

SAMPLING OF LETTERS OF APPRECIATION RECEIVED FROM RECIPIENTS OF SCHOLARSHIPS TO ATTEND VIRTUAL AGPA CONNECT 2021

At virtual AGPA Connect 2021, I was able to participate in a training group for clinicians who experienced race-based trauma. I've experienced race-based trauma in my role as a clinician and in my past and current personal histories. This institute was so incredibly moving and healing and affirming and challenging and beautiful. I felt that AGPA really saw me and my specific needs as a clinician by offering this institute to BIPOC participants. Participation in this special interest institute has already made me a better clinician and supervisor.

As the group coordinator for my agency, I see that I am navigating the program with more confidence as a result of the programs I attended at this year's AGPA. This is reflected in the intervention examples I provide to the staff and having greater access to data that support advocacy to improve our group counseling program. My hope is to continue to show and share my appreciation of this support by continuing my commitment to AGPA for years to come.

Thank you for kindly granting me a scholarship for this year's AGPA Connect conference. With the scholarship, I attended the Two-Day Institute, and thoroughly enjoyed and learned a lot from the experience. Most notably, I experienced directly, and for the first time, systems-centered therapy and how to productively integrate differences into the group and build a group's resources, as well as learn about functional subgrouping. I believed many members of my group were able to achieve and sense a deep intimacy and communicate well with one another. We were able to reach a deep sense of trust and explore a range of difficult topics that perhaps had a few of us, myself included, in awe that we were able to do so in such a short period of time.

This experience has definitely positively informed my participation in groups in residency. I have a greater appreciation for what it means to work in functional teams, the factors that contribute to this sense, and my role and authority in contributing to the functional versus dysfunctional components of group dynamics. My experience from the conference also highlighted the importance of allowing and creating the environment for genuine communication and discussion amongst all the members of the group. As I ready for graduation and fellowship, where I will be observing and then leading group processes, I am excited to bring my experience from Connect 2021 into my role as a group leader, continue to learn about group process directly as a participant and a leader, and continue to reflect about my role in groups and how I can promote honesty, agency and connectedness in myself and members of the group.

Thank you so much for awarding me the scholarship and the gift that was this gratifying and education experience.

I attended a Special Institute on addressing attachment insecurities using group therapy - this was my first AGPA Connect meeting and I am so grateful that I was able to join with the scholarship's support! I found the experience to have been incredibly rewarding. I valued the opportunity to witness the presenter, Aaron Black, demonstrate how to apply the principles and techniques he discussed in actual groups! I also found the conversations following these demo groups to have been powerful in addressing issues related to social (in)justice and how aspects of culture, privilege, and oppression played out within all the spaces. I felt inspired by this learning opportunity, primarily because of how open and real attendees and participants were in sharing feedback and challenging one another. This level of vulnerability was rather shocking to me and I loved it and it made me think about ways I can enhance my group practice by co-creating (or facilitating) these possibilities with group members. It certainly energized my desire to deepen my clinical and teaching skills as they relate to group therapy. I also had the opportunity to attend Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings and to connect with colleagues (who have been nudging me to attend all these years). So glad to have been able to attend and I will be back!

Thank for very much for the scholarship which enabled me to attend AGPA Connect 2021. The experience was rich in texture and content. Given the time and tone of the day, the topics presented during the various workshops and institutes were apropos the politics and peculiarities of the day.

Whether wresting with the implications of racial strife in the United States, or unpacking the grief experiences of our clients as they navigate the losses brought by COVID-19, the experience of Connect 2021 exposed me and others to the various interventions and processes which spoke to the above issues from a place of empathy, experience, and expertise.

As a clinician, I left the experience impressed with the level of investment I witnessed, as well as having my insight increased. These dual experiences will inform my group and individual practice. Though the experience was at times activating for many of us, overall, the event provided a holding container for our personal anxieties, and the projections we carry for society at large.

The experience of Connect 2021 will allow me to better facilitate conversation/processes dealing with race in America. In addition, as we all continue to confront the impact of COVID-19, I am in a better position to empower my clients in the use of resilience and encounter.

When I received the scholarship, I was so excited to participate in a conference that I have heard a lot about. Working at higher levels of care, I learned how to run groups because I had to. But this was an opportunity to truly learn the craft. A colleague and I will be starting up a BIPOC process group in the coming months. I was definitely given the confidence needed to start this group because of the conference. What I think was really important, and needed, was to be a participant in a group. It is an important perspective to have if you are going to facilitate. Because of this, I also have found a group, run by a fellow AGPA member, to continue my work as a participant while also starting my own group. Lots of exciting things on the horizon and it wouldn't have been possible without the help of this scholarship. I hope to pay it forward in my own ways.

