



## The Psychoanalytic Education of CAPA Graduates

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### ABSTRACT

The CAPA Psychodynamic Psychotherapy Training Program and the evolution of Internet videoconferencing applications have inspired and enabled graduates of its advanced program to seek distance psychoanalytic training, mainly in approved institutes of the American Psychoanalytic Association. Two forms of training, Formal Distance Programs and Distance Accommodation, are described. Distance analytic training presents technical and pedagogical challenges to institutes and to their faculty. Some of the objections to distance education that hamper participation by essential faculty are presented. These issues are discussed and remedies are suggested. With experience, these challenges can be addressed and the training experience becomes satisfying for faculty as well as students. The candidates themselves, in two letters, describe their positive experiences in simultaneous training. A sample of clinical work brought to supervision by a distance candidate in the early years of training is presented to give some sense of the aptitude for psychoanalytic work that exists among distance candidates. Some preliminary thoughts about the variations in the psychoanalytic processes are raised and will need to be supplemented by further experience.

### Introduction

When CAPA first began training Chinese mental health professionals in psychoanalytic psychotherapy, its mission was misunderstood to include psychoanalytic training. CAPA was condemned in certain circles as providing rogue psychoanalytic training and possibly a back door to membership in the IPA. Instead of forming a mutually beneficial and cooperative relationship, CAPA and the IPA regarded each other with wariness and suspicion and were unable to work together to create a relationship that would facilitate the growth of psychoanalysis in China by accommodating the large numbers of Chinese psychotherapists trained by CAPA who were becoming interested in psychoanalytic training. CAPA has always confined itself to psychotherapy training, and its program has inspired many of its excellent graduates to pursue psychoanalytic training. However, the limited number of IPA sponsored psychoanalytic training slots in China; the limited ability of the IPA to provide on-site training analysts; the IPA's coolness to, and restrictions on, distance analysis; and the hardships of shuttle analysis as required by the IPA (which include the high cost of travel and living abroad; forced separation of candidates from their families; disruption of clinical work with patients; and interference with earning an income) have severely restricted, to just a few, the numbers of worthy CAPA graduates who could receive training through the IPA.

Accordingly, many CAPA graduates have inquired of their American teachers, analysts, and supervisors about analytic training at APsaA institutes. To meet this demand, Elise Snyder, CAPA Founder and President, in what might be irreverently characterized as the “return of the distressed,” began to lobby educators in APsaA, IPA and independent institutes, urging them to develop distance components to their psychoanalytic training programs.

The results of her efforts have borne fruit. As of April, 2019, there were 28 graduates of the CAPA advanced training program taking psychoanalytic training in APsaA approved institutes and an additional 6 CAPA graduates in training in non-APsaA institutes (E. Snyder, personal communication).

There are at least an additional 15 candidates from countries other than China in distance training in at least 7 APsaA institutes, and an unknown number of additional candidates who, because of individual circumstances, have combined on-site and distance status in the course of their psychoanalytic training.

### **The scope of distance psychoanalytic education in APsaA<sup>1</sup>**

The Distance Education Taskforce of the APsaA Department of Psychoanalytic Education, requesting information about distance psychoanalytic education efforts, sent a short survey to all institutes approved by the American. It learned that, currently (April 2019), distance candidates in psychoanalytic training in approved institutes represent a wide range of countries beyond the United States: China, South Korea, New Zealand, Mexico, Iran, Saudi Arabia and India. APsaA institutes reported 37 clinical candidates attending formal distance psychoanalytic education programs. 7 additional candidates are attending the Michigan program as academic candidates, as they did not meet the residency requirement. An additional unknown number of APsaA candidates are pursuing their education in distance accommodation programs.

The information obtained indicated two distinctly different forms of distance education:

- (1) Formal declared Distance Education Programs.
- (2) Distance Accommodation.

