



Flares

Issue no. 6 - January 2022
MAP Newsletter

Start, Stop, Continue

In many cultures, the new year is symbolized by the Baby New Year and Father Time, personifying the passing of time, and everywhere in the world, the new year is much anticipated and always celebrated. It marks the end of the past year, and the beginning of a new one. "Out with the old, in with the new", as they say.

Depending on where one is, there are a multitude of festivities and rituals done to mark this day. In Colombia, people march the streets bearing empty suitcases in the hopes of a travel-filled year. In Greece, it is common to find onions hung on the front door to symbolize rebirth. Here in the Philippines, we serve an assortment of 12 round fruits and wear polka-dot clothing to encourage abundance and prosperity in the coming year. Fireworks and noise-making, of course are a staple, stemming from the traditional belief that these warded off evil spirits.

For many, the new year has also come to mean making resolutions. These are promises we make to ourselves so that we may improve our lives in the coming year. They can be things we want to start doing like beginning a new hobby or learning a new skill, things we want to stop doing like engaging in unhealthy vices such as smoking or drinking alcohol, and those that we want to continue doing like practicing self-care.

With the times being what they are, here are some resolutions that you might want to consider for this year.

START being more intentional on a daily basis, moment by precious moment. Be in touch with your whole self - mind, heart, body, and soul. Seek peace within each day, revel in the serenity that it brings, and commit to the stillness and calmness that you experience as a result. Remember that while aiming to be less busy in our lives in general is a good goal to have, aiming to be less busy everyday is even better.

STOP consuming media that leaves you feeling hostile, anxious, fearful, or worse, inadequate. Inasmuch as we are mindful of the food that we take into our bodies, so too should we be equally discerning of the media that we allow our hearts and minds to consume. Choose the kind that ignites your passion, that inspires you to be your best self, and that which brings you joy. Keep in mind that just because our current normal allows for more time and opportunity to live in the world of social media, it does not mean that we should.

CONTINUE being kind. To yourself. To others. At each and every opportunity you get. We, all of us, need kindness today and we need it more than ever. In the words of Leo Tolstoy, "Nothing can make our life, or the lives of other people, more beautiful than perpetual kindness."

Happy New Year everyone! May 2022 be gentle on us all.

About the Artwork

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn was one of the world's most prolific artists, producing over 300 paintings and 2,000 drawings in his lifetime. His work is prominently characterized by his use of "chiaroscuro", or the contrasting of light and dark. Among numerous masterpieces, Rembrandt is famous for his self-portraits which documented his face as it aged over time. These portraits speak of his life as it unfolded, his trials and tribulations, and the honest way within which he saw himself. In many ways, they represent man's ability to introspect, to accept oneself for what and who he is, and to lay bare his soul in the most intimate of ways.

Today, Rembrandt's self-portraits are displayed in various museums all over the world including the National Gallery in London, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

In this issue:

- Faculty in Focus: Get to know Ms. Dee
- The Power of our Thoughts: Remembering Dr. Aaron T. Beck
- When the Doors are Steel Bars: The Life of a BJMP Officer by Aura Paula Olitoquit
- Mental Health and Wellness Center: Webinars
- 'Tis the Time for Giving: MalaPSYCHkit in Action
- MAP Events
 - World Teachers' Day celebrations
 - Virtual Christmas Party and PSYBingo

MS. DIANA IMPERIO



Coordinator, College of Psychology
Professor, College of Psychology
Professor, College of Business
Psychology Teacher, International
Baccalaureate (IB)
Moderator, BSP Psychology Society

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology
De La Salle University Manila

Master of Science in Clinical
Psychology
De La Salle University Manila

What advice would you give to your younger self?

I believe my younger self would benefit from these words: Do not be afraid to explore and appreciate what life has to offer. Fear and hesitation will always be there, but you need to take risks and try things at least once for you to grow. You might not be equipped yet with enough knowledge and skills, but it does not mean you cannot do it at all. Be confident, appreciate yourself more and know that you are loved and valued for who you are.

What's the most adventurous thing you've done in the past?

I went to Jakarta, Indonesia to work as a Psychology Teacher and Guidance Counselor in 2009. I flew to a place which was miles away from home, where I did not know any single soul, where people could barely speak English, and where Catholics were rare. I consider it as the most adventurous thing I have done in my life so far as it was when I experienced a lot of firsts in my life. It was my first time to go abroad and take a plane, to directly work with expats, to live alone and be away from my family. It is interesting to look back and realize how much I have learned from such experience, as I tried to adjust to a culture and lifestyle I am not accustomed to. My perspective about myself, my being Filipino, and people in general have greatly changed since then.

