psychotherapy*, *Psychotherapy Research*, *Rorschachiana*, *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, *the Behavior Analyst*, *the Clinical Supervisor*, *the Counseling Psychologist*, and *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*. Additional articles that had been published in other journals were included in the review, identified through a supplemental search for each award category. The massive list of publications was then narrowed down, and 150 articles were identified that deserved a more detailed review and evaluation. Numerous papers were reviewed critically and rejected from consideration because their methodology was limited to a packet of self-report questionnaires administered at one point in time, especially if the sample posed no unique value to advancing the field. Then, the editor-in-chief narrowed the list down to the final four articles deemed best to represent each of the award categories. Each award category has its own criteria, but across the awards, the general criteria included a focus on matters that pertain to the realities of clinical practice. Manuscripts should have broad appeal, so it would be useful for most mental health professionals, even if the topic was not aligned to a specific area of interest or specialization. For review papers, the article could be a structured review of the recent literature, a meta-analysis, or a critical and opinionated review based on years of professional experience as a psychotherapist.

For research studies, the projects were evaluated for its subjects, measures, and procedures. In terms of research participants, it seems obvious that research on mental health and mental illness is best conducted with medical or psychiatric patients who are struggling with behavioral, emotional or cognitive problems (Overholser 2014b). Too many studies rely on participants that are not representative of the typical pool of psychiatric clients, and instead evaluate psychological issues in samples of convenience, such as college students, anonymous online surveys, or mTurk methodology. Too many psychological studies have collected data on WEIRD samples (Henrich et al. 2010) referring to Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic countries, instead of a broader sample of humanity. Because so many research studies have relied on samples of convenience (Fernald 2010), the external validity of the research is quite limited (Arnett 2008). The diagnosis and treatment of patients with mental illness benefit from research that is strong in external validity. Thus, it is essential for research on mental illness and its treatment to be conducted on samples of medical or psychiatric patients who can describe their mental and emotional problems (Overholser 2014b). Furthermore, investigators sometimes exclude from participation any "normal" participant that reported elevated scores on measures of psychiatric symptoms or psychiatric patients who meet criteria for more than one disorder. Although such research

may help the field to understand normal processes in normal individuals, such methodology is far removed from the heart of clinical psychology. Therefore, participants need to evaluate psychological processes in medical or psychiatric patients in need of mental health services. Many articles were excluded because their subjects were limited to analogue samples, such as healthy college students, anonymous online surveys, or mTurk recruitment.

In terms of measures used in the research, psychological assessment in clinical settings often relies on a combination of self-report questionnaires, structured diagnostic interviews, and possibly other sources such as informant reports or observational measures, often completed on several occasions over the course of therapy (Overholser 2014b). However, many research studies are limited to a packet of self-report questionnaires collected at a single point in time. Furthermore, some studies rely on assessment measures that may not be optimal for clinical use, including genetic markers, biochemical measures, or neuroanatomical structures. It seems important to respect the boundaries of psychology where assessment crosses into medicine, psychiatry or neurology.

Research procedures were evaluated to align with standard clinical practice. In terms of the procedures used in research projects, many studies were excluded if they relied heavily on biological interventions. Psychotherapy is an independent field, and psychologists do not need to accept an inferior role, serving as assistant to physicians, helping to monitor the effectiveness of drug treatments or their side-effects. Finally, some interventions are provided by online programs or graduate student trainees, using methodology that differs from standard clinical practice.

The award committee members were provided with a list of eleven award categories, criteria for each award, and four nominees per category. The committee members were asked to rank order each paper within each category, rating the papers from most to least valuable to the field of psychotherapy. The different rank orders were combined to select the winner in each category. The best papers demonstrate skillful writing (Overholser 2011) and an integration of theory and practice (Overholser 2007).

### **Most Valuable Contribution to the Integration of Science and Practice in Psychology**

Too many research studies are conducted in highly controlled and fairly artificial research environments. Although these research projects can help to improve understanding of the mind and mental processes, it can be difficult to generalize the findings to actual clinical settings. This award highlights the value of research while

maintaining a strong focus on clinical applications. Thus, priority is given to scholarly review papers or empirical studies that align with clinical practice. The intent is to emphasize the importance of the scientist-practitioner model as central to the future of clinical psychology (Overholser 2007, 2010). Therefore, this award aims to highlight and promote a sincere integration of science and practice. Nominees are ...

