

# SPRING CONFERENCE



## NAVIGATING CONNECTIONS: SOCIO-RELATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN

APRIL 16 - 18, 2026 | HOTEL24 SOUTH | STAUNTON, VA



### Topics

Childhood Connections  
Adolescents: Identity & Social Connections  
Adulthood  
Aging & the Evolution of Social Networks  
Technology & Relationships  
Cultural Influences on Socio-Relational  
Development



### Registration Fees

- VACP Member - \$295
- VACP Student Member - \$195
- Student (Undergrad) - \$30
- VAPS Faculty Member - \$75

\$25 Late fee for all registrations  
received after March 13, 2026.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE  
March 27, 2026.



### Accommodations

Hotel24 South  
Conference Rate: \$155++ per night  
Check in: 4:00 pm  
Check out: 12:00 pm Noon  
Cut-off Date: 3/16/2026

**RESERVE HERE** or  
call (540) 885-4848



REGISTER NOW:  
[WWW.VAPSYCH.ORG/SPRING](http://WWW.VAPSYCH.ORG/SPRING)

This conference program explores how relationships shape socio-emotional development across the lifespan, from early childhood through aging. Sessions will examine the influence of family dynamics, peer relationships, romantic partnerships, and workplace connections on identity, mental health, and well-being. Participants will also consider how technology and social media are transforming modern relationships, alongside the role of culture and globalization in shaping social connections. Together, these discussions offer a comprehensive view of how meaningful relationships evolve and can be fostered at every stage of life.

## THURSDAY, APRIL 16

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm VACP Board of Directors Meeting

## FRIDAY, APRIL 17

7:30 am - 8:30 am Registration and Breakfast

8:30 am - 10:30 am Course 1 - *Attachment, Loneliness, and the Architecture of Adult Friendship*

9:00 am - 10:00 am Student Paper Sessions 1 (VAPS)

10:00 am - 12:00 pm Student Poster Session 1 (VAPS)

10:30 am - 10:45 am VACP Refreshment Break

10:45 am - 12:45 pm Course 2 - *The Ethical Issues for Clinical Psychologists: Navigating APA Ethics Code in the Digital World of Online Reputation Management*

11:00 am - 12:00 pm Student Paper Session 2 (VAPS)

12:45 pm - 2:00 pm VACP Membership Meeting and Luncheon\* (Registration Required)

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm Student Poster Session 2 (VAPS)

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm Course 3 - *Navigating Socio-Relational Development Around the World: Global Implications and Local Applications for Clinical Practice*

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm Student Paper Sessions 3 and 4 (VAPS)

4:00 pm - 4:15 pm VACP Refreshment Break

4:00 pm - 6:00 pm VAPS Annual Meeting

4:15 pm - 5:15 pm Course 4 - *How Immigration Affects Parenting and the Mindset, Coping Strategies, and World View of their Second Generation Children*

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm VACP Members Reception\*

*Dinner is on Your Own*

**\* Restricted to VACP Members Only**

## SATURDAY, APRIL 18

7:30 am - 8:00 am Registration and Breakfast

8:00 am - 10:00 am Course 5 - *Board of Psychology Conversation Hour\**

10:00 am - 10:15 am Break and Hotel Check-Out

10:15 am - 12:15 pm Course 6 - *Learning by Doing: An Epistemological Approach for Racial Sensitivity*

12:15 pm - 12:45 pm Lunch

12:45 pm - 2:45 pm Course 7 - *The Politics of Stress: Lifespan Approaches to Therapy in Divided Times*

**\*Qualifies for Ethics Credit**

## COURSE 1

### **Attachment, Loneliness, and the Architecture of Adult Friendship**

**Presented by: Leslie Stelljes Nanson, PsyD, Stephanie McGraw, PsyD**

Explores the developmental, relational, and psychological underpinnings of adult friendship and its growing significance in contemporary clinical practice. Drawing from attachment theory, research on social isolation, and clinical case material, this presentation examines how early relational patterns shape adults' capacity for intimacy, mutuality, and trust outside of romantic relationships or family bonds. We will discuss the ways in which loneliness manifests in clinical work, how friendship serves as a critical (yet often underappreciated) protective factor, and how clinicians can help patients build and sustain meaningful peer connections. Emphasis will be placed on assessment, therapeutic interventions, and the role of friendship in mental health outcomes across the lifespan.