What is your favorite family tradition?

My mother belongs to a big clan. Every New Year's Day (January 1), we gather together for a grand reunion, where attendees are usually over a hundred in number. Each year, a specific family is put in charge to organize the entire event including the venue, program, prizes, food, and others. To make our reunion more special, we oblige all families to prepare a presentation based on a given theme. Most of us would really take things to the next level by doing all sorts of things just for fun. Our competitive relatives are always ready to embarrass themselves for the sake of winning the prize money. That makes all of us feel very positive every first day of every year since I was a child.

We hope to get back to that tradition when the pandemic is over.

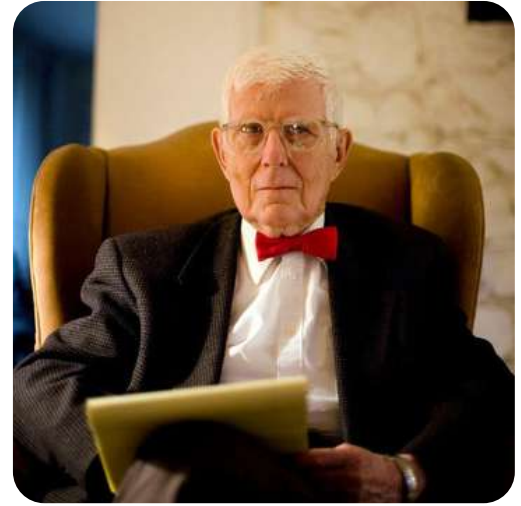
What is the best lesson that life has taught you?

Life has made me realize the worth of challenges that pave the way for growth. The Lord has great ways of taking us out of our comfort zones, allowing us to feel temporary discomfort to eventually be eternally strong. Life therefore becomes more interesting because of problems and difficulties. While we appreciate and look forward to happy days, life's challenges cannot and should not be totally avoided.

The Power of our Thoughts

Remembering Dr. Aaron T. Beck

Last November 1, 2021, the world bid adieu to Dr. Aaron T. Beck, psychiatrist, psychopathology researcher, inventor of the Beck Depression Inventory, Beck Hopelessness Scale, and Beck Anxiety Inventory, Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania, and President Emeritus of Beck Institute. Dubbed "one of the five most influential psychotherapists of all time" by The American Psychologist, Dr. Beck was recognized globally as the father of Cognitive Behavior Therapy. He was 100.



Dr. Beck's earliest work was geared towards validating psychoanalytic constructs, owing to his training in Freudian analysis. His work with depressed patients, however, led him to shift his focus from exploring childhood conflicts and past traumas buried within the psyche to looking into the distortions in a person's day-to-day thinking which ultimately brought about problematic behaviors. Through his studies, Dr. Beck found that rather than possessing an innate need to suffer, people living with depression tended to be consumed by negative thoughts and unhealthy beliefs. These "automatic thoughts" as he came to call them are what leads people to self-criticize, self-flagellate, and adopt self-defeating and self-condemning attitudes, thereby giving way to destructive behavior and despair.

Today of course, Dr. Beck's Cognitive Behavior Therapy goes beyond helping patients living with depression. In fact, it has come to be one of the most widely known and used mental health therapeutic modes, finding application and relevance in the treatment of many psychological issues including substance use problems, eating issues, mood disorders, stress, and anxiety among others. As psychologists, Dr. Beck's work has meant that we have in our arsenal a set of tools that we can use to help ourselves and others lead meaningful, purpose-driven, and happier lives.

Beyond academics, Dr. Beck taught all of us an important lesson on self-love and self-compassion. He taught us to rise above what he posited are the three main types of dysfunctional beliefs, namely negative views about oneself ("I am not enough"), negative views about the world ("All my experiences result in failure and defeat"), and negative views about the future ("The future is bleak"). He taught us to change how we think about situations in order to be able to engage in more adaptive behaviors. He taught us to challenge the thoughts that don't serve us well, and to cultivate those that do.

Dr. Beck once said, unceremoniously and unapologetically, **"Stop it, and give yourself a chance."** In this volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world we live in, these words cannot ring any truer and we would all do well to heed his wise counsel.

Truly, this world owes Dr. Beck so much. I imagine he would want to be repaid with a world full of people who can love and accept themselves, and help others to do so as well.

Let us start with ourselves. Let us start now.

