

2020-2022 HFI Annual Reports: The Pandemic Era

President's Letter to Our Friends Supporters

Dear friends,

The Covid-19 pandemic that swept the world beginning in early 2020 has had profound effects on the lives and livelihoods of millions of people around the world. This was nowhere more apparent than in the field of community mental health, especially in underserved communities, such as Harlem, because the underserved and marginalized communities that our Institute aims most to serve formed the demographic groups hardest hit by the pandemic.

We spent the pandemic years of 2020-2022 adapting to the new reality and finding ways to both continue to expand our reach in providing accessible mental-health services and training the next generation of community-based psychoanalytically focused clinicians. This meant greater reliance on technology and virtual communications tools, expanded outreach and new approaches to mental-health first aid and responses to trauma for adults and children, and the building of partnerships with other expert clinicians and mental-health organizations, including the 2022 establishment of our own clinical nonprofit subsidiary with the goal of opening a full Article 31 mental-health clinic in Harlem.

These were difficult years for everyone, bringing much troubling news. But there were also causes for hope and we saw communities come together to raise their collective voice for racial equality and social justice. In the midst of grief and anxiety, we also saw great resilience. And in the face of an unprecedented crisis, we saw unprecedented generosity, solidarity, and humanity. A better world is possible, and the fierce urgency of this moment inspires us all at the Harlem Family Institute to continue doing our part to help build it.

We therefore wish to extend heartfelt thanks to our wonderful donors — and to call upon potential contributors to please support our work. HFI needs your contributions more than ever in such unprecedented times. Although we maintain a very low budget and receive some grants and gifts from foundations and houses of worship, we urgently need *your* financial help. Only with support from individuals like you can HFI continue, expand and strengthen its unique, affordable training programs and its highly valued treatment services for children and adults in our City's underserved communities. We thank you for helping us in these vital efforts!

With best regards,

Michael Connolly, President, on behalf of the Institute's Board, faculty members, administrators and candidates in training.

More About the Harlem Family Institute

Chartered in 1991, the Harlem Family Institute was brought into being at the Children's Storefront School in East Harlem in the 1980s by psychoanalyst Stephen Kurtz. HFI is dedicated to offering low-fee psychoanalytic training and affordable therapy – taking psychoanalytic work out into the community, where we give children, teens and adults a safe space to voice their feelings, learn to use their strengths to manage the challenges they face each day, and discover new ways to relate to others and to themselves.

Comparative studies increasingly confirm the more profound, longer lasting value of the in-depth psychodynamic treatment we provide. But such treatment is sorely lacking nationwide and in NYC's public schools and underserved communities, where children are at greater risk for facing multiple obstacles to personal growth and academic success.

HFI is distinctive among psychoanalytic training institutes in its dual focus on serving residents of underserved neighborhoods and in seeking to train people – especially African Americans, Latinx and others underrepresented in the field – who want to become psychoanalysts, but who may need HFI's low-fee program and scholarship aid to do so.

In addition to providing training and treatment, HFI advocates for *systemic change* that supports increased recruitment and training of people of color. Advances in this sphere benefit the entire mental health field by broadening the pool of mental health clinicians providing services in the community. Besides serving as a model and "spokesperson" in this respect, HFI participates in and sponsors symposia and open houses that raise awareness of the need for greater openness and understanding of cultural and ethnic issues in psychoanalytic training. We invite you to learn more about HFI on our website:

www.harlemfamilyinstitute.org

New Partnerships

HFI Joins Forces with Dr. Gilbert Kliman's Children's Psychological Health Center of San Francisco, and Emory Brooks' Community Counseling and Mediation of Brooklyn

In 2020, the Harlem Family Institute won growing recognition and praise in the national psychoanalytic community as a modern pioneer in a field becoming known as *community psychoanalysis*, and began to introduce changes aimed at generating funds to help it become more self-sufficient through its work and to help subsidize other key but unprofitable aspects of its mission.

In September of 2020, the Institute joined forces with the **Children's Psychological Health Center, of San Francisco**, a groundbreaking nonprofit organization founded by the great humanitarian psychoanalytic psychiatrist **Dr. Gil Kliman**, who also came aboard with us as HFI Board Chair. Dr. Kliman brought over half a century of expertise in psychoanalytic psychiatry and child work, and a deep commitment to social justice. A graduate of the Harvard Medical School and the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, had created Reflective Network Therapy for preschoolers, a technique that organically integrates psychoanalytic treatment into a child's learning, play and socialization in the classroom, and which the Harlem Family Institute is preparing to include in its clinical practice. He is also an expert in forensic psychoanalytic work, having helped hundreds of traumatized and oppressed individuals in order to testify in legal cases on their behalf: both professionally assessing their suffering and helping them receive financial compensation.

