

# DEVELOPING NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EAST SIDE INSTITUTE FOR SHORT TERM PSYCHOTHERAPY

WINTER 2000 / VOLUME 3.3

## How to Have Sex: A Call for Dialogue

Over the past year, the East Side Institute for Short Term Psychotherapy has been creating conversation with colleagues working to create and support innovations in youth development and sex and sexuality education. One of the things we hope will emerge from this lively and thought-provoking dialogue — and the growing interest in our performance-based developmental approach — is a national conference (or a similar kind of professional gathering) on sex, sexuality and development that will be sponsored by the Institute in 2001. To involve you and many others in creating the conference, we present the following “mission statement,” which we hope you will share with colleagues and clients. We look forward to hearing from you and to working with all of our friends and colleagues in the US and internationally toward a more developmental New Year! You may reach us by telephone at (212) 941-8906 or by email at [mfridley@eastsideinstitute.org](mailto:mfridley@eastsideinstitute.org).

With all the talking we do about sexuality (adolescent and adult), pregnancy prevention and sex education when we get together as professionals, the one topic we should be talking about is the one we never touch — how to have sex. As experts, we keep a distance from each other and, more important, from the people we’re working

with, when we don’t struggle to articulate for ourselves and others our opinions, beliefs and positions on what it is — socially, psychologically, relationally, culturally — to have sex today. But as experts, aren’t we supposed to know something about this? Isn’t that why people come to us for help, advice and support? Over and over again, young people — when they’re being honest — tell us they want more than what we give them. They want more than warnings, more than information on prevention of pregnancy, AIDS and STDs, more than moral imperatives. They want to know how to have sex.

*“We have been shown these videos and these tapes since we were in fourth grade...after the tape goes off, the girl and the guy go home and go to bed, so what’s the difference? They try to scare people away, but I don’t think you can scare people away from sex.”*

*“I wish these videos and programs would teach about how to have sex. There are a lot of different ways to have sex, to be sexual — it doesn’t always have to be about birth control. A lot of us grow up thinking sex is about intercourse but that isn’t all sex is about, sex is about foreplay, it’s about the fondling and playing and touching that can go on for hours before intercourse comes in. If the young people were taught that, there would be a lot of happy females and males around without babies.”*

## Development, Sex and Developmental Sex

Assuming that all of us are truly concerned with supporting the people we’re working with to grow and develop as responsible, creative persons, it follows that the framework for talking about how to have sex would be development. *Is all sex developmental? Is no sex developmental? Can we distinguish between developmental sex and non-developmental sex? Would we all agree?* If you’ve never thought about “sex education” in this way, but find that these questions are helping you think outside the box, then we’d like to hear from you.

We at the East Side Institute for Short Term Psychotherapy are development experts. We’ve created an approach to promoting emotional, social, cultural and moral growth among people of all ages called performance social therapy. It’s based in a new understanding of human development as something we all create, not something that happens to us. It involves people in working together to create new ways of relating, *continued on page 2*

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**The East Side Institute for Short Term Psychotherapy**  
**500 Greenwich Street, Suite 202**  
**New York, NY 10013**  
**212.941.8906 fax 212.941.8340**  
[mfridley@eastsideinstitute.org](mailto:mfridley@eastsideinstitute.org)  
[www.eastsideinstitute.org](http://www.eastsideinstitute.org)

## *How to Have Sex: A Call for Dialogue, cont.*

new conversations, new understandings of themselves and who they are becoming, new environments, new organizations, new choices. As such, it gives people, young and old alike, the responsibility for creating and living their lives, based on their unique and particular characteristics and circumstances.

The Institute's developmental approach is practiced at ten Social Therapy Centers around the country, which see hundreds of children, adolescents and adults in group, individual and family therapy. It is, as well, the foundation for several successful school-based and after-school youth programs, in which we promote teens' active involvement and participation in the personal/social decision-making processes that affect their lives as becoming adults. In these environments, they discover and decide on sexual issues and learn how to do sex developmentally. The programs include:

*The All Stars Talent Show Network* — Begun 18 years ago, the All Stars Talent Show Network involves over 20,000 inner city youth annually in performance and development activities in their communities. The talent shows are designed to give every young person the opportunity to perform on (and off) stage and to learn a host of skills required to produce a live performance. In addition to New York City, the All Stars is also in Atlanta, Georgia and Newark, New Jersey.

*Development School for Youth* — This four-year old program is committed to developing leadership among young people who would

not otherwise have the opportunity to excel. Any young person between the ages of 15 and 21 who desires to be a leader is eligible to participate in the program, which includes workshops in public speaking, resume writing, and performance.

