

Group Assets



The Newsletter of the
Group Foundation
for Advancing Mental Health

Spring 2016

75 and Alive!

Connie Concannon, LCSW, CGP, DFAGPA, Editor, *Group Assets*

We are getting ready to celebrate AGPA's 75th Anniversary, and I'm in awe about how far we have come. This is a significant milestone for us as an organization. We have so much to be proud of. At the top of the list is the mere fact that we are here and are building a bridge to the next generation of group therapists. When I reflect on our 50th Anniversary and the issues that we faced then, I know what a long way we have come.

During that time, we were facing significant challenges in both our organization's viability and sustainability. We were impacted by the shift to the managed care model of healthcare, which impacted the ability of entry-level clinicians to get training and affiliate with professional organizations. With the funding in mental health clinics for training deeply cut, and the shift to short-term psychotherapy practices, we began to experience a decline in membership and lower attendance at our Annual Meetings. We also saw that group psychotherapy was used as a cost-effective delivery system rather than a vital component of treatment programs that required specialized training.

Thankfully, the International Board for Certification of Group Psychotherapists (then known as the National Registry of Certified Group Psychotherapists) was actively engaged in establishing a standard of practice and training for group psychotherapy. Through the certification process, we were able to identify clinicians who met these criteria and quickly respond to the public mental health needs following the tragic events of September 11. We raised more than \$5 million from governmental agencies and foundations to support group-based services for thousands of people so deeply affected in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. This expanded the work of AGPA in providing direct services to communities, both nationally and internationally, and AGPA earned recognition as a key public mental health resource in the field of trauma.

As funding ended, we recognized the value of the resources that we offered and wanted to continue to support our outreach work. This was in addition to other goals of supporting the Annual Meeting, increasing membership, supporting research, and keeping AGPA relevant by developing technology to enhance online resources for both clinicians and the public. It was clear that the Foundation's role needed to grow as a philanthropic organization to strengthen the representation of group therapy as a vital part of healing to the public and professional communities.

The Foundation became central to addressing these goals and created a culture of giving in AGPA. We provided a vehicle for our membership to support the work and the legacy of group psychotherapy that we so passionately believe in. This was led by those in leadership like Anne

Alonso, PhD, CGP, DFAGPA, and Ruth Hochberg, PhD, CGP, DLFAGPA, who made significant personal contributions and provided a model for leadership that brought philanthropy home to AGPA.

Now as we approach the momentous occasion of the 75th Anniversary of AGPA, the Foundation is launching a campaign—*75 Years of Healing Through Groups*—in celebration. I invite you to consider how you would like to participate in this celebration of the work and sustainability of our unique organizations and our field. The greater the participation in this effort, the stronger the voice of group therapy will grow, especially during this important time when we are looking to support goals integral to the continued development of our field, including:

Scholarships: providing needed training in group psychotherapy to students, new professionals, military personnel, agency employees, and others with limited options for training;

Research: advancing the field by demonstrating the effectiveness of group psychotherapy with a variety of patient populations and diagnoses;

Society/Speaker Awards: supporting AGPA Affiliate Societies, helping strengthen local infrastructure to provide education, training, and networking opportunities to support group therapists throughout the year;

Agency Training: presenting in-house, tailored training and consultation to agencies working in groups with underserved populations, often in remote areas where there are limited resources and access to trainers;

Community Outreach: offering programs that provide group-based responses to communities affected by traumatic events, as well as resources to cope with ongoing life challenges, helping develop healthy communities; and

Technology: enhancing AGPA's online resources for clinicians and the public-at-large, including distance-based training and web resources for the public to find information on how groups can help them and their families, as well as a referral directory to locate a group therapist if needed, quickly and easily.

There are many ways that you can contribute to supporting our work and having your voice heard, as the Foundation has looked to provide a fit for every level and type of giving in our membership and in the larger community.

- If you haven't committed to an Annual Pledge yet, consider starting this year. You will be part of providing financial support to future growth.

- If you have an Annual Pledge in place, consider increasing it this year. This increase would support the work

Fulfilling the Promise Founders Circle

Our sincerest appreciation is expressed to these
endowment donors in support of our program.

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We appreciate the provisions these planned
gift donors have made for the Group Foundation.

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2016 Contributions to the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health

Gifts acknowledged here are from January 1, 2016 through April 15, 2016

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Group Foundation Honors Scholarship and Award Winners

During the American Group Psychotherapy Association's (AGPA) 74th Annual Meeting in New York City, the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health sponsored a luncheon honoring scholarship and award winners, as well as the generous contributors who make the program possible. A myriad of tuition, travel, and monetary awards, supporting the training of group therapists and the use of group in communities to effect change, are distributed through the Foundation. Those recognized included:

- Nina Thomas, PhD, ABPP, CGP, who received the Social Responsibility Award for her sustained, decades-long work in social activism and trauma work nationally and internationally;
- Deborah Schwartz, MD, FRCPC, FAGPA, CGP, Marcia Nickow, PsyD, CADC, CGP, Ric Arseneau, MD, FRCPC, FACP, CGP, and Mary Gisslow, MD, who received the Alonso Award for Excellence in Psychodynamic Group Therapy for their article, *A Substance Called Food: Long-term Psychodynamic Group Treatment for Compulsive Overeating*;
- The Big Apple Playback Theatre of New York, New York, which received the Aaron Stein Memorial Award for its creative use of groups in non-therapeutic settings to benefit the community; and
- 193 individuals who received scholarships to attend the meeting, supported through endowed scholarship funds and private donations.

In Memoriam Contributions

(donor is listed in parentheses)

James Bessette (Sharon Murphree)
Toby Chuah-Feinson (Valerie Radetzky)
Dustin Nichols (Chera Finnis)
Beverly Scarbrough (Selma Morrison)

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Keith Rand's Birthday (indicated with* in donor listing)
Karen Travis (Darlene Ford, Lisa Mahon & Phillip Flores)

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that you have been a part of, like our vibrant Scholarship Program.

- If you would prefer to make a one-time special donation, this is the year! It reflects your appreciation for the important place that AGPA has been in your professional life.

- Become a part of the Group Foundation Legacy Society by making a bequest in your will or doing a charitable gift annuity.

- Host a fundraising event in your professional community in partnership with your local Affiliate Society. This is a great time to honor those colleagues who have greatly contributed to the field through training or leadership. These events are always well received and are a key part of community building. And you won't be alone; the Foundation will help you in the planning.

- Make a gift to honor someone like a mentor who has made a big difference in your professional and personal development.

- Make a gift to honor the memory of a friend or colleague to remember them in this special way.

- Make a gift to celebrate someone special or to acknowledge a personal or professional achievement.

- Last, but not least contribute with your expertise, talent and just spreading the word about the good work of AGPA. If you know someone who might have interest in our work, call us and we'll work with you to consider a thoughtful approach.

This year, more than any other, I hope you will be part of contributing to and celebrating the legacy of group psychotherapy and our unique community. Join the group!

Research Grant Awarded

The Group Foundation awarded a research grant in 2016 for *Rating Defense Mechanisms from Adult Attachment Interviews: A Randomized Control Trial of Group Therapy for Binge-Eating Disorder*. Principal investigator is Giorgio Tasca, PhD, Director of Research, Eating Disorders Program at University of Ottawa and The Ottawa Hospital, and Co-Investigators are Michelle Presniak, PhD, Robert Hill, MA, and Nancy Mcquaid, PhD.

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