### **Formal distance education programs**

These are programs in which: institutes have declared a distance program; posted information on the institute website; put policies in place for admission and evaluation; and enrolled candidates. The Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute, the Michigan Psychoanalytic Institute Society and Foundation, and the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia reported formal, ongoing distance psychoanalytic education programs. Current candidates in full, clinical psychoanalytic education programs are: Michigan-12, Chicago-15, Philadelphia-10. San Diego reports two distance graduates who received a combination of onsite and online. Michigan differentiates between clinical and academic training (two years of residency are required for full clinical training). Chicago and Philadelphia currently have policies that encourage candidates to travel to attend classes (and analysis) in person as often as they are able, given financial and visa parameters. All institutes with formal distance education programs require distance candidates to be in analysis with a Training Analyst or a Waivered Personal Analyst and to meet the criteria of their institutes and the APsaA Educational Standards document. All institutes admit and evaluate the progress of their distance and on site candidates using the same evaluation processes. All institutes use a teaching format that integrates onsite candidates with distance candidates who attend via video conferencing. Michigan requires English language proficiency testing, while Chicago and Philadelphia rely on the assessment of their admissions committees. Wisconsin has partnered with Michigan to train its local candidates. Many institutes reported contemplating adding distance psychoanalytic education in the future. Many institutes were offering or contemplating adding distance psychotherapy training.

### **Distance accommodation**

While many institutes stated they did not have formal distance psychoanalytic education programs, they do offer accommodations to enable their students who began training onsite to continue their training using distance education formats when they are forced to move for various reasons. At least

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<sup>1</sup>The sections of this article on The Scope of Distance Education, Technology, The Experiences of Analysts and Supervisors in the Distance Format, The Psychoanalytic Process in Distance Analysis, and The Experience of Candidates in Distance Analysis were written by me and my colleagues David Scharff, Dennis Shelby, Molly Witten, Nahaleh Moshtagh, and Xiao Shao for the Report of the Task Force on Distance Education of the APsaA Department of Psychoanalytic Education. Some slight modifications have been made for this article. I thank them for their permission to use these sections here. I thank them also for their collaborative enthusiasm and dedication to the work of the Task Force.

one candidate who received distance accommodation has already graduated. The Washington Baltimore Center and the William Alanson White Institute have accommodated such students.

### **Technology and the experiences of analysts and supervisors in the distance format**

Since distance psychotherapy training began more than 20 years ago, there have been vast improvements in Internet bandwidth, in applications such as Zoom and Skype, and in personal computers and other devices as well. Whereas frequent dropped calls and poor visual and audio quality used to make sessions in some locations an adventure, sessions are now mostly crystal clear and rarely become problematic.

Mastering the technology is simple. Obtaining the right equipment can easily be accomplished with the assistance of consultation from experienced institutes and psychotherapy programs such as CAPA and the International Psychotherapy Institute (IPI). Becoming familiar with applications such as Zoom takes a very short time. Many analysts already have gained experience and facility with these programs, as APsaA and local institutes increasingly are using them for meetings. The programs themselves now enable students from disparate areas each to have their own individual window on the screen where their names are posted. This provides ease of identification and recognition and makes the teacher's job easier.

However, many analysts are traditionalists and prefer to operate in the time-honored teaching and treatment frames with which they are familiar. These preferences, we have found after discussions with reluctant faculty at our institutes, are often based on anxiety about using technology that is new to them; their lack of experience promoting fear of the unknown; concerns about issues of language and unfamiliar cultures; pedagogical challenges that bring discomfort (e.g., managing complex mixtures of local and distance students in the same seminars); and advanced faculty age that, at times, brings reduced energy and lack of adventurousness. Consequently, it is important to recognize that some criticisms of distance analysis arise from strained attempts to rationalize the discomforts enumerated above.<sup>2</sup> Another verbalized objection to distance work is the reluctance of some senior analysts to supervise and analyze at reduced fees. It should be noted however, that in many cases, distance candidates are paying fees that are equal to, or higher than, fees paid by local candidates.

With experience, teachers who improve their ability to use this technology gain enthusiasm and confidence quickly as their skills improve with practice. Several references are available to aid the development of skills in the distance education format and should be studied by institute faculty study groups or used for coaching by faculty skilled and comfortable with distance formats. (Boettcher & Conrad, 2016; Simonson, Smaldino, & Zvacek, 2015).