*Pregnant Productions* — A community-based "production company" in which young inner-city children and teens create and perform plays dealing with sexual and emotional issues they are beginning to confront in their lives.

*Let's Talk About It at Erasmus High School, Brooklyn, NY* — A community-building, in-school group social therapy experience for teens dealing with a myriad of social, emotional and sexual situations. Now eight years old, Let's Talk About It is attracting attention from educators and mental health professionals throughout the country for its success in helping young people to grow and develop.

In addition, the Institute has produced a documentary video entitled, *Sexperts: Miscommunication About Teen Pregnancy*, in which teens and adult sex experts share their attitudes, conceptions and emotions about sex, sexuality and teen pregnancy. To date, copies have been distributed to hundreds of youth development and sex and sexuality education specialists around the country, and the many and varied responses it provoked were the catalyst for this call for dialogue.

### **Some Examples**

*"We go to trainings that focus on helping young people develop, are*

*very enthusiastic about what we're learning, go back to our classrooms or programs and the minute something doesn't go according to plan, within five minutes we're back to doing what we know how to do."*

*"We sit down with the kids all the time and lay out what we think would be important for them to talk about...they look at us like we're crazy."*

*"Teens tell me all the time about nearly impossible situations that I can barely imagine handling at my age, let alone handling when I was 15 or 16 years old."*

*"I think we're much more comfortable making plans for young people rather than involving them in a process where they are working with us to figure out what we want to be doing together. To do this means giving up trying to control young people, which I know I find hard to do."*

Clearly, many of us are looking for something different to do with our clients, both young and old. Our recommendation? Begin to look at your work through a developmental lens. In our experience, it can be richly rewarding. But it places new demands on us. It means facing the challenges of coming out from behind our roles as information providers, problem solvers and interventionists. It means giving more of ourselves to young people — and asking more of them. It means talking with each other and discovering what we know and don't know about how to have sex — not to mention sharing how we feel about going through this exploration process. Let's do it together.

## Playing and Performing a New Psychology

*This issue of Developing News spotlights play and performance — two topics that are (finally) receiving recognition as vitally important human capacities. Regular readers of this newsletter will be familiar with news about performance — the East Side Institute has been developing and practicing a performatory approach to human growth for many, many years now, and we work to promote and provide a forum for others who work within a performatory mode. While the relationship between performance and play has been key in our and others' performatory work, until now play has remained in the background of conversation. In sharing with you news of two events — "The Promise of Play" and "Performing the World" — we begin to bring play to center stage.*

### The Promise of Play

*The Promise of Play is a documentary video that presents play as a fundamental developmental factor in the lives of humans (and other species). Produced by The Institute for Play, a non-profit research and educational corporation, together with Inca Productions, this 3-hour miniseries aired on selected local PBS stations in the Fall, 2000. The East Side Institute is proud to have contributed to this marvelous documentary. When contacted by the producers, we recommended they get to know the All Stars Talent Show Network, a youth development project whose practice is based on the performance social therapeutic approach developed at the East Side Institute. The All Stars is one of many programs, schools and companies highlighted in the miniseries.*

*We asked two colleagues, early childhood educator Carrie Lobman and e-commerce CEO Phil Terry to comment on The Promise of Play.*

#### The Value and Joy of Play Carrie Lobman

**I** have been a player all my life. I had my first job working with young children when I was 16 years old and I pretty much went from playing as a child to playing with children. I have learned how to give my playfulness to others and how to play as an adult, and it is when I am playing that I

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### Performing the World

**The Taos Institute** is a community of scholars and practitioners who collaborate to design and promote creative, appreciative, and relational practices in families, communities and organizations around the world. **Performance of a Lifetime** is a training and consulting firm with a unique performance approach to organizational and professional development.

Members of these two organizations announce plans to host a conference exploring the rich potential of performance for social change. The conference organizers, Ken Gergen, Mary Gergen, Lois Holzman, Sheila McNamee and Fred Newman, are anticipating a unique event. "What we're striving for is not a typically serious conference setting in which playful matters such as performance, play and creativity are the topics. We hope, instead, to create a playful environment in which serious things can happen," says Lois Holzman.

Adds Sheila McNamee, "Performing identity, performing professional practices, performing knowledge...these, and more, are all serious performances. The richness of the performance metaphor reminds us that coordination with others and the ability to improvise into the situation opens possibilities for novel constructions of our worlds. This gathering promises to explore the multiplicity of performances that can construct futures full of potential and constant revisioning."

