

SONJA BENSON, Ph.D., L.P.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. 12/96 Counseling Psychology, APA approved
University of Minnesota

Dissertation title: Perceived parental marital satisfaction and conflict: Effect on adult intimate relationships,

B.A. 3/90 Psychology (Honors Program)
University of Minnesota

Honors:

Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society
Magna cum laude
Psi Chi - Psychology Honor Society
Omicron Delta Kappa Honor Society

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Practice Management

Minnesota Neurorehabilitation Institute; Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operations Officer.

Plymouth/Edina, MN. 12/19-current

Locate & lease clinical office spaces; hire and train administrative assistants; credential physician & clinic and maintain re-credentialing; complete motions to intervene for worker's compensation patient cases, support collection of patient records for legal cases; preview, select & implement electronic health record companies for clinical needs; process medical claims; provide bookkeeping and tax preparation (quarterly & annually) for clinic; manage billing, payroll and benefits; create policies for medical/legal as well as outpatient clinical processes

Individual, couples & family therapy, group counseling.

Private practice, Scottsdale, AZ 11/03-7/09, Wayzata/Plymouth/Edina, MN 10/11-current
Specialty practice marriage & family therapy. ADHD coaching and ADHD-couples therapy. General psychotherapy for individual adults, adolescents and children. Limited career counseling and assessment. Psychological testing as appropriate. Use hypnosis and EMDR including for attachment issues, as appropriate.

Wells Fargo Employee Assistance Consulting, Phoenix, AZ 1/04-12/05

Employee Assistance Consultant. Provide assessment and referral for counseling, assist with obtaining/locating resources, robbery response, consultation for management and human resources.

Progressive Insurance Health Services . Tempe, AZ 2/99-1/04

Employee assistance program psychologist. Provide counseling to individual adults, children and adolescents, couples and families. Use hypnosis and EMDR with appropriate issues. Vocational, personality, learning disability and ADHD/intelligence testing. (Instruments: WISC-III, WIAT, CISS, SII, MIQ, MMPI-2, CPI, MBTI) Provide psychoeducational workshops and consultation for management and human resources.

Veteran's Administration Medical Center, Phoenix, AZ 5/97-6/00

Medical psychologist. Provided pain management, smoking cessation education, and therapy for various mental health & sequelae of medical issues. Utilized hypnosis with a variety of patient issues. Evaluated patients utilizing personality and cognitive assessment instruments. (Instruments: MMPI-2, MCMI-II, PAI, WAIS-R, WMS-R, DRS, WRAT-3, Folstein MMSE).

Family Counseling Agency, Judicial Supervision Program Tucson, AZ 7/96-5/97

Program Director. Created program including training manuals, protocols, rules and regulations for service. Provided therapeutic supervision and family therapy for parents and children court ordered to therapy/supervision. Presenting issues include family reunification, child abuse, domestic violence, drug dependency, poor parenting skill, and issues related to parental abduction. Provided supervision of parent(s) and child(ren) on visits. Testified and made recommendations to the Pima County Superior Court, Domestic Relations. Supervised two case managers and 20+ visit supervisors. Responsible for assisting in grant writing, community outreach, leading staff meetings.

Veteran's Administration Medical Center, Tucson, AZ 9/95-9/96.

Psychology predoctoral intern. Provided individual and family counseling in the areas of health psychology, geriatrics, hospice, mental hygiene, and within a primary care team. Provided individual and group therapy for HIV+ clients within infectious disease clinic. Provided assessment consultation and evaluation (MMPI/MMPI-2, BDI, TAT, Rorschach-Exner system, WAIS-R, BAI, IPAT, HDI, Folstein Mini-Mental Status exam Received approximately 2 hours per week of individual supervision and 2 hours per week of group supervision. Weekly training in clinical hypnosis.

Family Counseling Agency, Tucson, AZ. 12/95-3/96.

Psychology predoctoral intern. Provided couple, family and individual adolescent and child therapy for presenting concerns of relational difficulties, blended family issues, divorce recovery, communication problems, self-esteem, family systems issues, and conflict management. Co-lead couples group for domestic violence resolution for I I week class. Co-lead high-school based group for conflict resolution. Co-counseling with couples. Received 2 hours of supervision for each 24 hours on site, plus one group supervision per month within staff meetings.

Lutheran Social Services, Minneapolis, MN/St. Paul, MN 9/93-8/94.

Psychology extern. Provided individual counseling to adolescents and adults and family therapy in a community mental health setting. Clinical focus consistent with a broad based community mental health agency. Provided direct service in the form of support groups to children grades 2-6 referred by teachers and through interviews (Inver Grove Heights school district). Topics presented included self-esteem, grief/loss, and personal safety. Received I hour per week of individual supervision, and approximately I hour a month of group supervision. Assessments used: MMPI-2, BDI, Prepare/Enrich, IMC, SII, WISC-R.