Bager-Charleson, S., McBeath, A., & Plock, S. D. (2019). The relationship between psychotherapy practice and research: A mixed-methods exploration of practitioners' views. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 19*(3), 195–205.

McBeath, A., Bager-Charleson, S., & Abarbanel, A. (2019). Therapists and academic writing: "Once upon a time psychotherapy practitioners and researchers were the same people". *European Journal for Qualitative Research in Psychotherapy, 9*, 103–116.

Siegle, G., Cramer, A., van Eck, N., Spinhoven, P., Hollon, S., Ormel, J., & Bockting, C. (2019). Where are the breaks in translation from theory to clinical practice (and back) in addressing depression? An empirical graph-theoretic approach. *Psychological Medicine, 49*(16), 2681–2691.

Truijens, F., Zühlke-van Hulzen, L., & Vanheule, S. (2019). To manualize, or not to manualize: Is that still the question? A systematic review of empirical evidence for manual superiority in psychological treatment. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 75*(3), 329–343.

And the winner is Femke Truijens et al. (2019) for their important paper on the risks and benefits of manualized therapy. The topic of manualized therapy is central to the current emphasis on evidence-based therapy, and the article protects the creativity and flexibility that is needed in most therapy sessions. In a thorough and scholarly manner, the article exposes the limitations involved in manualized therapy, and confronts the assumed superiority of manualized approaches. According to the authors (Femke Truijens, personal communication, March 26, 2020): "The most basic questions in research are often forgotten to be asked. A wide-spread and institutionalized assumption is that manualized treatment is more effective than non-manualized treatment. But is it? We took up the challenge to scrutinize the evidence-base for manual superiority. Strikingly, only six studies address this hypothesis in the margin and none provided straightforward support. This award is a great reminder to researchers that we cannot take our assumptions for granted and that we have to keep working in close dialogue with clinical practice."

## Most Valuable Contribution to Psychotherapy Integration

It is rarely helpful for psychotherapists to focus on one narrow view of therapy, and it is rarely helpful for trainees to learn one limited theoretical orientation. Instead, in actual clinical practice, psychotherapy often relies on a broad, comprehensive approach that integrates a diverse array of theories and strategies. This award highlights the value of a comprehensive approach to psychotherapy, highlighting the contribution made through a published article that encourages an integrative approach to psychological treatments. The award aims not for a "horse race" competition across several different psychological treatments, but a true assimilation that reflects the integrative work that forms the foundation for actual clinical practice. Papers may strive to integrate a diverse array of theories, ideas, and strategies that can help to guide therapy sessions. Nominees are ...

Goldfried, M. (2019). Obtaining consensus in psychotherapy: What holds us back? *American Psychologist*, 74 (4), 484–496.

Katz, M., Hilsenroth, M., Gold, J., Moore, M., Pitman, S., Levy, S., & Owen, J. (2019). Adherence, flexibility, and outcome in psychodynamic treatment of depression. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 66(1), 94–103.

Lundh, L. G. (2019). Three modes of psychotherapy and their requisite core skills. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 19(4), 399–408.

Messer, S. (2019). My journey through psychotherapy integration by twists and turns. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, 29(2), 73–83.

And the winner is Marvin Goldfried and his valuable article on divergent views of psychotherapy. Throughout his long and prolific career, Dr. Goldfried has emphasized the importance of integration in psychotherapy. His ground-breaking book (Goldfried 1982) helps to protect the wisdom from many historical figures and encourage the younger generation of psychologists to focus on integration of different therapy styles. The recent article on consensus highlights the value of commonalities across diverse views, including the role of client expectations and the value of the therapeutic alliance. Goldfried aims to reduce the gap between science and practice, and the role of principles of change. According to Dr. Goldfried (personal communication, March 20, 2020) "Ever since I was a graduate student, which goes back some 60 years (!), I have been concerned about the schizophrenic nature of clinical psychology. It has been the researchers versus the clinicians. It has been the battle of the theoretical

orientations. Although psychotherapy has been in existence for over 100 years, sociologists that have studied the development of sciences still categorize psychotherapy as an infant, pre-paradigmatic field. I wrote this American Psychologist article to explore what prevents us from achieving maturity, and what we need to do to finally make it happen."