When the Doors are Steel Bars

The Life of a BJMP Officer by Aura Paula Olitoquit

Public service has always been viewed as an honorable and respectable occupation across the globe, and the people who work within it are often portrayed as modern heroes disguised as ordinary citizens. They are tasked to protect, develop and deliver policies and services to the community - a true backbone of our society. Considered as resilient, strong, and dedicated, they have made a commitment to making a difference, devoting their lives, and often willing to set aside personal interests, all for the sake of the public.

As one of the five pillars of the Philippine criminal justice system, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) is a public service agency mandated to direct, supervise and control the administration and operation of all jails nationwide. Oftentimes heavily scrutinized and the subject of many criticisms, jail officers that work within the BJMP carry on their narrow shoulders the gargantuan task of safekeeping and developing Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), working directly and daily with them to aid in their rehabilitation. They are tasked with looking after the welfare of PDLs. Provision of basic needs, health services, educational programs, skills training, livelihood program, interfaith program, and paralegal program are only some of the assistance and services they provide. These responsibilities, often done behind the scenes, are not always understood by the public and definitely not something that all people can do easily. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, their work is even more challenging.



Being a jail officer means being away from family and friends often as they get assigned to different places for months or years at a time, thrust to live in places with strangers or their bosses, usually without having a say in the matter. These officers yearn for the love and comfort of their families and friends, and being in an environment with unfamiliar people while juggling new experiences and responsibilities does take its toll. Officers who may be prone to depression or other mental health problems can have an even more difficult time, aggravated by increased stress levels due to the lack of a support system.

Another challenge that BJMP officers experience is the constant threats of, and exposure to, violence from PDLs, something which leads to extremely high levels of stress on a daily basis. There is a real possibility that PDLs can assault these officers when given the chance, and those suffering from mental or behavioral problems can become extremely difficult and dangerous to control. Officers who live through these violent experiences can develop fear, anxiety, paranoia, or even PTSD. So too do job-related pressures threaten the officers' mental health and wellness, especially when a big part of the job is the protection and rehabilitation of PDLs whose behaviors may be difficult, unpredictable, or aggressive. To say that the job is taxing and emotionally draining is a true understatement.



In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase of law violators and criminals

When the Doors are Steel Bars (cont.)

The Life of a BJMP Officer by Aura Paula Olitoquit

that jail officers have to handle, resulting in congestion and overcrowding of jails which ultimately leads to population levels that are way more than what the staff could handle, thus doubling the workload. Highlighted as well are the dangers of letting one's guard down too rapidly in recent months. Local governments ease restrictions only to reimpose them following another COVID outbreak. Beyond work responsibilities, these affect jail officers on a more personal and intimate nature.

Since the job environment is so stressful, trainees are exposed to rigorous training and difficult examinations before they can become jail officers. These are fundamental to improve the cognitive knowledge, aptitude and faculties of the potential officers to effectively prepare them for their duties and responsibilities. So too is mental health awareness absolutely critical. Jail officers are human beings too and like any other person can reach their breaking point in the face of many stressors.

This global pandemic has highlighted the need for interventions to aid the prevention and management of mental health issues, as well as for more research to better understand the needs of the changing workforce. If we do not make the well-being and mental health of jail officers a top priority, stress and burnout will lend these officers unfit and unwell to carry about their duties of caring for the PDLs. With jail officers mentally unhealthy, they shall no longer be able to guarantee a safe prison both for the PDLs and society as a whole.

It goes without saying therefore that now is not the time for the government, private companies, and corporate leaders to relax their mental health policies. The tension and anxiety that most of us have experienced over the last 18 months will not go away on its own. Jail officers and public servants have always sacrificed their wellbeing for the sake of the general public, and they need help now more than ever. The time act is now.



Aura graduated with a degree in Psychology and is an MAP student. A Registered Psychometrician, she is currently working as a Jail Officer in the Admin/Welfare and Development Section of the Taguig City Jail.

Mental Health and Wellness Center

Webinars

Mental health is an important facet to a person's total wellbeing. More than just the absence of mental illness, it is a state of being wherein people are able to build resilience in the face of adversity, realize their full potential, and achieve connectedness with each other and the community.

The College of Psychology Mental Health and Wellness Center (MHWC) has been set up to foster the mental health of school employees and students. The mental wellbeing of employees and students is key to helping the Southville International School and Colleges (SISC) achieve

its vision of developing lifelong learners and movers of society who will make a difference in the 21st century.

MHWC employs a whole school approach in partnership with the Human Resources Department and the Counseling and Psychological Services Department (CAPS) to provide timely social and emotional support to employees and students, believing that each one will thrive best when they feel their best.

Over the past months, MHWC has conducted several webinars for faculty and students alike.