For the first time, I attended the whole gig, the Two-Day Institute, the Special Institute, and the Three-Day Conference. In the past, I had only attended the Two-Day Process Group Institute, and I was really glad I got to experience the workshops this time around. I was worried that I wouldn't feel connected in my process group due to it being on Zoom versus in person, but had the opposite experience and felt a more intimate connection in many ways.

As a psychotherapist in training, I have experienced endless generosity, professionally and personally from the AGPA community, for finding additional supervisory/mentor support to scholarship recipients for the training.

I went into my currently run groups with more security and more freedom in my practice, and also was fueled with initiative to create more groups based on the personal and professional impact they have had on me. I feel welcomed into the AGPA group family, and look forward to our continual communing!

Thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity to attend AGPA this year. It was my first year and it did not disappoint.

As a psychiatry resident I'll be co-leading a group and it was suggested to me that I attend AGPA to dive deeply into the experience as a group member.

I was frankly flabbergasted by the intensity of the emotional experience of being in a group with a bunch of strangers I've never met. In short order, we progressed from flirting, fighting, crying, laughing together. We played the game of mirrors: by interacting with each other in vulnerable, authentic ways, we triggered each other, we felt fear, anger, disgust, and compassion. We learned what it's like to do things that we're scared of doing, and what it's like to have a corrective emotional experience afterwards. We learned from each other and supported each other. In group, I stumbled into a conflict with another person, and it felt like I was dropped by the group, as we never really addressed it. I was bitter all day about that. But I resolved to speak up, and was surprised to get such great support from everyone, including the person I was in conflict with. It was a corrective emotional experience I'll never forget. I hope to always carry this memory with me until the end of my days. When leading groups, I will always remember what it feels like to be in conflict with another member, what it feels like to be dropped by the group, and then what it's like to be lifted up by the entire group.

All in all, I had an excellent time at AGPA. It was my first year, and it sure as hell won't be my last. Thank you so much for this opportunity.

It is hard for me to summarize in a few words the impact attending this conference has made on me. I came in with the expectation that I would be an "outsider." I am not trained as a therapist or have much experience in group therapy as a whole. I couldn't have been more wrong about that. This conference provided so much more than educational material. I was able to connect to people all over the world and share experiences with multiple everyone. Everyone was warm and welcoming towards me, and made me feel as if I belonged. This training has improved my skills when working within my group, and has expanded my knowledge of different techniques to

use while leading or co-leading groups. It was refreshing to see that so many others also saw the benefit that this modality of treatment offers for patients.

I first want to sincerely thank you for providing a scholarship for me to attend this year's 2021 AGPA Connect. I was privileged to be able to attend the Experiential Institute where I received experiential learning of group process by being a part of a process group. To say this experience was impactful is an understatement. I got to witness and experience some incredibly powerful moments of acceptance, belonging, and compassion. I was able to try out some relational behaviors that I have already noticed is having an impact on my current relationships. Overall, I came away from the experience on fire about the power of group therapy and its potential for massive change in the lives of people.

The last year and a half I have also had the privilege of leading an interpersonal growth group for adult men who have struggled with addictive sexual behaviors. Although the group recently came to a close, I plan on starting another process group in the near future that is mixed gender and potentially another process group for adult men as well. The experience at AGPA has given me practical strategies for fostering group involvement, cohesion, and here and now focus on feelings that I am excited to incorporate into my future leading of groups.

Thank you SO much for providing this opportunity for me as I look forward to using this learning to grow as an individual and to make a positive impact on many of my future group member clients.

My experience at AGPA Connect 2021 was nothing short of incredible, and I am extremely grateful that I was awarded a scholarship to attend as a resident. This conference is unlike any I have previously attended. The opportunity to engage in deep learning while simultaneously experiencing one's own process and growth is a rare one. I really appreciated the experiential component of each workshop and seminar that I attended and the ability to be open and vulnerable with peers in the service of self-growth and facilitating growth in our clients

I was so moved as to feel certain that I will create and lead psychodrama groups in my career given their powerful healing potential. I also appreciated the attention that was paid to attachment throughout the conference and feel both didactic and experiential components were helpful in understanding attachment and mentalizing more deeply. I am looking forward to using this knowledge with patients I am currently working with and with the groups that I will be working with in the future.

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