Yet another objection to distance analysis is the concern, raised by the IPA in its report on the confidentiality of teleanalysis, is the inability to assure security of psychoanalytic sessions conducted over the Internet. While technically, absolute security can never be trusted in this age of computer hacking, there have not been any such complaints of security issues since distance treatment began. Distance candidates themselves are not concerned about the confidentiality and security of their analytic sessions. While some in the IPA have expressed concerns that analytic sessions could be captured and posted on the Internet, the same is true of telephone sessions and even of in-office sessions. If someone is intent enough on doing this, offices can easily be bugged, sessions recorded and posted on the Internet. A colleague (E. Snyder, personal communication) has informed us that local sessions can be recorded from a microphone placed 300 yards away and pointed at the office window (See: <http://www.spysource.net/detectear1.htm>). Nevertheless,

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<sup>2</sup>A reflexively negative objection to distance analysis was made at the IPA First Asian Psychoanalytic Conference in Beijing in 2010, where Fred Levine, Lana Fishkin, and I presented a paper on Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis using Distance Modalities. Following the presentation of the paper, a senior, internationally prominent training analyst who was very opposed to distance analysis, criticized distance analysis because, among other reasons, you could not smell the patient. We originally included this example in the Report of the Distance Education Task Force but were prevailed upon by advisors to leave it out because "it made the unnamed analyst sound like an idiot." Maybe so, but it was actually said, and I think it deserves to be reported as a specific example of an unreasonable objection, whatever the cause might have been.

continued attention to developments in this area is important. And we do support the importance of discussing these potential intrusions with distance patients.

### **The psychoanalytic process in distance analysis**

Once the issues of technology anxiety and pedagogical challenges are mastered, analysts begin to focus, as they traditionally do, on the many interesting psychoanalytic issues that present themselves for understanding in the analytic situation and in supervision. A sample of such issues was discussed by Lyn Yonack at a COPE Study Group on New Technologies (See [Appendix A](#)). Many other discussions of these issues can be found in the ever-expanding literature on distance psychoanalysis. Enthusiasm should not blind us to the fact that this mode of treatment, like any other modality, offers both common and unique potentials for transference and countertransference resistances, which are worth noting and taking into consideration. It is easy for a bored or anxious analyst to engage in small distracting behaviors which the patient cannot notice: opening a browser to check his stock holdings, might be one; playing with the mouse and adjusting/readjusting the size of the Zoom window; reading something that is out of the patient's sight, while the session is going on (Fishkin & Levine, 2020). It has been pointed out that many Internet applications that compete for the analyst's attention are designed to make them attractive, compelling and difficult to resist. Of course, similar behaviors can also take place in the office, especially with the analyst sitting behind the patient.

### **Experiences of distance candidates**

Because of time difference (some distance candidates need to stay up until 0:500 am or get up at 03:00 am); language barriers; occasional unstable Internet service; and financial pressure (most of distant candidates are from countries where the average income is much lower than the U.S.), distance candidates have to overcome substantial difficulties in order to attend the training. These are indications of their strong passion, will power, motivation, and most importantly, their love of psychoanalysis.

As the results of our survey indicated, most distance candidates enjoy the training and see it as a very good experience. They think this type of training has the following advantages: 1) It saves the time that could have been spent on transportation; 2) Has a multicultural perspective (candidates are from different countries); 3) Allows the freedom to choose a psychoanalytic institute with a tradition they prefer (for example, those interested in self psychology have chosen the Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute); 4) Allows the opportunity to express themselves freely in a second language, both in personal analysis and in class, with an independent window online; and 5) Allows the option to visit the institute and personal analyst when able.

Generally, most distance candidates are located in countries where local analytic training is nonexistent, unavailable, or unsatisfactory. They are from China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, New Zealand and Korea. In all of these places, finding a local training analyst and a proper training program is very difficult – if at all possible; and the admission requirements are felt to be unfair. Korea, for example, accepted only psychiatrists until recently. On the other hand moving to another country is not feasible for most potential candidates, because of the commitments they have in their home country including those to their families and their career. Visa problems and financial difficulties make the idea of local analysis a remote possibility. Thus, the opportunity to be in training online is valuable and to most candidates it's a dream come true, even though it's not ideal.

### **The candidates speak for themselves**

The membership status of distance psychoanalytic candidates in APsA was changed from Academic Associate Candidate to Candidate Member on March 28, 2019 by unanimous vote of the APsA Executive Committee, in order to comply with the APsA Bylaws requiring full Candidate Membership for candidates in clinical training in approved institutes. Some time prior to this, the candidates from Chicago and

Philadelphia wrote letters requesting a change in this membership classification and describing their experiences with distance education (See [Appendix B](#)). These letters reveal the positive feelings that American and distance candidates have about learning together.

