

Notes from The President

Dear ISSBD Members, Friends and Colleagues,

It is more than a year since we first were confronted with COVID19 and the pandemic. No one needs to be told that it has certainly been a challenging and unprecedented time. We have all experienced hardships, some much worse than others. I want to communicate to everyone my strongest possible support and deepest sympathies to all for what you and your loved ones have experienced.

There is some good news – or potential good news. We seem to be on track to recovery with vaccines becoming more and more available. I am very hopeful that we will be able to hold our biennial, in this case quadrennial, meeting in Rhodes in 2022. More on that as details become available.

Although we have all experienced this last year in deeply personal ways, for me, the experience of the last year has re-instilled in me a deep understanding of the importance of human development and its role in society. I invite you to think reflectively about what we have learned, both the good and the bad.

People are social beings. Whether you believe it is a learned or innate behavior, it is fairly clear that we have suffered from the imposed isolation brought on us by the pandemic. As a person who studies social relations and its implications for health and well-being, I've been thrilled by the now widespread awareness of the importance of social relations. Stories of families finding ways to be together, of neighbors helping each other out in socially distanced ways, of others caring about and assisting strangers are truly heartwarming. However, we have also seen a significant increase in domestic violence, alcohol and drug misuse/abuse, anxiety and depression. We do not yet know but

have some idea of the effect this pandemic will have on an entire cohort of children who have been kept out of school for almost a year.

At the same time, it has led me to appreciate what we, as behavioral scientists, have to offer the world. There is much to be done and I believe that each of us, not only as members of this Society but also as members of our personal, ethnic, racial, geographic and national groups/societies, have important contributions to make. We need to use our scientific knowledge to address the problems we are facing. In my Bulletin contribution I noted the creation of a committee designed to identify ways in which we could use our science to optimize societal circumstances. After the year we've had, I think we need such a committee and optimization more than ever. We can do so at the local, national and international level. Please feel free to connect with me if you are interested in pursuing such goals within the Society.

I look forward to seeing you in Rhodes where we can share our thoughts, successes and goals as we move forward to use behavioral science to address the many pressing problems we face in the world today.

Warm regards,

Toni C. Antonucci