## Most Valuable Contribution to a Specific Intervention Strategy

In many situations, the most creative ideas for therapy derive from actual clinical practice. Through a series of adjustments and improvements, psychotherapy can be refined and strategies can be expanded. Specific strategies are aligned with one particular approach to therapy, and when found useful, it can extend beyond any single ideological approach. This award highlights innovations in clinical practice, often related to a specific type in treatment. Nominees are ...

Bland, A. (2019). The Personal Hero Technique: A therapeutic strategy that promotes self-transformation and interdependence. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 59(4), 634–657.

Bonavitacola, L. et al. (2019). Clinical guidelines for improving dialectical thinking in DBT. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 26, 547–561.

Westerhof, G., & Slatman, S. (2019). In search of the best evidence for life review therapy to reduce depressive symptoms in older adults: A meta-analysis of randomized clinical trials. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 26 (4), e12301.

Zatloukal, L., Zakovsky, D. & Bezdickova, E. (2019). Utilizing metaphors in solution-focused therapy. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 41, 24–36.

And the winner is Lauren Bonavitacola and colleagues for their article on cognitive restructuring in Dialectical Behavior Therapy. The article includes a variety of useful suggestions for conducting therapy sessions, including a checklist of cognitive restructuring procedures and handouts for emotion regulation and interpersonal effectiveness skills. The article summarizes two detailed case examples, highlighting the use of many of these treatment procedures. According to Dr. Bonavitacola (personal communication, March 22, 2020), "This paper stemmed from an observation that my colleagues and I had about the apparent lack of the traditional use of cognitive therapy in the implementation of DBT at our practice and in the larger DBT community. We thought this was interesting given that a core principle in DBT, if not THE core principle, is that of dialectics, which one could argue is a cognitive concept. We were curious to see if other DBT practitioners in the field felt that the use of



dialectical thinking was important to the overall outcomes of their patients and if they were targeting the increase in these strategies in their practice. Once we saw that there was both an awareness of dialectical thinking's importance and a lack of formally targeting it, we thought it would be beneficial to the field to write about how to utilize this cognitive technique more intensively."

### Most Valuable Contribution to the Treatment of Depression or Suicide Risk

Depression, in its various forms, is one of the most prominent and disabling types of mental illness. When working with clients who are currently depressed and possibly suicidal, a psychologist has the rare opportunity to share words that could save a life. Numerous research studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of psychological treatments for depression, and the superiority of psychotherapy over a pharmaceutical approach to treatment. However, it is now incumbent upon psychologists to refine and improve the treatments that help clients recover from depression. This award highlights the value of new ideas and valuable strategies that can guide the assessment or treatment of depression and its associated risk for suicide. Nominees are ...

Geschwind, N., Arntz, A., Bannink, F., & Peeters, F. (2019). Positive cognitive behavior therapy in the treatment of depression: A randomized order within-subject comparison with traditional cognitive behavior therapy. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, *116*, 119–130.

Hollon, S., Cohen, Z., Singla, D., & Andrews, P. (2019). Recent developments in the treatment of depression. *Behavior Therapy*, *50*(2), 257–269.

LeMoult, J., & Gotlib, I. (2019). Depression: A cognitive perspective. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *69*, 51–66.

Vittengl, J., Clark, L., Thase, M., & Jarrett, R. (2019). Could treatment matching patients' beliefs about depression improve outcomes? *Behavior Therapy*, *50*(4), 765–777.

And the winner is Joelle LeMoult and Ian Gotlib for their comprehensive review of the cognitive basis of depression. The article highlights basic cognitive processes that play a central role in the onset and maintenance of depression. The authors explain the manner in which depression is influenced by biases in attention, memory, interpretation, and self-referential processing of negative information. According to the authors (Joelle LeMoult, personal communication, March 27, 2020): "Cognitive models of depression have driven decades worth of research. Given the volume of research examining cognition and depression, we were interested

in synthesizing the current state of the field and offering a theoretical model depicting the relations among cognitive factors and depression. In doing so, we hope to motivate future research and clinical work."

### Most Valuable Contribution to the Treatment of Stress, Anxiety or Trauma

Stress, worry and anxiety seem ever-present throughout modern society. Going back to the pioneering work of Joseph Wolpe, Gordon Paul, and Albert Bandura, psychological treatments have been found extremely effective in treating most forms of anxiety, and psychotherapy should be considered the treatment of choice in all cases of anxiety disorder. This award highlights the valuable contribution made in an article that improves our understanding and treatment of clients with an anxiety disorder. Nominees are ...

