

Can a severely painful memory be lost, yet decades later be recalled in precise detail? That is the question that led lawyers for “Street Priest” Paul Shanley to appeal his 2005 conviction of indecent assault and rape of a child. The conviction was upheld, but testimony presented on the topic of recovered memories is controversial and will remain so for years to come.

Concord resident James A. Chu, MD is the psychiatrist who provided expert testimony on recovered memories for the prosecution in the Shanley trial. He has also been involved in other high-profile cases including testifying for the prosecution in the kidnapping case against Christian Gerhartsreiter, also known as Clark Rockefeller, and advising the defense in the Amy Bishop murder case.

Dr. Chu, consulting psychiatrist at McLean Hospital and Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, has written a new edition of his “Rebuilding Shattered Lives: Treating Complex PTSD and Dissociative Disorders,” a book which highlights understanding and treating adult victims of unbearable childhood experiences.

Dr. Chu will discuss his work at the Thursday Author Series on Jan. 10 in the Periodicals Room of the Concord Free Public Library. This free program begins at 7:30 p.m.

“Rebuilding Shattered Lives” is written for professionals as well as adults still suffering from severe childhood trauma and has been heralded as “the most up-to-date, integrative, and empirically sound account of trauma theory and practice available.” The book helps clinicians and patients navigate the complexity of post traumatic stress and dissociative disorders by drawing upon Dr. Chu’s years in treating victims of childhood trauma.

Now in private practice, Dr. Chu is the former director of the McLean Dissociative Disorders and Trauma Program and served as the hospital's Chief of Clinical Services. He is internationally recognized for his work as a clinician, researcher, and educator specializing in the post-traumatic effects of childhood trauma, and for his pragmatic approach to understanding and treating adult victims of child abuse.

Dr. Chu’s published papers include basic research on the effects of child abuse as well as discussions of the nature and techniques of clinical treatment. He is a Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, a Fellow and Past President of the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation, and the recipient of multiple honors and awards for outstanding contributions in psychiatry.

Dr. Chu's presentation is sponsored by the Friends of the Concord Free Public Library.

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