**Learning Objectives:** Participants will be able to identify at least two ways that adult attachment patterns influence the formation, maintenance, and rupture of adult friendships; apply clinical strategies to assess and intervene in loneliness and friendship-related challenges within psychotherapy.

## COURSE 2

### **The Ethical Issues for Clinical Psychologists: Navigating APA Ethics Code in the Digital World of Online Reputation Management**

**Presented by: Edward A. Peck III, PhD, ABPP-Cn, Lucien W. Roberts, III, MHA, FACMPE, Peter Sheras, PhD, ABPP, Carla Messenger, PhD**

The rise of online review platforms has made Online Reputation Management (ORM) an operational reality in healthcare, creating a significant ethical dilemma for clinical psychologists. ORM pressures conflict with the American Psychological Association's prohibition on soliciting testimonials (Ethics Code Standard 5.05) and raise concerns related to confidentiality, multiple relationships, and nonmaleficence. This panel examines how telehealth expansion, non-psychologist competitors, and patient-generated online reviews increasingly influence psychologist selection and risk professional marginalization. The discussion contrasts APA and AMA ethics codes, explores whether automated third-party feedback systems constitute impermissible solicitation, and examines challenges in defining "former patients" in contemporary care models. The panel reviews current APA guidance, presents data on ORM adoption in integrated care settings, and considers how professional ethics may be reconciled with the realities of the digital age.

**Learning Objectives:** Participants will focus on the APA's relevant Ethical Standards regarding on issues such as testimonials, confidentiality, definitions of former patients, multiple relationships, and nonmaleficence—and describe the current ethical conflicts clinical psychologists face regarding ORM, including strategies for addressing ORM-related ethical concerns when working in organizations that utilize ORM; analyze the ethical and professional arguments and concerns associated with using automated, third-party ORM systems for gathering feedback from "former" patients, including the complexities of defining "former" patients; learn how the APA can support Clinical Psychologists in balancing their ethical obligations with the operational demands of digital visibility and ORM, and what Clinical Psychologists can do as employees in health care organizations which use ORM to collect patient satisfaction information.

## COURSE 3

### **Navigating Socio-Relational Development Around the World: Global Implications and Local Applications for Clinical Practice**

**Presented by: Craig Shealy, Ph.D., Devi Bhuyan, Psy.D., Adriana Sofia Silva, M.T.F.S., M.A**

When Lightner Witmer established the first clinical psychology clinic in 1896, he couldn't have foreseen how the profession would have evolved, not only in the United States, but all over the world. Despite these impressive advances, there is an overarching need to understand and navigate this extraordinary socio-relational potential, locally and globally. As such, through this dynamic and interactive session, attendees will learn how to enhance their own practice.

**Learning Objectives:** Participants will learn about innovative instruments and approaches to assessment (e.g., international measures; online / virtual methods; therapeutic assessment); gain access to and certification in one such measure, the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory (BEVI) and its AI and reporting functionality; enhance their clinical practice via multiple applications (e.g., AI support of therapeutic and evaluation processes; client self / other assessment; demonstration of therapeutic effectiveness; assessing relational change; consulting and coaching; education and training); learn about the work of colleagues in Virginia, the U.S., and internationally who are pursuing collaborative practice, training, and research in clinical psychology, the mental health field, and other socio-relational contexts, with corresponding opportunities for expanded professional engagement.

## COURSE 4

### **How Immigration Affects Parenting and the Mindset, Coping Strategies, and World View of their Second Generation Children**

**Presented by: Christy Barongan, Ph.D.**

In order to immigrate to the U.S., one must have someone petition on your behalf to vouch for your value in documenting that you have a useful skill to offer. This process often requires passing a test to demonstrate your competence, years of appeals, and sometimes settling for a job that is below your skill set. Upon arrival, one must prove one's worth to demonstrate that you have earned your visa. As a parent, the work required to stay in good standing of your visa status can limit the amount of time and energy you have for parenting. In addition, successful entry requires determination, intelligence, and motivation, stress tolerance, and a strong work ethic--all values that immigrant parents want their children to embody. However, inadvertently, immigrant parents also convey the message that we must live in survival mode in order to stay in this country. Research on the impact of constantly living with our threat response system activated has been well documented.

