Laissez les bon temps rouler! What could be better than 4 days in New Orleans with our amazing psychiatric-mental health nursing community? We will be gaining new ideas in sessions that speak directly to our expertise and kicking back with our people at the Mardi Gras Reception as the good times roll at the APNA 33rd Annual Conference. I wanted to make sure you knew about some things I’m most excited about as you plan your trip to NOLA.

**Keynote Nanette Larson** will teach us 4 strategies for embracing the human connection to promote whole health. Connection drives wellness in all areas, and with her lived experience of mental illness and training as a recovery support specialist, Nanette brings a message of hope for using connection to promote wellness in others. After all, isn’t our goal to look beyond the disease to the person underneath?

As many of you know, one of the ways I most love to connect with people is through humor. I’m excited to laugh and learn with all of you as comedian **Pete Lee** performs standup at Thursday’s Mardi Gras Reception. Pete is an accomplished standup who has performed on the Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, TruTV’s Greatest Ever and Comedy Knockout, and more. After he performs, Jamie Plaxco, MSN, RN, NP, PMHNP-BC will join me and Pete for a discussion on the science of humor, laughter, and whole health. Jamie is a PMH-NP in private practice who also happens to be Pete’s significant other.

Come get jazzed with your community and earn 100+ continuing education contact hours!

Gail R. Stern, RN, MSN, PMHCNS-BC
President

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**Teen Vaping**

What we know and what you can do.

Leigh Powers, DNP, MSN, MS, APRN, PMHNP-BC and Marie Smith-East, PhD Candidate, DNP, PMHNP-BC, EMT-B will present Teen Vaping on the Rise: Contributing Factors and What Nurses Need to Know on Thursday, October 3, at the APNA Annual Conference. Below, they responded to a few questions on this topic.

**Why do nurses need to know about this?** Teenagers in the United States are reporting a dramatic increase in their use of vaping devices in just a single year, with use at nearly double among high school seniors. According to the Surgeon General’s report, e-cigarette use has surpassed that of cigarettes as the most commonly used tobacco product in youth (US Dept of Health and Human Services, 2016). Clinical efforts must actively target this upward trend by increasing provider knowledge related to assessment and treatment.

**What are some common misconceptions about vaping?** Common misconceptions revolve around the harm reduction debate. Many teenagers that use vaping devices may perceive them as less of a risk of harm than cigarettes with no consideration regarding the long-term effects of use on the developing brain.

**What is one effective intervention for teen vaping?** Utilization of motivational interviewing that takes into consideration familial, peer, and societal influences regarding teen vaping can be an effective intervention.

**What is the most important thing you’d like attendees to take away from your presentation?** Nurses can take the lead in assessment, education and implementation of treatment initiatives aimed to reduce as well as prevent youth tobacco product use. While teenagers may be attracted to the highly marketable technology and flavorings found in vaping devices, it is critical that teens understand the possible effects of vaping on overall health, the development of the teenage brain, and the risks for addiction.

Anything else you’d like to share? Join us for an engaging discussion on this topic that offers real-world examples that you will be able to use in practice.
Nurses

I love meeting with and talking to nurses! That’s because I know that caring and compassion are at the heart of the nursing profession. I have learned from personal experience that healing occurs in the context of relationships, and I know that it is often psych-mental health nurses who are best positioned to be facilitators of hope and healing.

Connection

As a Recovery Support Specialist, connection is at the heart of my work. Within my first few months working for the state mental health authority, I was asked to meet with a family advocacy group known for their somewhat adversarial relationship with the state. My supervisor said, “You’ll be fine. Just remember to remain humble, appreciative, and vulnerable. These three things – humility, appreciation, and vulnerability – are like function keys on a keyboard. They are short-cuts to connection. Nearly 20 years later I use those keys every day as I relate to people in various states of wellness and at all levels of the system.

Whole Health

When I think of whole health, I think first of a mindset that is intentionally focused on achieving and sustaining a healthy and balanced lifestyle; one that recognizes the connections between the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of wellness. Whole health also takes into consideration the domains of our lives – relational, occupational, environmental, financial – and how our wellness can be either helped or hindered by strengths and challenges in those domains.

Self Care

“Secure your own oxygen mask before helping others.” For those in helping professions, this is one of the hardest lessons to put into practice. When we don’t, we face serious dilemmas. First, there’s brain damage! Well, not literally, but just as a deficiency in the amount of oxygen reaching your brain can render you useless, when we ignore our own needs, we become less and less useful to others. Second, there’s lip damage! That’s when people think we are just giving them lip service because our actions don’t line up with our words. So, put your own oxygen mask on first. You’re worth it!

Learn more about Larson and her keynote at www.apna.org/AnnualConference
I remember at first being almost overwhelmed at the amount of information, skills, and expertise that was available for attendees to explore. I realized that there was so much still for me to learn,” recalls Seng, a student nurse at the time of her first APNA Annual Conference, which she attended as an APNA Board of Directors Student Scholar. “However, there was this contagious motivation among all the attendees. I found inspiration in talking to nurses and hearing about what they were doing to advance our practice and knowledge base. It became an opportunity for me to soak up as much knowledge as possible and gain insight from experienced nurses so that I could be a better nurse and bring relevant ideas into my own workplace. Of course, I also had a ton of fun checking out the city, restaurants, and other touristy places after the days were over. Part of the appeal of going to a conference is that after a day of learning, there is still a lot more to check out.”

Seng says that one of her most memorable lessons at the conference came from Keynote Pete Earley, who shared his son’s struggle with mental illness and the issues they encountered with getting help and dealing with legalities.

“I learned about seeing the patient themselves and not the manifestation of their mental illness, and also about seeing the friends and family members who love them and suffer alongside with them,” she says. “It’s a reminder that above all else, the work we do is with the goal of helping a person whose struggles are genuine and real to them.”

This year, Seng is co-presenting a mini concurrent session on Thursday, Risk Perceptions and Reasons for Tobacco Use Among People with Mental Illness. “Following the first conference, I have been using every work shift to assess the needs of my patients and needs of direct care providers,” she says. “I hope to be able to identify a specific topic to pursue with graduate studies. So, going forward, I will be approaching these conferences as an opportunity to narrow down on areas of focus, identify where more research is needed, and bring that into my future studies.”

To anyone considering attending this year’s conference, Seng says: “There is a lot to be proud of in being a mental-health nurse, and part of that is pursuing new skills and knowledge, so that we improve the care given to our patients, their families, and the community. By attending the APNA Annual Conference, you’ll be immersed in enrichment and learning that enables you to truly be an agent of change.”
Meet Your New APNA Leaders

Elected by the membership, these three members will assume their positions on the APNA Board of Directors this October at the APNA Annual Conference.

**President-Elect**
Matthew Tierney, MS, CNS, ANP, PMHNP, FAAN

“I value a diverse and inclusive APNA membership reflective of the amazing variety of the communities where PMH nurses live and work. I strive to help APNA continue growing in scope, diversity, and influence.”

**Member-at-Large**
Eugenia Millender, PhD, RN, PMHNP-BC, CDE

“My goal is to share my experiences and expertise to continue to enhance and expand the psychiatric mental health nurse workforce and advocate for better mental health services policies. I am committed to helping APNA and all members grow.”

**Member-at-Large**
Jeffrey Ramirez, PhD, MSN, MPA, PMHNP, CARN-AP, ARNP

“I will work hard to empower members to move APNA strategic plans forward and to have more of an impact on the local, state, and national level. Our mental health system is facing complex issues ... Psychiatric nurses have a role to play in finding solutions...”