Save  
the Date

## PERFORMING THE WORLD Communication, Improvisation and Societal Practice

*A conference at the Montauk Yacht Club at the eastern tip of Long Island, New York  
Friday, October 12 - Sunday, October 14, 2001*

*For scholars, therapists, health and helping professionals, educators, business professionals, community builders, performers and the irrepressibly curious*

**PERFORMANCE:** A means of developing self and relationship, enriching potentials for communication, exploring and illuminating the world, enhancing political consciousness, bringing diverse worlds together, effectively constructing new worlds, conjoining art and life, and expanding the province of joy. Come join the action....

Space is limited, so save the date and register early! Conference information and registration materials will be available in January, 2001 at the websites of the Taos Institute ([www.serve.com/taos](http://www.serve.com/taos)) and Performance of a Lifetime ([www.performanceofalifetime.com](http://www.performanceofalifetime.com)). You can also check the Institute's site ([www.eastsideinstitute.org](http://www.eastsideinstitute.org)) or contact Mary Fridley at (212) 941-8906 or by email at [mfridley@eastsideinstitute.org](mailto:mfridley@eastsideinstitute.org).

*The Value and Joy of Play, cont.*

feel the most alive, the most intimate with others, and the most creative. For me, one of the most exciting things about "The Promise of Play" is the fact that it was made. It includes new understandings and innovative practices of play, and brings the public into the growing movement to embrace play as one of the most wonderful and developmental of human activities. When I first became a nursery school teacher 15 years ago, people would look at me condescendingly and say, "Oh, what do you do, play all day?" Videos like this one support me to proudly answer, "Yes." The documentary appears at an interesting time in the history of how educators view play. At the same time that researchers and theorists are arguing that play is critical to human development and learning, play is being pushed out of many schools, afterschool programs and childcare centers. There is growing pressure to make children's lives less playful.

As an article in *The New York Times* put it, "No more fun and games: As children across the nation head back to school this fall, many are encountering a harsher atmosphere in which states set specific academic standards and impose real penalties on those who do not meet them." (Lewin, 1999, p. A-1)

Play has been set up as being the opposite of work, learning and teaching. Even educators who work with very young children are encouraged to get serious and cut down on the time children spend playing, because they are under pressure to provide evidence that they are teaching children the skills that they will need to be accepted and succeed in elementary school. Play has become a luxury — even an indulgence — and children are expected to prepare for future work by working (Elkind, 1990).

The first few segments of "The Promise of Play" are a direct challenge to this. Far from a frivolous

activity that does not support learning or development, the video presents the argument that play is how children learn and develop. From the dramatic play of preschool to the math games of elementary school, children learn best when they are playing. The video argues that far from being a luxury, play serves a serious function in human development: play prepares children for adulthood by allowing them to practice the social, cognitive and physical skills necessary for adult life.

While many developmental psychologists and educators see play as primarily about preparation and practice, to me the most powerful statement of the video comes in the second half when we see not only children but also adolescents and adults playing. From the All Stars Talent Show Network, to joyful and creative adult improvisational workshops, and a process oriented corporate brain-

*continued on page 6*

## ROUTLEDGE IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE

### Postmodern Psychologies, Societal Practice and Political Life

Edited by Lois Holzman and John Morss  
is now available

Postmodern Psychologies grows out of the 1997 East Side Institute-sponsored Unscientific Psychology conference. The book contains essays by speakers at the event — Erica Burman, Lenora Fulani, Ken Gergen, Mary Gergen, Lois Holzman, John Morss, Ian Parker, Fred Newman and John Shotter — and commentary from Harlene Anderson, Robert Neimeyer, Sheila McNamee and Vesna Ognjenovic.

*Here is a troupe of some of critical and postmodern psychology's most articulate and challenging voices performing at their best: engaging us in questioning our taken-for-granted psychological ideas and practices while compellingly inviting us beyond them: [O]ne of the best conversations on postmodern psychology's possibilities I've yet to come across.*

**-Tom Strong, University of Northern British Columbia**



**Play: Business Unusual**

Phil Terry

This PBS documentary is a great piece of television. Watch it. Enjoy the diversity of programs and organizations that have caught on to the power of play and, in particular, performance. The video implicitly endorses the notion — consistent, I think, with the work of the East Side Institute community — that creating playful environments is THE business issue of the new century. In fact, I believe that if we don't do something to change "business as usual," we will miss thousands of opportunities for the growth and development of our economy. So, if you don't mind, the rest of my remarks won't focus on the video, "The Promise of Play," but instead will explore further one of its themes, the power of play in the business world.

