



FSA
Family Service Agency
of San Francisco

Lives Transformed



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SPOTLIGHT: Debra Collins Felton Coach and Trainer



Debra Collins, LMFT, Felton Institute's Coach, Trainer and Consulting Educator has a warm demeanor and winning smile that immediately puts people at ease. She grew up in southern California and earned her BA in broadcast and film at Cal State Northridge, where her professors were living legend Lucille Ball, CBS Comedy Programming head Peter Stern, television director Ralph Levy and segment producers from ABC sports.

After graduation, Debra participated in Los Angeles theater companies and ultimately became a television segment producer. In a town where so many children dreamed of success in show business, Debra actually lived the dream come true.

When it came to advice about life, Debra learned a lot from observing her parents, who came from large families of eight and nine, and from her grandparents, who immigrated from Poland via Ellis Island between the World Wars.

"I would say resilience was very much a part of how they lived and what they showed me through example," Debra reflected.

Resilience was a character trait that served Debra well in show business and in her life transitions. She moved to the San Francisco Bay Area with her first husband, who was an art director for Lucas Films. Debra worked for SFO Productions producing segments and managing production for local shoots for shows like *Entertainment Tonight* when they came to town.

After Debra and her husband divorced, she switched careers and went to graduate school at JFK University in Orinda, California to become a therapist.

"Ironically, my last media client was Stanford University, and I did a promotion piece for their psychiatry department. That wasn't what inspired me though-working with hospitalized children as a volunteer in the pediatric Child Life program at UCSF really touched my heart," Debra shared.

Before coming to Felton in July of 2017, Debra served as the clinical director of Novato Youth Center. She has also worked as a program director for other community based organizations throughout the Bay Area in the fields of family and child counseling, drug and alcohol treatment, hospice, school-based counseling and clinic work.

"I was fortunate to be asked if I would like to train both Felton employees and external clients in Motivational Interviewing. I became a member of Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers in Berlin in 2015. The practice of Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a perfect synergy of my work as a clinician, director, clinical supervisor and trainer.

"Many individuals struggle with ambivalence about making a change in their lives. They may know they need to change, but they may lack the confidence to do so. Many counseling models do not fully address this natural ambivalence. MI gives the provider a way to support an individual to find their own motivation for change in a compassionate, accepting manner," Debra explained.

Debra discovered that Felton's commitment to serving people from diverse background in a respectful manner is very much aligned with the underlying spirit of Motivational Interviewing.

"Felton has embraced the practice of Motivational Interviewing as well as other strength based practices to best support those in need. The most rewarding aspect of my work is the opportunity to train those on the front lines who directly support the underserved to improve their lives. The most challenging is wishing I could give them a magic wand. The desire to 'fix' rather than guide is a lifelong challenge that perhaps many of us in the helping professions need to check in with themselves about. MI is not something we do to people; it is not a trick to make them change, but rather a way to listen and have a conversation about change. It helps the provider remember that the power towards change resides within," Debra said.

After the fires in northern California last fall, Debra spent time providing mental health services to many who lost loved ones and homes through the tragedy. When she needs personal comfort to foster resilience, Debra enjoys spending time in nature. She and her second husband met while on a hiking excursion with the Sierra Club, and they married in 2004. Hiking continues to be one of their mutual passions.

When it comes to a personal motto, Debra says, "The joke in our household is 'live and don't learn.' This is not meant to be as discouraging as it could sound, but rather it serves as a reminder to be compassionate with ourselves and others in the journey toward change."

It is a lifelong journey that Debra clearly navigates with grace.

Felton Presents at Singapore's Global Conference



Felton President and CEO Al Gilbert and the Senior Division's Dr. Keith Wong presented to a standing-room-only crowd at the Agency for Integrated Care's (AIC) Global Conference in Singapore, held February 2-3, 2018. Their topic at the international conference was *Geriatric Mental Health Model: Integrating Mental Health and Aging Services to Transform Systems of Care*. Dr. Catherine Calderwood, Chief Medical Officer from Scotland, UK, was the keynote speaker for the forum that attracted clinicians, health and social care professionals and practitioners, and policymakers from around the world who gathered to share knowledge, experiences, ideas and innovations in integrated care delivery.

"Singapore's Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) was incorporated in 2009 to play the role of National Care Integrator. Their 2018 Global Conference on Integrated Care provided a perfect opportunity for Felton to showcase our integrated Mental Health and Aging Services care model," Al Gilbert enthused.

Members of AIC first visited Felton last summer during which Al, Senior Division Director Cathy Spensley, Dr. Keith Wong and other team members hosted a reception and shared information about Felton's services. In December, Felton Board Chair Emeritus Mike Hofman visited AIC's headquarters.