Amy Montañó conducted a talk entitled **"Talk About Stress? Anxiety? Burnout?"** during the SISFU General Faculty and Staff Meeting last 18 Nov. 2021.



Jing Climacosa conducted **"The Mirror and The Stage: Handling Emotions and Communicating Assertively"** for students of IC3: Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Relations (EQ) last 19 Nov. 2021.



Jing Climacosa conducted two sessions on **"Training for Success"** for Group Dynamics students on 13 and 14 Dec. 2021.

Tis the time for Giving

MalaPSYCHkit in action

During the last quarter of the year, MAP students, alumni, and faculty all came together once more to spread joy, hope, and love to our fellowmen through outreach activities, demonstrating that the spirit of malaPSYCHkit lives on in each and everyone of us. Maraming Salamat Po!

Disaster Relief

Typhoon Maring victims:
P5,500 c/o Philippine Red Cross

Typhoon Odette victims:
P5,000 for Bohol c/o Ms. Belen
P5,000 for Cebu c/o Cathy

Estrellas Nexcare

15 Hygiene Kits for patients
7 Noche Buena packages for staff



Noche Buena Packages

160 CAA students
56 Southville ates and kuyas



*"We make a living by what we get.
We make a life by what we give."
- Winston Churchill*

MAP Events

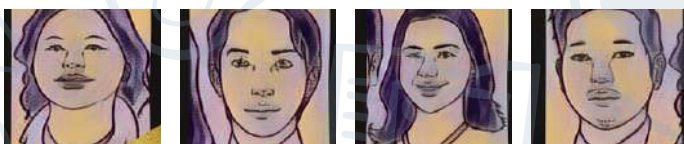
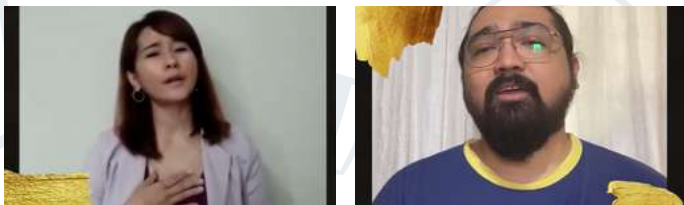
World Teachers' Day celebrations

Last October 5, the MAP Psychology Society paid homage to teachers in celebration of World Teachers' Day.

In season 2 of the "Ang Kwentong Guro Ko" series, the College of Psychology's newest faculty members, Ms. Lee Calison, Sir Jan Dalawampu, and Ms. Elyds Reyes, were featured.

Each one shared their own experiences as teachers, and the passion that inspires them to make a difference in the lives of their students. We are proud of their caliber and definitely count them as worthy additions to the College's premier faculty.

We look forward to learning from you!



In a touching rendition of Celine Dion's "Because You Loved Me", MAP students paid tribute to College of Psychology teachers through the gift of music and art.

The song encapsulated everything that we are grateful to our teachers for - for being pillars of strength, for seeing our potential and helping us to realize them, for supporting us in our pursuit of academic excellence, and for their unwavering belief that each one of us can fulfill our dreams of becoming psychologists.

The video ended with lovingly-created portraits of our dear teachers, a fitting tribute to all those who give so much and expect nothing in return.

Thank you dear teachers.

*We are everything we are,
because you love us.*

MAP Events

MAP Virtual Christmas Party and PsyBingo Part 2

December 18 was a red-letter day for the MAP as we celebrated our second virtual Christmas party.

The occasion was marked by a rundown of MAP Psychology Society's successful December 2021 MalaPsychkit activities and introduction of faculty and new students. Lester provided an intermission number like no other wherein he channeled his inner Mariah Carey, and goodies were up for grabs with a lucky four taking away the raffle prizes. As with last year, a Best Christmas Headdress contest was held, with Judith's "Miss Universe Christmas Edition" crown taking away the first place, and Tethresh's christmas tree-inspired headdress and Tess' environment-friendly jingle bell headdress tying for second.

Of course, the party will not be complete without our annual PsyBingo. Judith was declared winner, being the first to complete the required pattern, thus winning for herself a copy of the DSM V. The jury is still out, though, on whether Dr. Sam will receive a DSM III for his "only-one-word-missing" bingo card 😊.

C

O

N

G

R

A

J

S

PsyRaffle winners

Tess

Junior Double Yema Cake from Slice

Amy

Solo meals for 2 from Max's

Dean Ruel

P2k worth of Gas Card from SeaOil

Ms. Lee

Samgyup good for 2-4 pax from Samgyup-on-the-Way



Best Christmas Headdress



Judith

PSYBINGO WINNER