Walk-In Counseling Center, Minneapolis, MN. 12/92-8/93.

Psychology extern. Provided individual counseling on a walk-in basis for crisis-related issues to adults. Clinical issues consistent with a crisis oriented center. Received 1-1 ½ hours of group supervision every other week.

Vocational Assessment Clinic, University of Minnesota. 3/92-8/92, 6/93-8/93, 6/94-8/94.
Student counselor. Provided direct service through vocational counseling and assessment for adults presenting with issues related to career exploration/ career change. Responsible for interpretation of test battery including GATB/MATB, SII, CPI, MPQ, MIQ, MSQ, case presentations, case notes, and client summary write-ups. Received individual supervision 1 hour per week.

University Counseling Services. University of Minnesota. 9/91-6/92.
Practicum student counselor. Provided direct service to undergraduate and graduate students presenting with issues consistent of a general mental health student counseling center. Presented vocational workshops. Received individual supervision 1 hour per week, and group supervision 2 hours per week. Received didactic training 2 hours per week. Assessments used: MBTI, SII, MIQ, WAIS-R, CPI, MMPI.

Veterans Administration Medical Center, St. Cloud, MN. 6/91-9/91.
Full time, psychology trainee. Provided individual counseling to chronically mentally ill inpatient veterans. Clinical focus was consistent with an inpatient/outpatient mental health clinic. Conducted insight and affect oriented groups twice weekly with veterans primarily presenting with diagnoses of depression and PTSD. Co-facilitated a domestic violence group for court ordered perpetrators using the Duluth model of power and control. Responsibilities were congruent with those of a staff psychologist including intake interviews, client staffing, charting, case presentation, and administration and write up of neurological screening (WAIS-R, WMS, mini-mental status exam). Participated in in-service training. Received approximately 9 hours of supervision per week in form of co-therapy, case review/consultation, and observation of therapy.

Supervision

Family Counseling Agency, Judicial Supervision Program- Tucson, AZ 7/96-5/97. **Program Director**, Supervised masters level therapist, two case managers and 20+ visit supervisors who provided supervision services for parents and children who have been court ordered to supervised visitation or supervised exchange. Held at least one hour each week per case manager of case supervision. Coordinated monthly visit supervisor team meetings

Interviewing lab instructor/supervisor, University of Minnesota. 3/94-6/94. Directly responsible for didactic lab instruction and individual supervision of 6 prepracticum graduate students. Students responsible for twice weekly taped role play sessions and 4 counseling sessions with selected undergraduate students. Responsibilities included interviewing and selecting appropriate undergraduate student clients, helping students gain basic skills and learn to evaluate their own counseling sessions, review case notes, and provide process and content feedback. Weekly meetings with course instructor, planning lab curriculum, and evaluating students for practicum.

Practicum instructor/supervisor, Counseling & Student Personnel Psychology program, University of Minnesota. 9/94-12/94. Had responsibility for 4 Masters level psychology students. Responsibilities included facilitating group process discussions of ethics, helping trainees prepare tape transcripts and case presentations. Provided process feedback to trainees on client sessions and issues. Evaluated projects on ethical dilemmas, case presentations and tape transcription Provided 2 hours group supervision per week, received 1 1/4 hours group supervision of supervision per week.

Outreach

Employee Assistance Program, Minneapolis, MN. 3/95-6/95.

Provided workshops on conflict management/conflict resolution to work groups within the University of Minnesota. Responsible for co-planning curriculum. Facilitated group exercises and skill building. Supervision 2 hours per month.

Lutheran Social Services, Minneapolis, MN. 1/94.

Provided 3 psychoeducational/support group sessions at University Lutheran Church of Hope. Responsible for co-planning curriculum. Clinical issue focus was depression.

University Counseling Services, University of Minnesota. 9/91-6/91.

Responsible for planning and conducting 2-session vocational workshops (2-MBTI, 1-II). Provided history of instruments, administered and provided group interpretations. Co-facilitated diversity training workshop for women's athletic department.

RELATED TRAINING

Year long developmental model for couples therapy training (2025-2026)

Couples Intensives training (2025)

EMDR for Attachment Issues training (2025)

ADHD Couples Therapy training and ADHD certification training (2023-2024)

 New ADHD certification training with Dr. Ari Tuckman(2025)

Discernment Counseling Certification (2020).

Yoga Calm curriculum (2017)

 Completed 36 hours of Integrated Approach to Wellness Intensive training. April 2017.

Emotion Freedom Technique (EFT/Tapping) training (2016, 2017)

 Completed Level 1 EFT program April 2016.

 Completed Level 2 EFT program April 2017.

 Completed certification for Simplified EFT 2018.

Wellness Coach Certification Program (2014).