### **Institutional issues encountered in the psychoanalytic training of CAPA graduates**

Those of us who have had extended experience with supervising, teaching and analyzing distance candidates sometimes find it hard to remember what it is like for colleagues that are new to the experience. Before they commit to this work, novices raise basic questions about time differences (China time is 12–13 hours ahead of eastern US time), understanding the English spoken and written by Chinese students and Chinese customs and culture. They lack familiarity with the websites that the Chinese use to find and be found by patients and how this affects the evaluation and selection of analytic patients. They have little or no experience with distance technology. They experience working on-line instead of in the office as strange. They are unfamiliar with alterations of the frame that are brought about by its co-creation, and they anticipate struggling to teach classes with students simultaneously in the room and on-line. Many of these issues can prove difficult, but these difficulties can be smoothed out or eliminated by orientation and guidance of faculty from more experienced faculty colleagues. Careful selection by Admissions Committees of candidates with good written and spoken English is essential, as is thorough orientation of these candidates about what is expected of them with regard to case selection, preparing written reports of their work and other issues. Appointing a distance coordinator to work with them as an advisor is a good way to orient them to requirements and expectations.

It will not surprise the reader familiar with psychoanalytic education to learn that implementing challenging innovations such as distance education may become complicated by ongoing institutional conflict. Unless the groundwork for the decision to train distance students is laid prior to commencing the program, its success will be jeopardized by failure to support the initiative by essential teachers, supervisors and analysts of candidates. Because the decision to train distance students is often initiated as a remedy for the financial straits caused by a dearth of candidates, failure of a distance program can leave an institute in even worse shape. The financial strain will not have been remedied; there will not be enough candidates to train, graduate and replace retiring faculty; and the conflicts and morale will have become even worse as a result of the failure. The ideal situation would be one in which the faculty of the institute is adequately informed of the financial situation that results from the dearth of local candidates and recognizes the need to pull together to participate in the changes that will allow the institute to continue to carry out its primary mission. When the distance program is initiated without faculty consensus and without a shared desire to work together, it will lay bare existing schisms and expose some of the worst aspects of the training analyst system (particularly the life time TA appointment that confers a sinecure of high status that permits the TA the prerogative of refusing to participate in the education of distance candidates). If reforms are possible, additional supervisors can be appointed to meet the educational needs of the distance candidates, even if the longstanding problems within the institute are not resolved. But that constitutes a temporary fix.

### **Try it. You'll like it**

With experience, work with distance students who are eager to learn psychoanalysis is highly rewarding. The refusal to even start to supervise or to analyze distance candidates robs analysts of experiencing this satisfaction. Ten years of doing analysis and more recent experience with supervision of two CAPA graduates in psychoanalytic training have provided me with the satisfaction that I missed in the earlier part of my career when analytic patients were few and far between, not only for me, but also for my colleagues. The dearth of analytic patients and candidates is illustrated by the numbers. When I graduated from psychoanalytic training (1985), the two psychoanalytic institutes

in Philadelphia had 75 candidates between them. Now, in the merged Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia, there are 30 candidates, one third of whom are distance candidates.

### **The quality of clinical and written work of CAPA graduates in psychoanalytic training**

I have supervised two distance candidates who are CAPA graduates. I believe that their aptitude falls well within the range of local candidates. To illustrate this, I am providing (with permission) an account from one of my supervisees of sessions that took place in her second year of analytic training, during the 14th and 15th analytic sessions with her first analytic patient, a mental health professional. I believe that my supervisee's sensitivity and skill and her nascent ability to think analytically speak for itself:

#### *Session 14*

*P came in looking at my new dress (actually it's an old dress but it's the first time I wore this dress since I worked with her). Her eye and facial expressions made me feel as if she had some competitive and hostile feelings toward me. I had this in my mind without exploring with her because I thought I need more understanding of my countertransference and it's not a good timing to talk about it.*