Boettcher, H., & Barlow, D. (2019). The unique and conditional effects of interoceptive exposure in the treatment of anxiety: A functional analysis. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, *117*, 65–78.

Boterhaven de Haan, K., et al. (2019). A schema therapy approach to the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, *29* (1), 54–64.

Brown, L., Zandberg, L., & Foa, E. (2019). Mechanisms of change in prolonged exposure therapy for PTSD: Implications for clinical practice. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, *29*(1), 6–14.

Muroff, J., & Otte, S. (2019). Innovation in CBT treatment for hoarding: Transcending office walls. *Journal of Obsessive–Compulsive and Related Disorders*, *23*, 10,047.

And the winner is Hannah Boettcher and David Barlow (2019) for their article on the use of interoceptive exposure. The article explains the benefits derived from helping clients to confront the symptoms of anxiety and the associated fears, such as having a heart attack. The article includes a detailed review of ten adults who were struggling with panic disorder and claustrophobia. Patients were treated effectively using interoceptive exposure therapy to refute their beliefs and habituate to the feelings of distress. Because of individual differences, the authors recommend that both assessment and treatment should be adapted to the needs of each individual patient. According to the author (Hannah Boettcher, personal communication, March 30, 2020): "This project was designed to illustrate the strengths of taking a single-case approach in applied research, and to better understand an underutilized component in CBT for anxiety, interoceptive exposure. Single-case designs can be conducted with limited resources (the present example was a doctoral dissertation

with ten participants and no study staff), and they allow for flexible, response-guided personalization. Given that nonresponse to evidence-based treatment remains common, it is incumbent upon both researchers and clinicians to take an idiographic approach to treatment design where possible. For example, this study illustrated that among patients with identical diagnoses (panic disorder with claustrophobia), differences in types of feared outcomes impacted benefit from interoceptive and situational exposure. Furthermore, participants found interoceptive exposure highly acceptable, even with minimal psychoeducation and no cognitive restructuring, despite common misconceptions that this intervention is dangerous or unacceptable (Deacon et al. 2013). This project is one of the first to isolate the effects of interoceptive exposure with a clinical population".

### Most Valuable Contribution to the Treatment of Eating Disorders

Many individuals struggle with an eating disorder. Problems can include a severe restriction of food intake, uncontrolled caloric consumption, or tendencies to purge. When eating disorders are present, they can be disruptive to the client as well as family members. Optimal papers confront eating disorders as they occur in clinical samples, and the advice can be used to help guide psychological treatments for these patients. The award supports advances and innovations that can help to improve the treatment of clients with eating disorders.

Agras, W. S. (2019). Cognitive behavior therapy for the eating disorders. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 42, 169–179.

Dahlenburg, S., Gleaves, D., & Hutchinson, A. (2019). Anorexia nervosa and perfectionism: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 52, 219–229.

Gorrell, S., Loeb, K., & LeGrange, D. (2019). Family-based treatment of eating disorders: A narrative review. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 42, 193–204.

Marks, A. (2019). The evolution of our understanding and treatment of eating disorders over the past 50 years. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 75, 1380–1391.

And the winner is Andrea Marks for her comprehensive review of CBT for eating disorders and how these strategies have evolved for the past five decades. The article includes a fascinating review of the history of anorexia and bulimia, respecting the pioneering work conducted by Ernest Lasegue, William Gull, Hilde Bruch, Salvador Minuchin,

and Christopher Fairburn. The paper concludes with challenges that remain for experts in this important area.

### Most Valuable Contribution to the Treatment of Personality Disorders

In clinical practice, personality disorders are ever present. Unfortunately, many researchers and some clinicians fail to navigate the complex terrain of personality pathology. When personality disorders are neglected, treatment is more difficult and improvement is unlikely. Although personality pathology can be observed in any setting, the best studies are conducted on clinical samples, using measures that are appropriate for clinical practice. This award highlights the valuable contributions made to help understand, assess, or treat individuals who have a personality disorder.

Lilliengren, P. and colleagues. (2019). Comparing the treatment process in successful and unsuccessful cases in two forms of psychotherapy for Cluster C personality disorders. *Psychotherapy*, 56 (2), 285–296.