 Completed 60 hour program in Wellness Coaching through College of Executive Coaching.

Discernment Counseling Training, Advanced Level (2013)

 Completed 10 month advanced training with Dr. Bill Doherty

Bringing Baby Home Educator Training (2013). Gottman Institute, Inc.

Gottman Methods Couples Therapy (2012, 2013).

 Completed Levels 1 & 2 through The Gottman Institute, Inc.

Discernment Training, Beginning Level (2012).

 Completed beginning level discernment training with Dr. Bill Doherty;

Disaster Relief Assistance Team (2011).

 Completed DART training and joined DART team for Crisis Connection.

Personal & Executive Coaching (2006 to 2018)

 Completed 120 hours coaching training through College of Executive Coaching; in progress toward 128 hr certification.

EMDR. (2000-2002)

Completed level 1 training Jan 2001; completed level II training Oct. 2002.

Clinical hypnosis. (1995-2014)

Completed one year of supervised hypnosis training at Tucson VAMC as part of predoctoral internship. Intermediate and advanced clinical training with Erickson Foundation and ASCH. Certification through American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH). Teach hypnosis workshops for Erickson Foundation and for regional ASCH conferences.

Divorce Recovery/Children Cope with Divorce, Family Counseling Agency 9/96, 4/97.

Completed training to provide facilitation for Divorce Recovery adult groups and to teach psychoeducational courses in family re-organization following divorce. Emphasis on Children Cope with Divorce curriculum is teaching parents to assist their children through the transition of divorce and family re-organization.

Sexual Violence Program- University of Minnesota. 8/92-1/93.

Participated in 54 hours of intensive training for sexual violence including sexual assault, domestic violence, and sexual harassment. Volunteered as victim advocate on call 40 hours/mo.

Academic Adviser/Coordinator. Psychology Department, University of Minnesota. 9/91-7/95.

Advised undergraduate psychology students on their course planning, preparation for career or graduate training. Oriented incoming transfer students and presented graduate school preparation workshop twice yearly to honors students. Facilitated decision making and advised prospective graduate students on application process, Evaluated student applications for scholarship, ruled on student petitions, revised guidelines for honors thesis requirements, and supervised 2 graduate student advisers. Responsible for hiring and training new advisers, acting as psychology liaison for students with individualized and interdepartmental programs with emphasis in psychology, and liaison for members of Psi Chi Psychology Honor Society. Evaluated transfer coursework

TEACHING

Instructor.

Milton H. Erickson Institute (Phoenix, AZ)

Teach topic areas of intensive hypnosis workshops at beginning, intermediate and advanced levels as needed. 2004-2009.

Phoenix Community College. 9/98-12/98.

Introduction to Psychology- Two classes.

University of Minnesota. 9/93-3/95.

Psychology Applied to Living. 9/93-12/93, 1/95-3/95

Introduction to Psychology. 6/94-9/94, 9/94-12/95.

Introductory Laboratory Psychology II. 3/94-6/94.

Introductory Laboratory Psychology I. 1/94-3/94

Teaching Assistant.

University of Minnesota, 9/90-8/93.

Introduction to Statistical Methods. quarter time. 6/93 -8/93.

Introduction to Cognitive Psychology. quarter time. 6/93-8/93

Vocational Psychology. quarter time. 3/91-6/91.

Psychology of Aging. quarter time. 1/91- 3/91.

Introduction to Psychology. 4 courses, quarter time. 9/90-12/90, 6/92-8/92, 6/93-8/93

RESEARCH

Twin Study of Adult Development. University of Minnesota. 9/91-8/92
Quarter time, one year. Interviewed adult twins, administered WAIS-R and partial Weschler Memory Scales, tested blood pressure, glucose levels, and lung capacity

Adult Relationships Project. University of Minnesota. 9/90-6/93
Reviewed literature, assisted in creation of survey, mailings, data entry, data analysis, and manuscript preparation.

Veteran's Administration Medical Hospital/University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN. 6/89-8/90, 1/91-3/91
Reviewed PTSD and Vietnam era patient files, coded for DSM III-R symptomatology, randomized patient files and assigned to raters, assisted with data entry.

Minnesota Twin/Family Study. University of Minnesota. 6/89-3/90.
Half time. Located and recruited twin families, coordinated large scale mailings, assisted with data management and data entry, and phone prompting. Coordinated family interaction sessions, and completed interviewing training including child and adult ability testing.

PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

Gafner, G. & Benson, S. (2011) Gotta Love the Story: A Bombardment of Indirection for Recalcitrant Disorders (2 hr workshop. Metaphors and Anecdotes Topical Panel (1 hr panel discussion), Anecdotes (1 hr dialogue session). Invited faculty presentations at 11th International Congress on Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Psychotherapy, Dec. 2011, Phoenix, AZ.

