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Cracks in the Glass Ceiling: Perspectives from the Women's Issues in Behavior Therapy SIG

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1977. The women's liberation movement had been in full-force for over a decade. *Roots* is on television and *Star Wars* (the real first movie, not episode one!) hits the big screen for the first time. Approximately 20 million women are in the full-time workforce – making about 59 cents for every dollar brought home by their male counterparts (U.S. Women's Bureau and the National Committee on Pay Equity) and abortion rights are on the front page when the Supreme Court rules that states are not required to use Medicaid funds to cover elective abortions. The number of doctorates in psychology is rising but women make up just about 25% of those earning PhDs overall and about 18% of those earning PhDs in science and engineering (National Science Foundation Division of Science Resources Statistics, 2006). In 1973, APA's Division 35, the Society for the Psychology of Women, is formed and in 1975 the journal *Sex Roles* is founded. It is against this backdrop that the Women's Issues in Behavior Therapy Special Interest Group (Women's SIG) is formed by co-founders Dr. Marsha Linehan and Dr. Stephanie Stolz. This was a time when few women were in the room when funding priorities in the field were discussed – in fact, few women were in the room at all. The Women's SIG formed as a place to discuss the issues important to women that were not seeing the light of day. For example, while assertiveness research was in its heyday, investigations took on a masculine bent – the relationship, a decidedly more feminine concern, was not seen as central to these discussions (Seligman & Anderson, 2015). The Women's SIG became a place for ABCT members (at the time AABT) to discuss issues of importance to women and to advocate with NIMH and others to fund research that disproportionately affected women. Working together as a group, the Women's SIG allowed the female members of ABCT a voice that was hard to get as an individual. For many of its members, the Women's SIG also became a professional home of sorts – many faced inhospitable work climates in their home departments and came to an annual conference that was so dominated by men that the Women's SIG offered a place

where – as one former SIG leader put it – members could “cling to” one another to see that being a female psychologist in academia was even possible.

Since the inception of the Women's SIG, 19 leaders (all women) have served as President or co-President, including some of the most accomplished members of ABCT (e.g., Marsha Linehan, Patricia Resick, Diane Chambless); many others have served on our board or been active members. The experiences of our leaders and our members have been as varied as the women who make up the group. Early on, some were told that membership in the Women's SIG was not a good career move, as interest in women's issues was deemed “too narrow”. However, this advice seems to have missed the mark. When we asked our members and past presidents to reflect on their experiences many reported that their involvement in the SIG led to fruitful collaborations and inspired them to pursue lines of work that became their lifelong interest (e.g., Brandon & Holtzworth-Munroe, 1992; Collins & McNair, 1986; Wolfson, 1999; Wolfson, 2001). Others remarked that the SIG served as a place where their students' interests were sparked by the diverse research agendas of the members and that participation in the SIG was the entry point to successful academic and administrative careers. Thus, one goal of the SIG, to serve as a meeting place for women to build collaborations and find inspiration has certainly been a success, but what about the SIG's other goals – for women to have a seat at the table in ABCT and beyond and to get ABCT to recognize women's issues as mental health issues?

Early on, when inequality in wages was being debated on the national level, the Women's SIG attempted to get ABCT's board to take a position advocating for equal pay; however, the board chose to not view this issue as one pertaining to mental health, despite the frequently observed link between socioeconomic status and health outcomes. In response, the Women's SIG organized a walkout during an ABCT board meeting. As a country we continue to struggle with this issue and its impact on women's mental well-being as well as their finances and as a professional organization, we have yet to take a stand on many of these issues.

Women are being hired into faculty positions at increasing numbers; however, only 34% of women are represented at the rank of full-professor (Christidis, Wicherski, Hamp, Stamm, & Nigrinis, 2014). Moreover, psychologist's wages are stagnating, perhaps due to the "feminization" of the profession. On the other hand, women's participation at ABCT has increased dramatically over the years (Ham & Anderson, 2012). For example, women served as first author on 54% of the papers delivered in a symposium at ABCT in 2014 (Sockol, McGinn, & Newman, 2016) and both the current president and the president-elect of ABCT are women. However, as Sockol et al. (2016) point out, women's participation at the annual conference still lags behind when it comes to roles that require an invitation (e.g., symposium discussant) or prestige (e.g., master clinician seminar). Moreover, of the 22 lifetime achievement award recipients only 4 (18%) are women and two of these women shared the award (2014: Lauren Alloy and Lynn Abramson shared the award). And for women (or men!) that need to balance career goals with family responsibilities attendance at ABCT can be difficult due to lack of accommodations.