**Learning Objectives:** Participants will describe the stresses and traumas that one must endure to obtain a visa in the U.S.; discuss the impact that this stress and trauma has on the offspring of successful immigrants.

## COURSE 5\*

### **Board of Psychology Conversation Hour**

**Presented by: Virginia Board of Psychology Members and Staff**

Members and staff of the Virginia Board of Psychology will provide an update on relevant and timely issues under consideration by the Board, including Masters-level licensure, RxP, and licensing exams. Panelists will answer questions on topics under their purview from the audience.

**Learning Objectives:** Participants will be able to identify two issues currently under discussion in the Virginia Board of Psychology; identify how to find out specific and detailed information online about upcoming changes to psychology licensure.

\*Qualifies for Ethics Credit



## COURSE 6

### **Learning by Doing: An Epistemological Approach for Racial Sensitivity**

**Presented by: Gene Cash, LCSW-S, Rafaella Sale, Ph.D., LCP**

Addressing race in therapy reflects broader societal challenges and highlights gaps in psychologists' training on structural racism and racial trauma. Developing racial sensitivity requires self-examination and engagement with the central role of whiteness, implicit bias, and racial socialization in clinical practice. This experiential workshop introduces an epistemological framework for improving race-centered therapeutic engagement by fostering awareness of participants' racial identities, biases, and blind spots. Through modeling and guided dyadic exercises, participants will build the mindset and skills needed to engage in challenging, meaningful conversations about race in therapy.

## COURSE 7

### **The Politics of Stress: Lifespan Approaches to Therapy in Divided Times**

**Presented by: Zetta Bowles, PsyD, LCP**

Political division has grown in recent years, and it affects people's mental health at all ages. Many clients are coming to therapy feeling anxious, stressed, or in conflict with friends, family, or coworkers because of politics. This presentation looks at how political stress affects adolescents, young adults, middle-aged adults, and older adults, and shares practical therapy strategies for each age group. Drawing on recent peer-reviewed research, we examine how adolescents, young adults, middle-aged adults, and older adults experience political stress differently ranging from identity formation and social media driven emotional reactivity in adolescents and young adults, to family conflict, civic disillusionment, and legacy concerns in middle-aged and older adults. Key mechanisms, including cognitive distortions, affective polarization, and interpersonal tension, are highlighted as contributors to distress and therapeutic targets. We propose developmentally-informed interventions, including cognitive-behavioral strategies for reframing polarized thinking, acceptance-based approaches for values alignment, emotion-focused techniques for relational conflict, and social action models to foster agency and resilience. Therapists also need ways to stay neutral, manage their own biases, and guide clients in dealing with media exposure. This session will share real-world examples and practical tools. Clinicians will leave with clear strategies to help clients manage political stress, regulate emotions, and build resilience, making therapy a space for growth even in a divided world.

**Learning Objectives:** Participants will recognize key psychological mechanisms such as cognitive distortions, affective polarization, and interpersonal tension that contribute to distress in politically charged contexts; apply evidence-informed psychotherapeutic strategies, including cognitive-behavioral, acceptance-based, emotion-focused, and social action approaches, tailored to developmental stage and client context.

## MEET OUR PRESENTERS

**Follow this QR Code to read our presenters' bios.**



## **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP NOTICE**

In accordance with the VACP Bylaws, the membership of VACP will gather on Friday, April 17, 2026 to conduct business on behalf of the organization. All members in good standing are invited to attend.

**SAVE THE DATE**

## **2026 Fall Conference**



**October 8 - 10, 2026**

**Embassy Suites | Virginia Beach, Virginia**

# 2026 Spring Conference Registration

Register online here or complete the registration form and submit with payment to:

VACP • P.O. Box 29069 • Henrico, VA 23242-0069 • VACPoffice@gmail.com

Attendee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (will be used for name badge)

Dietary / ADA Considerations: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please submit by March 13)

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Daily Registration Fees** (Includes all CE and meals listed below. Must register for meals by March 13th. No exceptions.)