I first started working in corporate America in 1993 at a leading Wall Street institution. During that first year I mostly experienced confusion. I could not understand how such wealthy businesses could succeed when they were so poor at managing and developing their people. I came up with a term to describe this phenomenon — the "walking dead." This is when people full of potential get turned into unhappy, bitter, dispassionate "employees" who walk lifelessly around in often very well-appointed offices.

After a few years, I went to the Harvard Business School and did a little studying of the matter. It turns out that most companies "forget" to invest in most of the people to whom they pay salaries. In fact, a recent Stanford University survey estimates that only about 8% of

companies actually invest in the development and support of their employees. To me, this suggests the value of bringing play into business; I sincerely believe that more of what I like to call "business unusual" is vitally necessary today.

Here's why. Based on the Stanford research, let's assume that 90% of companies today do not effectively develop their people and that these same companies do not allow/support/encourage their employees to play, to go beyond themselves, to learn developmentally. Then, taking into account that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is basically an economic equation that describes in dollar terms how much "value" is created in the domestic economy by the creation, distribution and consumption of goods and services, I suggest that if these unplayful 90% did business unusual — i.e. transformed their walking dead environment into playful, ever-developing atmospheres — we would double the GDP.

As the CEO of an Internet startup, Creative Good, I have witnessed the impact of play on business. In fact, since day one, as we have built our company, we have integrated play into almost everything we do — from recruiting and training to our core consulting services and team management. We have done this working with Performance of a Lifetime, an organizational and training consulting firm that brings improvisation and performance into business settings. [Performance of a Lifetime was founded in 1996. It utilizes the approach of the the East Side Institute in creating its own unique brand of corporate and organizational development.]

The work we do with this company has many facets: workshops every six weeks where we play together as a company; training programs leading to improved policies and practices that help us to relate to people beyond their development and encourage them to perform ahead of themselves; coaching for executives and managers; bringing Performance of a Lifetime into our client engagements and creating plays with our clients (definitely unusual).

The impact of these efforts is clear: we have seen 100% retention of our consulting staff; 50% improvement in recruiting top candidates; and a moralized team working well, particularly during this dot.com depression. There is no question that play has been central to the growth of our firm. Perhaps if every company learned to play and perform, we could double the GDP. We'd certainly get pretty close — and we could definitely go a long way towards changing the "walking dead" phenomenon.

Which takes us back to the video. The PBS documentary shows that there are other folks who believe in play as well. So go watch it. Take pride that the East Side Institute, Performance of a Lifetime and other affiliated organizations have blazed a trail. Then tell your company to make play the bottom line.

*Phil Terry is CEO of Creative Good, an Internet strategy consulting firm headquartered in New York. Phil earned his MBA from the Harvard Business School, graduating with academic honors and the prestigious Dean's Award. He is widely quoted and featured in the press Fast Company, The New York Times, Boston Globe, AdWeek and Business 2.0.*

## *The Value and Joy of Play, cont.*

storming session, we are shown the transformative, developmental nature of play. What is critically important about this video, in my opinion, is its moving portrayal of everyday people reinitiating development by playing and performing with each other. The video sends a powerful message that while young children are playing and therefore developing and learning all the time, adults and older children are usually locked into identities, roles and jobs that require them to stop fooling around and be who they 'really' are.

In my experience, play and performance free people (young and old) from the roles we are locked into. We do not watch James Earl Jones play *Othello* and question whether he is really the kind of person who could kill his wife, and we do not demand that young children prove to us that they are really

Superman or the Little Mermaid. Instead, we take a creative journey with them and allow their performances to impact on them and us. If we look at human activity and see performance, we have a chance to support people to go beyond the roles prescribed to them by society, and create and re-create endless versions of themselves and of the world.

The first half of the video implies that adults have a better shot at teaching children how to be in the world if we support them to play. While I whole-heartedly support children's right and need to play, I would argue that the second half of the video is a much more provocative and ultimately developmental argument for adults learning how to play and perform our lives with some of the joyful creativeness of children playing Superman. In its totality, "The Promise of Play" is a wonderful statement about the

value and joy of performing and playing in everyday life. Its message is that play is too valuable to be left only to small children and professional performers.

Elkind, D. (1990). Academic pressures-too much, too soon: The demise of play. In E. Klugman and S. Smilansky (Eds.), *Children's play and learning: Perspectives and policy implications*. (pp.3-17). New York: Teachers College Press.