Additional activities of Dr. Kliman are **positioning HFI at the intersection of psychoanalysis and human rights**. Dr. Kliman is a leading **forensic psychoanalytic practitioner**, having worked with hundreds of traumatized and oppressed individuals to testify as an expert witness in legal cases on

their behalf: both professionally assessing their suffering and helping them receive financial compensation. **In 2020, we worked pro bono with a group of RAICES clients, fathers and sons who were separated at the U.S.-Mexico border while seeking asylum**, in support of a psychological-damage lawsuit filed against the prison where they were held. The institute is also positioning to become involved in **international human rights**, having appointed Cambodian Killing Fields survivor Kealy Ny to its Board and tasked her with engaging as HFI's ambassador to the international human-rights community.

Another partnership that began in 2020 saw HFI affiliate with **Brooklyn nonprofit Community Counseling & Mediation, or CCM**, a mental-health clinical operation created by dynamic African American social worker **Emory Brooks** and licensed by the NY State Office of Mental Health, allowing it to be reimbursed by Medicaid as well as by commercial insurers for its work with its many clients from underserved communities. Several HFI candidates began working at CCM in a joint HFI-CCM program allowing HFI to receive some payment for its work with Medicaid-insured clients, who form a large portion of CCM's clients. This should in turn allow HFI to give its candidates tuition breaks and even pay them per diem stipends for their clinical work provided under supervision.

Responding to the Pandemic

Remote Operations and Support Groups

Due to the public health crisis, we were forced to temporarily shift from in-person training and clinical work in March of 2020 and to move everything online. In 2020, our candidates and one graduate provided online therapy to 21 children, and 18 adults.

Before the lockdown, our candidates also provided in-person clinical work to 18 children and their parents/caregivers at two Manhattan public elementary schools, Central Park East 1 in East Harlem and the Castle Bridge School in Washington Heights. We worked with five additional children at our clinical offices at the Franciscan Community Center (FCC) on West 97th St. Five adults were seen there or in supervising clinicians' offices. The Institute was also just opening a clinical space in its fairly new site, Fresh Oils Ministries, on St. Nicholas Ave. at 118th St. in West Harlem when the lockdown struck and delayed the project. We ceased providing clinical services at the South Bronx offices of the august old nonprofit Sheltering Arms in January 2020, as it established its own clinical operation. Alas, Sheltering Arms collapsed in the pandemic.

In addition to moving our clinical work online, we were forced to do the same for our educational and administrative activities. All classes, faculty and staff meetings, and advisory sessions were conducted via Zoom, and we all had to adapt quickly to the new technological reality. For all of the difficulties the transition posed at the outset, it also led us to two major positive developments: the launch of our virtual Public Programming including lecture and discussion sessions and community outreach meetings, and the increased modernization of our medical-records and education management systems (described in more detail below.)

Guided-Activity Workbooks for Children's Psychological First Aid

An innovative tool developed by Dr. Gil Kliman of the Children's Psychological Health Center, that he helped HFI adopt to support children globally and try to generate some much-needed income, was a series of Guided Activity Workbooks for children and teens who have lived through natural disasters or other collective traumatic experiences. These workbooks, which are now the property of HFI and its HFS clinical subsidiary, serve as both therapeutic exercises for children and their teachers or caregivers, and a diagnostic-assessment tool to be evaluated by clinical professionals.

“*My Pandemic Story*,” which is Dr. Kliman’s use of the method as a targeted-response tool to the Covid-19 crisis, was released in the summer of 2020 and has been translated into 11 languages and counting. HFI has been involved in updating and marketing the book to individuals and institutions, and we are actively working to bring it to the attention of educational administrators, teachers, child-care organizations and state education departments. The book is available for purchase as a digital download via our website, with significant discounts available for bulk licensing.

In the spring of 2022, in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, we returned to the guided-activity workbook format and created “*My Story about the War and Terror in Ukraine*,” aimed at addressing the trauma faced by young refugees and people displaced or otherwise affected by the war. We worked swiftly to translate it into Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, German, French, Italian and Spanish to meet the needs of the children around the world experiencing turmoil, and built an international collaborative network of clinicians and outreach workers to distribute the book widely to those in need. We also held video meetings with Ukrainian clinicians to learn of their struggles and offer support..

New Online Community Outreach Clinical & Educational Programs

In mid-2020, the Institute launched HFI Community Outreach programs led by Board Chair Dr. Gilbert Kliman, MD, and Principal Consultant, Dr. Paula Kliger, PhD. Most ambitious was the Margaret Morgan Lawrence Trauma-Response Service, which sought to connect experienced clinicians with people suffering from the effects of traumatic events, including gun violence.

In addition, we began presenting online public and professional talks, symposia, workshops, book presentations and performances by a diverse lineup of psychoanalysts, authors, social-justice activists and healthcare professionals, focused on issues of diversity and discrimination and working with children and adolescents in underserved communities. The presentations can draw significant income to HFI, especially when they offer continuing-education credits for clinical professionals, as the Institute has won NY State authorization to offer these to Licensed Psychoanalysts, Social Workers and Licensed Psychologists.