- P: "I don't know what to talk about (Silence for several seconds). Like what I felt in my previous treatment, in the beginning, I was very excited, then gradually I had no feelings toward the treatment. I have some therapist friends who told me they felt good about their treatment; why can't I feel that? Does that mean my ability to touch my feelings is much poorer than other people? There were times, when I attended some group activities, the people around me felt something like happiness, sadness, or anything. I couldn't feel those things, I didn't trust the group leader and I suspected people just pretended they felt something."
- A: "Having no feelings is also a kind of feeling that can be explored. In the example you gave, it was not that you didn't have feelings; it was that you didn't have similar feelings as others. What you felt was suspicious, distrust, and unsafe."
- P: (Thought for a while) "Seemed so. And I have another puzzle. I have worked so hard and spent so much time, money, and energy attending various training programs and seeing supervisors, why is my work with my patients still so unsatisfactory? Why haven't I made much progress as a therapist? I want to explore my unconscious, but I never remember a whole dream; what I could remember were just some parts of dreams."
- A: "That's a start."
- P: "I often dreamed that I was left out and lonely, nobody liked me, just like my real life."

*Then she associated to her childhood during which her parents had few friends, her family seldom communicated with other people as if the outside world was dangerous.*

- P: "I haven't worked through my own difficulties in relationships, how can I help my patients with such problems?"

#### *Session 15*

- P: "I set out late today, I had thought I would be late today."
- A: "You are right on time."
- P: "I could have set out earlier but I didn't, which made me almost late. I wonder if my setting out late was because I was unhappy about the 7:00pm session time, which is not so convenient to me. But I can understand your situation; you may have your family, your child to take care of. I felt guilty when you saw me 5:35pm before Spring Festival."

*I empathized with her unhappiness and guilt and said, “I do understand; it’s not so convenient for you to come before 7 pm. Setting out late and arriving on time could be a ‘compromise formation,”” using a Chinese word meaning “to find a middle way,” to express both her reluctance and willingness to come.*

- P: “Seems so. And I find it’s hard for me to express my own wishes and needs, usually I put others’ needs before me. For example, when I go out having dinner with people, I just let them decide which restaurant to go, which foods to order. I don’t speak for myself even though I have my favorite ones. Just like in my family, I’m the youngest child, no one asked about my opinion, they made all the decisions.”
- A: “How do you feel about it?”
- P: ” I felt controlled, but I couldn’t express my anger. My mother was very revengeful, every time I said anything negative to her, she became very angry and attacked me. So was my third sister. She (her third sister) was so controlling, dominating and vindictive that I had to obey her. Another reason for my obedience was that they have been very kind to me, helped me a great deal, especially when I was in trouble with my ex-husband. They love me and I love them. My parents and siblings are the most important people in my life whom I felt most close to. I never had a real close relationship with people outside my original family.”
- A: “Usually a loving and close relationship in the family can make one feel safe and courageous to explore the outside world, it seemed that this was not your case. You seemed to become withdrawn as if the outside world is dangerous.”
- P: “I did feel the outside world was very dangerous and I needed to attached to my family to be protected and helped by them.”

*Then she started to talk about her nephew (her third sister’s son) who cheated her for money again and again and again. She hates herself for being so easily taken in by him, but couldn’t understand why she fell into the trap repeatedly, even though she knew he was a liar and unreliable.*

## Concluding thoughts

Resistances to distance teaching largely center on the newness the challenging and complex format of simultaneously teaching students in the classroom and on the screen. It is definitely harder than teaching a small group of candidates in person. Unfamiliarity with Chinese culture and written and spoken English, coupled with the lack of opportunity to socialize and to get to know each other, make the course work the most difficult leg of the tripartite model. Perhaps the simultaneous teaching of local and distance candidates in the same seminars is not the best seminar model, and it might be more effective and easier on faculty for distance candidates to be taught separately. Mixing distance American candidates from underserved areas of the U.S. with international candidates, with all on screen, might be the best model for the didactic seminars. It might be unpopular with candidates however, because local and distance students do like the opportunity to be in classes with each other. Supervising and analyzing, however, offer a greater opportunity to get to know and to work in depth with the candidate and takes the distance out of distance analytic training. Encouraging the candidate to visit further intensifies the experiences and that intensity would make for the formation of a more solid analytic identity.

As my colleagues on the Distance Education Task Force and I stated in our report, “Disagreements over the practice of distance analysis will not be speedily resolved. In the meantime, respectful dialogue should be a feature of the ongoing discussion on both sides of the debate. Many analysts conduct distance treatments and take their efforts seriously. Just as some analysts freely express their reservations about various dimensions of distance work, those who spend many hours a week practicing it find, on occasion, the tone and content accompanying these concerns to be dismissive of their efforts

and challenging of their reputations as serious, ethical psychoanalysts. It is our belief that most analytic practitioners take the responsibility of providing competent treatment seriously regardless of their position on distance analysis.”