- ☐ **\$295 VACP Member General Registration** - Includes all CE, Friday and Saturday breakfasts, Friday and Saturday lunches, and Friday reception.
- ☐ **\$395 Non-VACP Member General Registration** - Includes all CE, Friday and Saturday breakfasts, and Saturday Lunch.
- ☐ **\$195 VACP Student Member General Registration** - Includes all CE, Friday and Saturday breakfasts, Friday and Saturday lunches, and Friday reception.

The following events may be included in your registration, please indicate which you will be attending:

- |                                                                                    |                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friday Breakfast                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Breakfast        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friday CE Presentations                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday CE Presentations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friday VACP Member Luncheon (Limited to first 60 members) | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Lunch            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friday VACP Reception                                     |                                                    |
- ☐ **\$30 Student General Registration (Undergraduate and Graduate)** - Includes Friday breakfast (Registration is required of ALL students presenting **and** attending VAPS sessions only.) *VAPS membership is a separate process that must be completed on the VAPS web site.*
- ☐ **\$75 Virginia Association for Psychological Science Members (VAPS)** - Includes Friday breakfast (Registration is required of ALL VAPS faculty members attending VAPS sessions. Registration is valid Friday only and does not include any VACP Courses.) *VAPS membership is a separate fee that must be paid directly to VAPS.*

The following event is included in your registration, please indicate if you will be attending:

- ☐ Friday Breakfast
- ☐ **\$25 Late Fee** - Applies if registering after March 13, 2026. Applies to all registration types.

\$\_\_\_\_\_ **Total Registration Fees**

To contribute to VACP's PAC,  
Virginia Psychology PAC, visit  
[www.vapsych.org/donate](http://www.vapsych.org/donate) or  
scan this QR Code:



☐ Pay by Check      ☐ Pay by Credit Card (MasterCard/Visa/American Express)

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Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (required) \_\_\_\_\_ Authorized amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

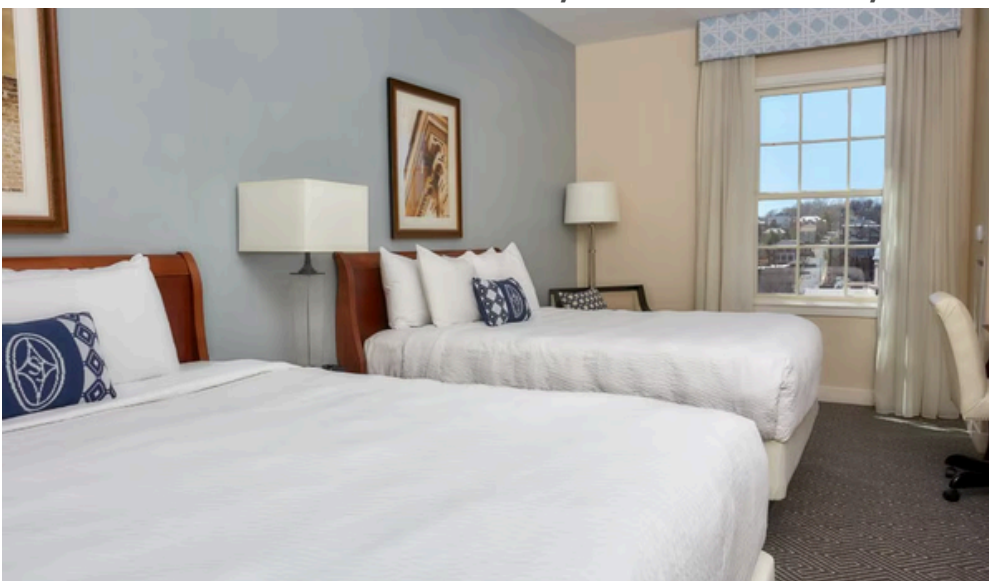


Scan QR code to  
reserve!



## ACCOMODATIONS

### HOTEL24 SOUTH, STAUNTON, VA



Contact Hotel24 South at (540) 885-4848 and mention the Virginia Academy of Clinical Psychologists to make your reservations. The VACP discounted rate is \$155 per night, plus appropriate taxes. Parking will be at the prevailing city owned garage rate. The number of rooms at this rate are limited. All reservations must be made no later than Monday, March 16, 2026.