Our most recent goals and achievements reflect this mixed picture of great successes mingled with many remaining opportunities for improvement. Our board members continue to organize and participate in discussion panels geared towards facilitating women's careers, such as panels on breaking the glass ceiling, mentoring women scientists, and obtaining funding for research on women's health. 2015 was the first year a lactation room was provided at the conference, an effort spearheaded by former SIG president Alyssa Ward and pursued for several years before finally coming to fruition. This is just one example of how the SIG tries to advocate for women in the organization more broadly, not just SIG members. Currently, we are working on a plan to assess child care needs at the conference as we seek to make ABCT a more accessible and welcoming place for single parents, dual career couples, and parents with young children. Recently, we also successfully nominated Dr. Marsha Linehan (Women's SIG co-founder and past president) for the lifetime achievement award, to be bestowed at ABCT 2016.

Dr. Linehan's contributions to the science and practice of cognitive behavioral therapy mean she will be one of the most accomplished members of a very impressive list. We are certainly very gratified that her omission from this group has been corrected as a result of our continued efforts we hope to see the number of women receiving such prestigious awards starting to reflect the number of women active in the field. In line with the early goals of the SIG to foster collaboration and provide a professional home for our members we have also have started a newsletter to keep in touch with members and a listserv for our group to disseminate information and opportunities.

Nearly 40 years after the Women's SIG's inception, *Roots* is on television again (as a remake), the pay gap still exists (although some progress has been made), women's reproductive rights remain under attack, and on the national stage one presumptive presidential candidate has declared that "women's rights are human rights," while the other....well, shall we say, has taken a somewhat different view of the role of women in our society. In the field, however, the outlook is somewhat brighter. Female students are now the majority in psychology graduate programs (Willyard, 2011), there are multiple journals for feminist psychology in addition to *Sex Roles*, and the Women's SIG has accomplished much of what its founders set out to do. So what do we see for the next 40 years – or at least the next 3 or 4? In addition to continuing to make attendance and participation at the annual conference more feasible for those members juggling their professional roles with child care responsibilities we also wish to honor our founding leaders' goal of advocacy for women's issues outside of ABCT – but of course, being part of ABCT we intend to do this in a data-based way! To this end, we plan to begin examining the proportion of federal funding going toward supporting research on issues that disproportionately affect women (e.g., sexual violence, eating disorders) and to women principal investigators. Additionally, we know that as more women join a field, salaries often suffer (Levanon, England, & Allison, 2009). Thus, the feminization of psychology has the potential to impact the earning power of all of us – women and men. While the debate about the cause of this phenomenon continues,

the Women's SIG has taken the positive step of sponsoring a panel discussion at the 2015 conference offering advice on how to negotiate salary and benefits (Seligman et al., 2015). The fact that women are less likely to negotiate than men and that this leads to a lower starting salary that is compounded over the years (Babcock & Laschever, 2003) can lead to lower salaries for the field as a whole over time as more women join the profession. However, Levanon's et al. (2009) analysis of 50 years of data suggest this is not the only issue at play; in fact, the feminization effect seems to be largely driven by employers devaluing of work once they see women doing it. Psychologists' research on implicit biases helps to explain why this is so but yet we are still left with few viable solutions. This seems a clear place for the Women's SIG to continue our history of advocacy both in encouraging the study of this phenomenon and in pushing for viable solutions.

So in sum, as we look to our past and forward to our future, as we spoke to early leaders and members and reflected on our experiences today, we realized that the landscape at ABCT and at many of our workplaces has changed radically from the days that inspired the founding of the Women's SIG. This brought up the question, are we still needed? After all, we no longer need to cling together to reassure ourselves that women can make it in psychology – those who went before us have proven that women can survive and even thrive in our field. However, while we recognize how lucky we are, as we hear from our members about discrimination they face as students during their pregnancies or we gasp to see some of the accomplished members of field omitted from ABCT's awardee's list, as we see the opportunities to support our members' careers and to advocate for women's mental health, we have come the conclusion – both happily and with some regret – that yes, at least for now we are still needed.

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