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

### Notes on contributor

*Ralph E. Fishkin*, D.O., was Secretary of The American Psychoanalytic Association from 2013–2019 and has been a member of its Board of Directors for many years. He serves as North American Representative to the Board of the International Psychoanalytical Association. He is a Supervising Analyst and Co-President of the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia (2019–2021), and Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Thomas Jefferson University. He has served on the CAPA Board of Directors and is currently a member of its Ethics Committee.

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### Appendix A

The Psychoanalytic Process in Distance Analysis

(This report by Lyn Yonack from the COPE New Technologies Study Group was written in collaboration with Ralph Fishkin and appears on the Report of the Task Force on Distance Education.)

During the five years that Lyn Yonack was a member of the COPE Study Group on New Technologies, the group typically concerned itself with questions about the technology itself. The group discussed such questions in regard to the hows and whats of remote psychoanalysis and supervision as: Does an analyst need to be licensed in the state where the patient is? What platforms are secured? Does insurance cover remote psychotherapy and psychoanalysis? How does an analyst create and use a website to promote her practice? What to do when the Internet fails mid-dream? Can a distance analysis be a real analysis? But questions about fantasy and other theoretical concepts as manifested in remote psychoanalysis are always in the air. Two years ago, at the Winter Meetings, Ms. Yonack presented in the Discussion Group on New Technologies and the following year co-chaired the group, where considerations of phantasy, meaning, and enactments within the remote venue took center stage. The people in both discussion groups considered remote analysis and supervision less from a practical angle and more from a psychological perspective, examining such questions as what is gained, what is lost, what is avoided, how the medium can be used defensively in distance analysis, and how it might be used to open up and facilitate unconscious material not seemingly accessible to in-the-room analysis. As this DPE group moves forward with its review of the usefulness, inevitability and pitfalls of distance treatment and supervision, it is imperative that we include a thoughtful psychoanalytic perspective, giving weight to the many possible conscious and unconscious implications, and not explore merely at face value.

For example, who is distance analysis for? To what degree is it for the patient who might not otherwise have access to psychoanalysis or be able to come to the office due illness, injury, travel or geographic relocation by either the patient or the analyst? In the latter case, would the patient be better served by continuing with his current analyst via remote analysis or switch to another analyst or terminate? And to what degree is it for the analyst who enjoys the work and the clinical hours?

What happens when the bodies of the analytic pair are not in the same room thus eliminating smell, the gazes of the analyst and patient, eye contact and shifting proximity at every point of the session? What is the effect of the applications (Skype, Zoom) with their eye-locking intensities and vigilance as opposed to a more free-floating attention when the analytic pair is in the same room? What fantasies may be evoked if the patient uses a bed as an analytic couch? How do these factors feed fantasies and enactments?



In the office, it is largely the analyst who sets and maintains the frame and setting. In remote work, the frame is co-created to a variable extent by the patient, since the analyst and patient visit each other in their respective rooms. What, then, is the meaning and consequence of the analyst “coming into” the analysand’s space? Or, if the patient shifts the setting, from, for example, the car to the bedroom to the office to the porch (perhaps even the bathroom), how does this shift in the locus of control invite enactments around, among other aspects, analytic authority? Such considerations of the setting and space that would not beg ongoing attention within the analyst’s office necessitate closer attention in remote psychoanalysis.

## Appendix B

### (1) From the Chicago Candidates:

To: Chair of APsaA Executive Committee, President Harriet Wolfe

President-Elect of APsaA, Lee Jaffe

Secretary of APsaA Executive Committee, Ralph Fishkin

Head of the Department of Psychoanalytic Education, Alan Sugarman

Associate Head of the Department of Education, Britt-Marie Schiller

We, the Chicago-based candidates at the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis, are writing in support of our distance-candidate colleagues. They have brought to our attention the inequality between their status and ours within APsaA. Many aspects of their training are identical to ours – the course work and the procedures and requirements for progression through the training and for graduation. Where there is any difference lies in their analyses primarily over Skype or Zoom and occasionally in person. It is unclear whether this makes a difference in the character of these analyses and supervisions; it is even less clear whether such a hypothetical distinction would in fact lead to significantly different results. That these are telecommunications analyses strikes us as an insufficient reason to maintain the distance-learners in a second-class position within the analytic community. If their analyses are in any way lacking, that would most likely become evident in their clinical work with control cases (as it would in ours) and would then be handled on a case-by-case basis (as it is with the Chicago-based candidates). To date, that does not seem to be an issue.