Sauer-Zavala, S., Wilner, J. G., Cassiello-Robbins, C., Saraff, P., & Pagan, D. (2019). Isolating the effect of opposite action in borderline personality disorder: A laboratory-based alternating treatment design. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 117, 79–86.

Sorensen, K., Rabu, M., Wilberg, T., & Berthelsen, E. (2019). Struggling to be a person: Lived experience of avoidant personality disorder. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 75 (4), 664–680.

Vogt, K., & Norman, P. (2019). Is mentalization-based therapy effective in treating the symptoms of borderline personality disorder? A systematic review. *Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 92, 441–464.

And the winner is Shannon Sauer-Zavala and colleagues for their lab-based study of borderline personality disorder. The project evaluated 16 adults who met criteria for borderline personality disorder and participated in a mood induction protocol to elicit feelings of sadness, anxiety, anger or shame. Then, these subjects were asked to behave in a manner that was consistent with or opposite from their normal behavioral tendencies. Such an experimental protocol is rarely used in mental health research and opens many possibilities for the creative evaluation of psychopathology. According to the lead author (Shannon Sauer-Zavala, March 23, 2020): "This study was conducted as part of my Career Development Award (K23) from the National Institute of Mental Health. As I was writing the grant application, I was struck by how little is known about the unique contributions of specific elements included in larger treatment packages. The overarching goal of this paper, and my larger research program, is to distill active ingredients in our treatments in

order to make them as potent and efficient as possible. In disseminating the results of this project, I have also been thrilled to teach others about single-case experimental design. Finally, this research would not have been possible without my wonderful team of colleagues."

### Most Valuable Contribution to Technology-Assisted Psychotherapy

Over the past 50 years, technology has changed the world in many ways. Technological advances have been incorporated into clinical assessment and psychological treatment, with modalities that include internet-based psychoeducational programs, smart phone assessment apps, and videoconferencing as a means of communicating with clients from a distance. The future of the field will include more technology, and these changes can be integrated but not replace traditional face-to-face sessions (Overholser 2013). Technology provides alternative means of communicating with clients, helping them to monitor their thoughts, moods, and behaviors, and initiate the change process. The present award highlights some useful ideas and innovative strategies that can help clinicians to incorporate contemporary technology to improve their clinical services. Nominees are ...

Cooper, S., Campbell, L., & Smucker Barnwell, S. (2019). Telepsychology: A primer for counseling psychologists. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 47(8), 1074–1114.

Holmlund, T., et al., (2019). Moving psychological assessment of the controlled laboratory setting: Practical challenges. *Psychological Assessment*, 31 (3), 292–303.

Luo, J. (2019). A Guide for the 21st Century psychiatrist to managing your online reputation, your privacy, and professional use of social media. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 42(4), 649–658.

McGinn, M., et al. (2019). Recommendations for using clinical video telehealth with patients at high risk for suicide. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 42, 587–595.

And the winner is Stewart Cooper and colleagues for their article on telepsychology. The comprehensive and thorough article provides a wealth of information about technology, and its role in psychological treatments. The authors explain the ethical, legal, and clinical issues that arise when technology is used to extend beyond traditional psychotherapy sessions. These issues have become invaluable with various changes happening throughout the world today. According to the authors (Stewart Cooper, personal communication, March 23, 2020): "We saw a significant need and opportunity for counseling psychologists and other psychologists to

increase their use of telehealth practice to relate telehealth to several core values central to the field including: Access to services, Social Justice, Culture, Education and Training. Given the complexities of engaging in this work ethically and competently within the context of a highly complex set of changing legal and regulatory controls, a primer was the correct level of focus. The content covers asynchronous and synchronous practice, the application of ethics, competency training and other areas. The article was published just prior to the coronavirus pandemic in which telehealth has become the norm, not the exception."

### Most Valuable Contribution to Idiographic Research

The historical foundations of psychotherapy can be found in important case studies described by Sigmund Freud, Josef Breuer, Alfred Adler, Carl Jung, and many others. The use of a case study has evolved into single-case research designs, which may be seen as the pinnacle of clinical practice. Through the use of single case research designs, the psychotherapist can examine hypotheses, document changes, and demonstrate the effectiveness of their treatment. However, it can be difficult to conduct individualized research in many clinical settings. This award helps to encourage and improve the research foundation of clinical practice, even when limited to a single participant. Nominees are ...