After the Global Conference, Al and Keith met with agency leaders in Hong Kong, including Dr. Tim Fung, Director of Richmond Fellowship of Hong Kong, a non-governmental organization providing residential training, vocational rehabilitation, community mental health services for people in recovery for over 30 years in Hong Kong.

Dr. Candy Ling, Clinical Psychologist and Ms. Clara Lee, Executive Manager welcomed Al and Keith to New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association, a non-governmental organization providing recovery-oriented mental health services and promoting well-being for over 50 years in Hong Kong. Felton's services continue to garner worldwide interest and opportunities for collaboration.

Social Security 2-1 Listening



On February 1, 2018, Felton's Senior Division Director, Cathy Spensley, introduced two national leaders at a forum at the San Francisco Main Public Library. The popular topic focusing on how to become stronger advocates for strengthening the Social Security and Medicare systems attracted dozens of concerned community leaders. Forum attendees came from a large number of disciplines, including law, research, policymakers, healthcare, social services, and older adults. Carroll Estes, Professor Emerita of Sociology at UCSF, and past chair of the Board of Directors of The National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, presented along with Kevin Prindiville, Executive Director of Justice in Aging in Oakland.



Key points made by the presenters included challenging a negative use of the term "entitlements" for programs that are "earned" benefits. These benefits, along with a broad array of programs, provide essential supports to meet basic needs, especially in California, which has the nation's highest number of seniors living in poverty (one in five). Additionally, both Social Security and Medicare are extremely efficiently-run programs, with Social Security as an important economic multiplier. In California, for every \$1.00 spent, the program brings in \$2.21 to state and local economies.

In her introductions, Cathy spoke about Felton and the agency's longstanding commitment to social justice beginning 129 years ago. Cathy's commitment to advocating for Social Security and Medicare stem from her professional work, as well as a personal interest, since she is part of the "boomer" generation, which are expected to rely even more extensively on these programs than previous generations for a variety of reasons.

At Home with Growing Older, an interdisciplinary learning initiative empowering people of all ages, organizes and hosts monthly forums in San Francisco and in Berkeley. A link to additional information on this forum and others can be found at athomewithgrowingolder.org.

Felton And You It's Valentine's Day every day at Felton Institute



The world celebrated Valentine's Day this week, but at Felton, the spirit of Valentine's Day operates year-round.

A mother's heart will cause her to do anything for her child-ANYTHING. And, the same can be said about fathers. Felton Institute's first executive director, Katharine "Kitty" Felton, never gave birth to a child, but it could be said that she mothered hundreds of children-possibly even thousands, many of whom were orphans-through her work establishing social services in the city of San Francisco.

Since its founding in the spring of 1889, the welfare of San Francisco's most vulnerable, its children, has been at the center of

Felton's focus. Kitty established an emphasis on serving low-income children, adults and families, which continues to be at the heart of our mental health and social services organization today. One could say, people are our passion.

Kitty Felton was a progressive innovator who, in 1903, reformed the orphanage system in San Francisco, where the infant mortality rate was very high, by developing the first foster home system in California. Foster parenting became so successful that the infant mortality rate in San Francisco dropped to the lowest in the world of a city comparable in size. From the outgrowth of developing a foster care system, Kitty's influence helped to establish the Department of Unmarried Mothers and Their Babies, which led to the closing of founding asylums and paved the way for improved and well-monitored foster care and adoption services in San Francisco.

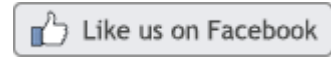
By 1909, Kitty became an advocate for well-baby clinics, improved standards and practices for child labor, school attendance, mental health care, adoption, care of the disabled, minimum wages for women and minors, and health services in public schools.

How does a young woman living in 1909 accomplish so much?

First, Kitty had a passion for helping people in need-especially children of the city. And, she had help. She was not only an innovator, but also a collaborator. She established partnerships through lobbying into existence the State Board of Charities and Corrections, which is the forerunner of the State Department of Social Welfare. Kitty also organized the Community Chest, a forerunner to the United Way.

Although a lot has changed in our world and in the important work that we do at Felton Institute, caring for the needs of children and low-income families is at the heart of what we do. We need your support to continue helping the children of San Francisco, just as our predecessor Kitty Felton did, and to accomplish all we hope to do this year.

Do you have a heart for children? For low-income children, adults and families? Please consider giving a gift to Felton Institute today. To give to the cause for which you have passion, text FELTON to 41444 on your mobile device; it's quick and easy!



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