The flagship of this program has been our “**Saturday Talks: Harlem’s Psychoanalytic Renaissance**” series, which began in 2021, aimed at clinicians and clinicians-in-training and brings in experts in the field to discuss issues of social justice and community experience as they apply to clinical practice.

We also began offering monthly online community outreach sessions entitled “Bridging the Institute and the Community,” a space for Institute members to connect with people in the helping professions (healthcare, clergy, other mental health clinicians, childcare, social outreach and social services, etc.) in the underserved communities on which we focus our efforts.

Additionally, Dr. Gilbert Kliman hosted some seminars and training sessions for practitioners on Reflective Network Therapy in the Preschool Classroom, the technique he created in the 1960s for providing intensive engagement and support to special-needs preschoolers by working in a classroom setting with groups of struggling children one at a time. It has proved highly efficacious, including for children on the autism spectrum.

In 2021-2022, we hosted the following programs as part of our Saturday Talks series:

Fanny Brewster, PhD, MFA, LP: “The Racial Complex: Race, Racism and Cultural Complexes”
Daniel Gaztambide, PsyD: “Between Blackness and Puerto Ricanness”
Neil Altman PhD, Eugene Ellis, MA, and Ann Marie Sacramone, LP: “White Privilege: Psychoanalytic Perspectives”
Kirkland Vaughans, PhD: “And How Are the Children? Intergenerational Trauma and the Development of Black Children in America”

Harriet Wolfe, MD: “Psychoanalysis at the Crossroads”
Kathryn McCormick, MA, LMFT: “Indigenous and Still Here: Reclaiming and Reconnecting our Narrative with Reflective Network Therapy”
Ebony Dennis, PsyD: “Misogyny and Racism Combined”
Jodie Kliman, PhD: “The Social Matrix Diagram: Mapping Intersectional Identities in Clinical and Training Relationships”
Jasmine Ueng-McHale, PhD: “Reclaiming Connections to Family and Transnational Histories Amid Anti-Asian Racism in America”

Modernization of Clinical and Educational Operations through Purpose-Built Software

The shift to primarily online work because of the 2020 pandemic lockdown emphasized the need for a 21st-century institute to make use of modern technology in record-keeping and running operations. Previously, our records were handled in hard copy in secure storage, with some online aspects handled through a secure shared drive.

In 2021, looking ahead to what we intend to be a significant expansion of our clinical operations, we began using TheraNest to manage our intakes, appointment scheduling, insurance and patient billing. TheraNest is a software platform designed for mental-health clinical operations and features the latest in security, HIPAA compliance and flexibility, as well as allowing clinical supervisors of candidates in training to oversee the work of their supervisees. Our new administrative staff are also working to reach out to help candidates in training and our clinical clients navigate the onboarding and billing processes.

In 2022, we extended new technology to our training operations by implementing the Populi education-management program. This is a highly customizable and powerful online education-management system, handling the whole life cycle of a candidate from application to graduation, handling course registration for both candidates and instructors, tracking credits and grades, providing space for reviews and evaluations, and facilitating tuition payments.

Looking to the Future With Harlem Family Services and Its Coming Margaret Morgan Lawrence Family & Child Development Center

In 2022, HFI founded its nonprofit subsidiary Harlem Family Services with the goal of establishing a full-service Article 31 mental health clinic in Harlem, to be named the Margaret Morgan Lawrence Family and Child Development Center in honor of one of HFI’s founding trustees, the nation’s first Black female pediatrician and first Black female psychoanalyst. This clinic is planned to be staffed with fully licensed and established professional clinicians and will accept insurance and Medicaid, and will prioritize service to low-income and otherwise underserved/marginalized patients in Harlem and Upper Manhattan.

A significant source of funding for this new clinic comes from a generous grant from Dr. Gil Kliman and Dr. Harriet Wolfe to underwrite the clinic’s ability to provide Reflective Network Therapy to young children.

Key Facts and Figures:

In **2020**, we had 15 active psychoanalytic candidates, one active psychology extern, and two active clinical-experience candidates. Prior to lockdown, we provided clinical services at our sites at CPE1 Elementary, Castle Bridge School, and the Franciscan Community Center, and began developing relationships with Fresh Oils Ministries and Exodus Transitional Community.

In **2021**, we had 15 active psychoanalytic candidates, one active clinical-experience candidate, and one graduated student working on their permit. We continued to provide clinical services at CPE1 Elementary, Castle Bridge School, and the Franciscan Community Center, and continued our work with Fresh Oils Ministries and Exodus Transitional Community. Through Dr. Gil Kliman we handled over 20 forensic psychoanalytic cases, and our first public programming sessions reached 60 attendees.

In **2022**, we had 19 active psychoanalytic candidates and one active clinical-experience candidate. We continued to provide clinical services at CPE1 Elementary, Castle Bridge School, and the Franciscan Community Center, and continued our work with Fresh Oils Ministries and Exodus Transitional Community.

DONATIONS:

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Michael Connolly
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Gilbert Kliman
Children's Psychological Health Center

2021 Donations

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