Lewin, N. (1999). No more fun and games as children go back to school. *New York Times*, p.A-1

*Carrie Lobman is a Spencer Research Fellow in Early Childhood Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. She has been an early childhood educator for 15 years and leads workshops for educators in performance and improvisation.*

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- Some of the latest writings from Lois Holzman and Fred Newman
- Fred Newman answers questions from therapists and therapists-in-training

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## New Therapy for Old Therapists

John Soderlund

Two years ago, emerging warily from a graduate degree in psychology, I wished privately that I had somebody to hold my hand as I embarked on a career as a psychotherapist. The two-year masters course I had completed had its fair share of practical training, but there were murky ethical, professional and therapeutic issues which still dogged me practically every time I sat down with a new client. I quietly longed to return to the career in daily journalism which I had pursued for 10 years prior to completing my psychology training. I had left journalism to get away from the stress of an enterprise which, while immensely stimulating and less ambivalent, was feeling increasingly soulless as I clambered up the newsroom ladder. A close friend and long established therapist consoled me: "You're not alone. Every therapist faces doubts about issues for years into their career because they are not issues to be resolved, but issues to be grappled with. If you don't struggle with them, you can't help

but wonder about what that means about your work."

Six months later, with the encouragement of the said advisor, *New Therapist*, the "indispensable survival guide for the thinking therapist," was launched. Our team of contributing editors guided us to the key issues therapists face in their daily work and we began bringing on board writers and contributors from around the world to address them. Our mandate: To blow some fresh air through the debates and dilemmas therapists face because of their work, and to offer a way through them that is readable, entertaining and thought provoking.

Now, 20 months and ten editions later, thanks in part to the largely generic nature of the dilemmas therapists face around the world, the magazine has lost its exclusively South African flavour and has an entirely international face, with contributing editors in five continents and writers and contributors from all over the globe. Contributors and interviewees to date have included Thomas Szasz, Harlene Anderson,

Tom Andersen, Albert Ellis, Raymond Fowler, Kenneth Gergen, Robert Langs, Fred Newman, Lois Holzman, Neville Symington, Lynn Hoffman, Lois Shawver and John Grohol.

Much like the issues it set out to address, producing each magazine is a struggle, an attempt to elucidate the nuances of the therapy world, its own pathologies and the ways we navigate them. To fulfil its mandate, the difficulties will probably not be eased with time and the magazine will be very different this time next year from what it is now. If it is, we trust our readers will join us in continuing to sweat out the challenges and questions their work raises every day.

*John Soderlund is the publishing editor of New Therapist and a psychologist in private practice in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. He is a former news editor and journalist of 10 years for international wire agency Reuters News Agency and Independent Newspapers, South Africa's largest newspaper group. New Therapist's web site can be found at [www.newtherapist.com](http://www.newtherapist.com).*

## Take A Fresh Look At Therapy

Psychotherapy is about to change. Yet so many of the publications for practitioners around the globe fail to tackle how the potential for change can shape the way therapists are working.

***New Therapist***, the international magazine for psychotherapy practitioners, offers definitive coverage of the news, research, practice and thinking that is revolutionizing therapy. Produced by leading thinkers, writers and therapists around the globe, it offers the freshest read on therapy today.

See our website at [www.newtherapist.com](http://www.newtherapist.com) for selected full-text articles. If you would like more information, or would like to subscribe, contact John Soderlund at [newtherapist@yebo.co.za](mailto:newtherapist@yebo.co.za).

## Great News!

"Let's Develop!," the popular call-in radio show hosted by Fred Newman on WEVD-1050 AM is now available to everyone on the World Wide Web. Log on to [www.wevd1050.com](http://www.wevd1050.com) every Sunday at noon (EST) and you too can join in on the conversation. If you need help, call Madelyn Chapman at (212) 941-8844.

## The East Side Institute for Short Term Psychotherapy

The East Side Institute for Short Term Psychotherapy is a research and training center for performance social therapy and other new approaches to human development and community. We work to bring together academics and practitioners with people from all walks of life so that together we can restructure psychology as a positive force in re-activating human development.

The Institute's activities include a post-graduate training program, classes and seminars, conferences, annual institutes and on-site trainings. We also collaborate with organizations in the United States and internationally to develop positive programs for children, youth and adults in their families, schools and neighborhoods.

Through their writing and lecturing, staff of the East Side Institute are in the thick of debate and dialogue on the need for radically new methods for psychology, psychotherapy and education.

The Institute is a 501-(c)(3) non-profit organization. *Developing News* is published four times a year. Submission deadlines are: January 15, March 15, September 15 and December 15. Mary Fridley, Editor; Skye Leith, Designer

*Best wishes for the holidays to  
our friends around the world*

*from all of us at*

*The East Side Institute*

*The East Side Institute for  
Short Term Psychotherapy  
500 Greenwich Street, Suite 202  
New York, NY 10013*

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