Gafner, G. & Benson, S. (2011) Gotta Love the Story: A Bombardment of Indirection for Recalcitrant Disorders. Two day advanced level workshop for Florida Society of Clinical Hypnosis, Oct. 2011. Cocoa Beach, Fl.

Gafner, G. & Benson, S. (2007). Confusional Inductions and Story Techniques (2 hr workshop). Anxiety & Phobias Topical Panel (1 hr panel discussion). Developing Hypnotic Inductions in Therapy (1 hr dialogue session). Invited faculty presentations at 10th International Congress on Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Psychotherapy, Dec. 2007, Phoenix, AZ.

Gafner, G. & Benson, S. (2004). Hypnosis, Unconscious Process & Metaphor Development. Solicited short course presented at 9th International Congress on Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Psychotherapy, Dec. 2004, Phoenix, AZ.

Gafner, G. & Benson, S. (2003). Regional workshop for ASCH, 1 ½ days Intermediate classes, 1 ½ days Advanced classes, Dec. 4-7, 2003, Phoenix, AZ.

Gafner, G. & Benson, S. (2002). Hypnotic Techniques for Treating Anxiety. Luncheon workshop presented through Cottonwood de Tucson continuing education luncheon program, Sept. 2002, Phoenix, AZ.

Gafner, G. & Benson, S. (2001). Standing on Milton's Shoulders: Novel Applications of Metaphor in Hypnosis & Psychotherapy. Solicited short course presented at 8th International Congress on Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Psychotherapy, Dec. 2001, Phoenix, AZ.

Gafner, G. & Benson, S. (2001, 2002). Weaving Hypnosis into Psychotherapy. Full day workshop presented for Southwest Health Professions Education Center, July 2001, Prescott, AZ.
Presented for Jewish Family & Children's Services, Nov. 2002. Tucson, AZ.

Gafner, G. & Benson, S. (1999) Indirect Hypnotherapeutic Approaches to Treating PTSD in Refugees from Africa and Central America, Solicited short course presented at 7th International Congress on Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Psychotherapy, Dec. 1999, Phoenix, AZ.

Frazier, P., Benson, S., Losoff, A., & Maurer, S. (1993). Desire for Marriage and Life Satisfaction of Unmarried Adults. Poster presented at Minnesota Psychological Association convention, May 1993, Golden Valley, MN.

PUBLICATIONS

Gafner, G. & Benson, S. (2003). Hypnotic Techniques. New York: Norton.

Gafner, G. & Benson, S. (2001). Indirect Hypnotherapeutic Approaches to Treating PTSD in Refugees from Africa & Central America. Contemporary Hypnosis, 18 (3), 135-144.

Gafner, G. & Benson, S. (2000) Handbook of Hypnotic Inductions. New York:Norton.

Frazier, P., Arikian, N., Benson, S., Losoff, A., & Maurer, S. (1996). Desire for marriage and life satisfaction of unmarried adults. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 13, 225-240.

PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS

My research interests lie in the area of interpersonal relationships and divorce. In an applied setting, my main interests lie in working with couples, families, children and adolescents, as well as in consulting and organizational assistance. My theoretical orientation is family systems with components of contextual therapy, and cognitive-behavioral therapy. I am also interested in group therapy and outreach in the area of providing workshops. Within teaching, my main interests lie in introductory psychology, and courses related to counseling. Counseling course interests include interviewing, history and theories, ethics, and practicum/supervision.

ASSOCIATIONS AND DIVISIONS

- 1) Member of Graduate Student Liaison Committee, Psychology Department, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN. 1991-1994
- 2) Member, APA. 1997-2018.
- 3) Member, ASCH 1998-2011.
- 4) Member, AzPA. 1998-2000, 2004-2009: Member of Governing Counsel, 2006
- 5) Member, Scottsdale Psychological Society. 2005-2009. Treasurer, 2005.
- 6) Member, Secretary/Treasurer, Phoenix Society of Clinical Hypnosis. 2005-2009.
- 7) Member/Diplomate, American Psychotherapy Association, 2005-2009.
- 9) Member, International Coaching Federation, 2006-2009.
- 10) Member, MN Psychological Association, 2011-current.

AWARDS AND GRANTS

- 1) University of Minnesota Psychology Department Dissertation Fellowship, 1995.
- 2) American Psychological Association, Science Directorate Dissertation Research Fellowship Award, December, 1995.
- 3) Stocker Foundation grant of \$15,000.00 for Judicial Supervision Program, 1997
- 4) AzPA Arizona Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award, large business category. Co-authored with Tom Ashworth, HR manager, for Progressive Casualty Insurance, 2003.

LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Minnesota Psychologist License # LP5311; active status
Arizona Psychologist License #3252; expired
ASCH Certification in Clinical Hypnosis, certificate # R9095