The Chicago candidates have greatly benefited from having distance-learners in their co-horts. They bring different perspectives, a diversity that is essential to the vitality of the psychoanalytic community. But perhaps more than that, their dedication to learning psychoanalysis, as evidenced by the sacrifices they are making to accommodate the time zone differences, is awe-inspiring to us. It reminds us of how incredibly precious this knowledge and this skill are.

Lastly, as members of a discipline that has been on the decline, we are deeply concerned with the future of psychoanalysis. For too long, it has remained isolated and insulated. We welcome the opportunities afforded by having candidates from across the globe who can expand the reach of psychoanalysis and actively break down the barriers that keep psychoanalysis as the bastion of the white, Western world. We are living in a global society, and if psychoanalysis is to have a future, it must reflect the globalism. How is psychoanalysis to enter new regions – ones with few or no practicing analysts – if the training requires that candidates be in the same room as their analysts for the entire duration of their training?

In the interests of equality, and to ensure a future for psychoanalysis, we urge APsaA to reconsider the status of candidates who are distance-learners, and bring them into full membership as candidates within our community.

Respectfully Yours,

The Candidates’ Association of The Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis

Mary Margret Bell, Noel Blackburn, J. Dakota Cimo, Linda Emanuel, Michele Gaspar, Alexandra Hedberg, Michael Jones, Sidney Miller, Noemi Molina, Kathleen O’Connor, Susan Pearlson, Theo Pintzuk, Jane Reid, Chris Rigling, Peter Rudnytsky, Gina Shropshire, Katherine Williams.

(2) From the Philadelphia Candidates:

To: APsaA Executive Committee

Alan Sugarman Ph.D. (Chair, Department of Psychoanalytic Education)

We are distant candidates in China and local ones in the U.S. who are undergoing clinical psychoanalytic training offered by the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia, and we are writing to raise concern in APsaA about the membership status of distant psychoanalytic candidates.

As you may know, several psychoanalytic institutes, including PCOP, The Chicago Institute and the Washington Baltimore Center have started to provide and are currently providing complete clinical psychoanalytic training to both distant candidates via the internet and local candidates in person simultaneously, as a way to promote the spread of psychoanalysis in the world, as well as in areas in the U.S. where no local institute is available. We are grateful and very enthusiastic about the opportunity to train together.

However, it is unfortunate, disappointing, and ultimately unfair that, so far, the Chinese distant candidates are not eligible for Candidate membership, but only Academic Associate Candidate membership. Distance candidates from the U.S., because they are not easily differentiated from U.S. in-person candidates, will likely escape notice and be admitted to Active membership in APsaA. Following graduation, the Chinese distant candidates may only become Academic Associate members, even though the Chinese distant candidates receive, via the internet, the full version of clinical training, including courses, personal analysis, and supervision of control cases. We believe that any candidate who is in clinical training should be admitted to Candidate membership and following graduation, to Active membership. We believe that an error was made in designating Chinese clinical candidates to an academic (non-clinical) membership category. Therefore we distant and local candidates of PCOP sincerely appeal to APsaA to reconsider this membership issue.

There is another important issue to consider. In the past few years, IPA has started to offer psychoanalytic training for local Chinese candidates in Beijing and Shanghai. The applicants accepted are mainly ones having special or close connection with people in charge of the program, and at the same time living in only these two cities. Thus, it is reasonable for us to worry that, during the foundation and development phases of the field of psychoanalysis in China, psychoanalysts trained distantly in psychoanalytic institutes in the U.S. may be excluded or at least marginalized without regular membership in APsaA.

Xiao Shao, Robin Wang, Shan Yujia, Liu Yang, Cheng Jiang, Barbara Cohen, Rachel Gross, Hannah McLane, Jacquelynn Cunliffe, Shelley Oxenhorn, Jeremy Elkin, Sonya Ware, Zhang Yajuan, Jane Xu, Frank Tisano, Jason McLaughlin, Romani George.