Brown, C., Bosley, H., Kenyon, A., Chen, K., & Levenson, R. (2019). An idiographic statistical approach to clinical hypothesis testing for routine psychotherapy: A case study. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 118, 43–53.

Kazdin, A. (2019). Single-case experimental designs: Evaluating interventions in research and clinical practice. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 117, 3–17.

Miles, S., Brown, G., Corfe, A., Hallett, C., Wingrove, J., Wheatley, J., & Veale, D. (2019). Time-intensive behavioural activation for depression: A multiple baseline study. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 63, 36–47.

Piccirillo, M., Beck, E., & Rodebaugh, T. (2019). A clinician's primer for idiographic research: Considerations and recommendations. *Behavior Therapy*, 50(5), 938–951.

And the winner is Casey Brown and colleagues for their article on idiographic strategies for hypothesis testing. The article provides a detailed case formulation of a client struggling with anxiety, depression and angry outbursts. The authors conducted 22 sessions of psychotherapy, and they use this case to exemplify the statistical analysis of his response to treatment. According to the authors (Casey Brown, personal

communication, March 20, 2020): "We began the project as two friends on a couch, discussing ways to bridge the gap between recent advances in idiographic statistical methods and real-world clinical practice. Over the next three years, we began a multidisciplinary effort to develop a simple framework and online platform that clinicians could use to apply idiographic statistics to data from their individual clients. We consulted experts in idiographic clinical science, software development, affective science, and clinical practice. This paper represents the first scientific contribution from that collaboration. We hope that clinicians utilizing our platform will gain novel insights into the mechanisms of therapeutic change, and contribute their findings to the scientific literature."

### Most Valuable Contribution to Psychological Assessment or Psychiatric Diagnosis

Psychological assessment and psychiatric diagnosis lay the foundation for all major decisions regarding effective treatment. Without a psychometrically-sound psychological assessment, it becomes unlikely that the therapist can identify the most accurate diagnosis, and therefore it becomes difficult to provide the best treatment. Further, proper assessment helps the clinician to evaluate the impact of treatment, whether in a research setting or a clinical environment. This award highlights the improvements made in psychological assessment or psychiatric diagnosis. Research reports can examine the utility of self-report questionnaires, structured interviews, or observational methods, searching for strong psychometric properties while remaining practical for use in most clinical settings. Nominees are ...

Baldwin, J., Reuben, A., Newbury, J., & Danese, A. (2019). Agreement between prospective and retrospective measurements of childhood maltreatment. *JAMA Psychiatry*, *76* (6), 584–593.

Bassman, R. (2019). Label jars not people. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *59* (3), 339–345.

Churchill, H. & Ridenauer, J. (2019). Coming together through falling apart: Using psychological assessment within a developmental framework to assess change. *Rorschachiana*, *40* (2), 151–168.

Raskin, J. (2019). What might an alternative to the DSM Suitable for psychotherapists look like? *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *59*(3), 368–375.

And the winner is Jesse Baldwin and colleagues for their article on optimal assessment of child maltreatment. The article reviews 16 studies, and proposes useful strategies for identifying children who may be experiencing physical, sexual or emotional abuse. The article highlights the different groups of vulnerable children who may be identified

by prospective versus retrospective sources of information. According to the authors (Jessie Baldwin, personal communication, April 2, 2020): "Childhood maltreatment can be assessed in two ways: through prospective measures collected as children are growing up, or through retrospective reports by adults years after the events happened. We conducted a meta-analysis to test whether paired prospective and retrospective measures of maltreatment identify the same individuals. Across 16 studies (> 25,000 individuals), agreement between prospective and retrospective measures of childhood maltreatment was poor ( $\kappa=0.19$ ). On average, 52% of individuals with prospective observations of childhood maltreatment did not retrospectively report it, and 56% of individuals retrospectively reporting childhood maltreatment did not have concordant prospective observations. These findings do not suggest that retrospective reports of maltreatment should be discredited. Rather, they imply that individuals identified as having been maltreated through prospective versus retrospective measures may have different pathways to poor health, and thus might require different treatments."

