**AGPA Connect 2023 Presenter Information**

**Course Code:** II

**Course Title:** Ancestors' Influence on Our Lives: An Exploration Through Group Process, Exercises and Epigenetics

**Course Times:** 9:30 AM - 5:30 PM & 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

**Course Dates:** Tuesday, March 7 & Wednesday, March 8

**Instructors:** Elaine Cooper

**Course Description:** Group process will provide participants the opportunity to explore personal histories of inherited social trauma and how it plays out in group interaction. War, oppression and other man-made disasters don't only affect the survivors; such trauma can be unconsciously transmitted to future generations. The didactic portion will cover research on transmission.

**Learning Objectives**

The attendee will be able to:‎

1. ‎‎‎‎‎‎‎‎‎Explore personal generational history
2. Learn clinical and biological research on transmission of trauma.
3. Reflect on Institute Group process and development of cohesion.
4. Define and differentiate "social Legacy" and "social Narrative.
5. List positives of surviving trauma.

**Significant Articles:**

1. Cooper, Elaine (2015). Let's All Hold Hands and Drop Dead: Three Generations - One Story. Morgan James Rosner, Elizabeth (2017). Survivor Cafe, Counterpoint.
2. Schlapobersky, John (2021), When they Came For Me. Birghahn.
3. Atlas, Galit (2022), Emotional Inheritance. Little Brown Spark..
4. Mandela, Nelson (2018), The Prison Letters of Nelson Mandela. Liveright.
5. Rosner, Elizabeth (2017). Survivor Cafe, Counterpoint.

**Agenda**

DAY I Section I - A.M.

A. Introduction (10 min) (Objective 1) Welcome, check attendance, state objectives and contract, make sure everyone is in the right place.

B. Guided Imagery and Discussion (20 min) (Objective 1) Guided imagery will start with participants in their current location and monitor the changes of numbers and places as they go back many generations to visit ancestors. A discussion will follow.

C. Non-Directive Group Process. (60 min) (Objective 3) Discussion of feelings this exercise brought up. Participants start to get a feel for one another from both a generational perspective and interaction in group. Members start to see similarities and differences among them, have first impressions and make assumptions as to how safe the group is and whom they can trust. Impressions of the leader emerge: whether she appears to contain the group, is competent and trustworthy. Conflict is suppressed while trust issues are pondered.

Section II - A.M.

A. Private Exercise (30 min) (Objective 1) With paper and pencil provided by leader, members will write down answers to 7 questions. These questions are designed to help participants connect their inherited social legacy and narrative with their current life challenges. It will be stressed that this is one of many ways of understanding personality problems. It happens to be a perspective that is not addressed adequately.

B. Non-Directive Group Process (45 min) (Objective 4 and 5) If they choose, members will have the opportunity to share results of the exercise. No pressure to reveal; leader will set this norm. Undoubtedly, some will want to share and others will identify with their story, starting a deeper bonding process in the group based on mutual identification. Leader will intersperse didactic material to clarify the generational issues. She will also share her own story. Distrust and conflict will not be addressed; if it emerges, it will be contained.

Section III - P.M.

A. Non-Directive Group Process (90 Min) (Objective 3) Group development will continue. Leader will encourage expressions of latent distrust of members and herself. Thus conflict will start to be explored. Hidden prejudices against enemy groups represented by members of the group might emerge. Leader will contain group so that anger remains constructive/communicative. Personal stories will take the place of stereotyping differences.

Section IV - P.M.

A. Non-Directive Group Process (60 Min) (Objective 3Group development will continue. Norms will become more secure. Members will start to relax as they see the group is under control and their anger is not destructive.

B. Didactic and Cognitive Discussion of Group Development and Inherited Trauma (45 Min) (Objective 3) The trust and power and control phases of the group will be reviewed, along with appropriate leader intervention at each stage. Members will assess whether these phases developed in a healthy manner and whether the topic of generational trauma enhanced or hindered it. Emotional, Task, Scapegoat and Defiant leaders will be identified.

DAY 2 Section I

A. Group Process (60 Min) (objective 3) Group process will deepen as members express here and now reactions to one another. There will be a new level of mutual revelation given the group survived the power phase. Members will take on new ownership of their generational roots and begin to look at connection between them and intimacy challenges in their life. Section II A. Group Process (60 Min) (objective 3) Members will start to look at their roles in the group and how their unconscious choice of a role was connected to ancestral history. Identification of such connections will give members time to consider changing roles and thus break maladaptive generational patterns.

B. Didactic (60 Min) (Objective 5) The group's development will be assessed and any stumbling blocks to intimacy addressed. Factors that led toward or hindered cohesion will be identified. Leader will present didactic material including definitions, ideas about transmission of trauma, case examples, generational patterns, statistics, literature and resources.

Section III

A. Group Process (60 Min) (objective 3) Termination will be the focus. Members will fantasize how a good parting would look and feel. Members will look at what they have learned about themselves in terms of history, current life and interactions in the group. Generational unexpressed grief might be strong. The challenge of transforming the generational chain will be addressed. Members will struggle with how to help themselves and their patients heal the wounds of history.

Section IV

A. Group Process (60 Min) (objective 5) Further integration of former process. Members will make a courageous effort to have an authentic, healthy and healing good-bye.

B. Didactic, Discussion of Group Process, Evaluation (90 Min) (Objective 6) Leader will give more didactic from the literature and her own experience. Members will look again at the group's development and what they want to take away with them in terms of new learning for themselves and their patients. A bibliography will be handed out that will be useful for them and their patients. Evaluation of this unique Specific Interest Institute will take place, so that it can be improved upon in the future.

**Assessment Questions**

Question 1 (include possible answers)

Is there data that confirms "unconscious transmission of trauma?"

Correct Answer 1

Yes. Controlled blind studies can be found by searching psych info.

Question 2 (include possible answers)

Is there research confirming that epigenetic transmission cells are reversible?

Correct Answer 2

Yes. Many animal studies have been done and can be found on psyche info.

Question 3 (include possible answers)

Do we all have a social legacy?

Correct Answer 3

Yes. Messages how to behave are passed down from parents' stories and behavior.

Question 4 (include possible answers)

So we all have inherited trauma?

Correct Answer 4

I believe so. Over many generations experiencing war, relocation, and poverty trauma occurs and epigenetic proteins are affected.

Question 5 (include possible answers)

Is transmission most likely if survivor has PTSD?

Correct Answer 5

Yes, see follow up studies of veterans.

Question 6 (include possible answers)

Is there data reporting how children of holocaust and severe drought and starvation do?

Correct Answer 6

There are a number of studies on children of the holocaust survivors all over the world and parental starvation of children in Sweden. Most children of parents severely traumatized have some emotional problems. but also some strengths.

Question 7 (include possible answers)

Are the brains of Nazi criminals different in some way from normal people.

Correct Answer 7

No, This was explored after the war and their brains are the same. Keep in mind that we have far better ways of determining this now and perhaps they would show a different picture.

Question 8 (include possible answers)

Does community make a difference in survivors recovering from social trauma?

Correct Answer 8

Yes. The Armenians, for example, had better adjustment than most because they met and processed the trauma on a community level. Israelis adjusted better than Americans for the same reason.

Question 9 (include possible answers)

Is there a difference between DNA and the epigenome.

Correct Answer 9

Yes. The epigenome is the messaging system.

Question 10 (include possible answers)

Does poverty and social class affect the messaging system?

Correct Answer 10

Yes, studies are starting to come out that validate this serious problem.

Specific Focus Process Group registration limit

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