### Most Valuable Contribution with Lasting Utility

The field of psychotherapy has evolved in important ways (Overholser 2020). However, many older publications have played important roles in the development of psychological treatment. Even more, the information contained in the article is still useful, relevant and helpful for guiding therapy, even though the article was published more than 75 years ago. These works are evaluated based on the lasting contribution that can be found in one published article. This year, several "sleepers" are reviewed that played a foundational role in contemporary psychotherapy but probably remain unknown to many psychologists. The article should be viewed as an independent contribution separate from estimates of the value of the pioneer's career as a whole. Thus, the winning article captures ideas that were expressed long ago, but remain useful and relevant today, and the winning article should become required reading in all graduate training programs in clinical psychology. Nominees are ...

Beard, G. (1869). Neurasthenia, or nervous exhaustion. *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, *3*, 217–221.

Janet, P. (1906). On the pathogenesis of some impulsions. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *1*(1), 1–17.

Pratt, J. (1922). The principles of class treatment and their application to various chronic diseases. *Hospital Social Services*, *6*, 401–417.

Witmer, L. (1907). Clinical psychology. *The Psychological Clinic*, *1* (1), 1–9.



And the winner is Lightner Witmer for the seminal paper on applied clinical psychology. Witmer is credited with opening the first psychological clinic at the University of Pennsylvania in 1886 and coining the term “clinical psychology” in 1896. He justified the term “clinic” because it was used to designate the scientific method, not a medical locale. Witmer explained the role of the clinician as a scientist who searches for answers by studying the favorable or unfavorable reaction of individual patients to their treatment. Throughout this classic article, Witmer argues for the integration of science and practice as the guides for psychology, claiming “there is no valid distinction between a pure science and an applied science”, because “what fosters one, fosters the other” (p. 4).

## Discussion

It was another strong and productive year with many valuable papers on psychotherapy. In addition to the four papers that were nominated in each category, there are several other published articles that deserve honorable mention. Some valuable papers did not reach nomination status simply because of an artificial limitation on four finalists in each category or did not align with a specific award category. For example, a recent paper by Paul Nestor (2019) confronted the notion of free will and how it continues to play a role when psychologists are involved in forensic work and expert testimony. Although the article ends with important questions left unanswered, criminal responsibility is viewed through the lens of neuroscience, combined with legal views of insanity.

Some interesting papers literally and figuratively extend the perspective beyond the walls of a typical therapy office. For example, Jovanovic et al. (2019) examine issues involved in designing psychiatric hospitals that could potentially increase the likelihood of social interactions. Although these ideas can be traced back to the early days of institutionalization (Tuke 1813), contemporary architectural designs are normally planned without input from psychologists or patients.

Some articles provide useful guidelines for conducting therapy sessions, but each research study usually provides one small step forward. For example, a recent study by Recor et al. (2019) examined the treatment of obsessive–compulsive disorder in 94 psychiatric outpatients who were provided with either exposure-based treatment or exposure plus additional cognitive-behavioral strategies. Although both interventions were effective in producing significant improvement, results showed that the addition of cognitive therapy strategies adds to the beneficial effects of exposure treatments for OCD. These findings are closely aligned with clinical experience, and these results help to refine the use of exposure strategies in the treatment of OCD. The

study highlights the therapeutic value of a comprehensive approach to therapy instead of simply taking one active ingredient to push clients toward change. The project demonstrates the value of the scientist-practitioner model in action.

Some valuable reports describe views from the personal experience of a psychotherapist or that of a client. An interesting paper that deserves mention was published by Messer (2019) who provides a thoughtful autobiographical review of his personal efforts toward psychotherapy integration. Messer provides a captivating narrative, summarizing how various perspectives developed over the course of his career. Messer explains the limits of a single view and the benefits of a more comprehensive integrative approach to therapy. Another interesting article was published by Ronald Bassman (2019) who provides a different form of autobiographical narrative, summarizing his personal experiences after he was diagnosed with schizophrenia. In an insightful and captivating commentary, Dr. Bassman helps readers to appreciate the subjective experiences of a psychiatric patient, and confronts the stigma that remains attached to many psychiatric labels.

The award program was designed to highlight, praise, and recommend the most valuable contributions to psychotherapy each year. It has been exciting to review the literature and identify many new innovations in the field. However, it remains rather troubling that there continues to be a vast schism between the great papers and the mediocre masses. From a critical perspective, it appears that the vast majority of published articles rely on weak methods, samples of convenience, and have been designed to promote ideas that could be supported by a simple combination of clinical experience and common sense. There is a risk that the field of psychotherapy will deteriorate if the people who write the books, chapters, and research articles are faculty members who no longer provide clinical services themselves. It has become easy to read a published article and tell if the lead author is an active clinician or an ivory tower academic. There remains an ever-expanding split between the researchers who publish most of the journal articles versus psychotherapists who provide most of the clinical services to those in need. A sincere integration is needed, for the benefit of clients, trainees, and the field of mental health treatment. Hopefully, the “psyche” awards will highlight, recognize, and praise those scholars who publish outstanding articles at the forefront of advances in psychotherapy.

### Editorial Postscript:

As editor-in-chief, I have many people to thank for their support and efforts during the past year. First, let me thank my panel of expert judges who evaluated the nominated papers and submitted their rank order preferences. I want to be especially respectful of one of my judges, Ed Watkins, whose publications were eligible again this year, but

he was denied nomination because of his valuable manuscript that won an award last year. I want to thank the Long Island Consultation Center and Springer Publishers for the ongoing support for the journal and allowing me the professional freedom to steer the journal as I see fit. I am highly appreciative of my editorial board and ad hoc reviewers who have provided valuable feedback about the record number of manuscripts submitted during this past year. During the past 12 months, the following professionals have served as ad hoc reviewer: Jacqueline Abate, Steven Abell, Behrooz Afshari, Oladayo Ayobami Afolabi, Haifa Mohammed Saleh Al Gahtani, Shlomo Ariel, Alison Athey, Evrynomi Avdi, Ally Baier, Catherine Barber, Luz Bascunan, Annette Bovee-Akyurek, Denise Ben-Porath, Ray Bergner, William Boyd, Gina Brelsford, Janet Brody, Fatima Khurram Bukhari, Cynthia Bulic, Kerry Cannity, Eduard Carratala, Christophe Cazauviel, Jasmin Colic, Aureliano Cramer, Rachel Crook-Lyon, Antonia Csillik, Luanne Davis, Gustavo Dionisio, John Donahue, Chris Eckhardt, Bruno Faustino, Stuart Fisher, Espen Folmo, Julian Ford, Celeste Foster, Haruo Fujino, Valerie Gaus, Erica Gergely, Rajesh George, Peter Gerhardt, Duncan Gill, Alberto Gimeno-Peon, Marv Goldfried, J. Grant, Huw Green, Eugena Griffin, Volkan Gulum, Jay Hamm, Thomas Hoffman, Lara Honos-Webb, Isaac Hooley, Jurgen Hoyer, Felix Inchausti, Cary Jordan, Itzhak Lander, Syed Muhammad Sajjad Kabir, Ebrahim Rahbar Karbasdehi, Aaron Kindsvatter, Nancy Kocovski, Ioanna Kousteni, Leonhard Kratzer, Valery Krupnik, Jeffrey Kuentzel, Michael Lasher, Tania Lecomte, Tamiko Lemberger-Truelove, Lloyd Leland, Maxwell Levis, Bethany Leonard, Sinikka Luotonen, Duane Lundervold, Paul Lysaker, Daniel Ruivo Marques, Shannon McIntyre, Shlomo Mendlovic, Matthew Merced, Brian Miller, Dawn Moeller, Laura Moesender, Elonora Natalini, Hamid Nejat, John O'Connor, Isabelle Ong, Cynthia Osborn, Giovanni Ottoni, Christophe Panichelli, Andrej Pec, Amanda Pearl, Bjorn Phillips, Tracy Prout, Amir Qorbanpoorlafmejani, Susan Reviere, Anna Robinson, Lauren Rogers-Siran, Chiara Ruini, Sara Schapiro, Deborah Serani, Hasein Shareh, Liz Shapiro, Douglas Snyder, Sonia Sofia, Sarah Spannagel, Orr Spivak, Anders Sorensen, Liliana Varman, Patricia McCarthy Veach, Jennifer Veilleux, Evan Waldheter, Caitlin Walsh, Robert Waska, and Allison Zubot. As editor, I remain deeply indebted to everyone that has helped to maintain the integrity of the *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*.

## Compliance with Ethical Standards

**Conflict of interest** The author has no conflict of interest to report. The present manuscript is an editorial review paper. No empirical data were collected and no subjects participated in any type of research for this work. This article has not been published before, as it contains all new material, except for direct quotations from various historical sources.

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