



Mid-Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society  
An Interdisciplinary Organization for Professionals Interested in Group Psychotherapy

# Fall 2018 Newsletter

Volume 26, Issue 2

[www.magps.org](http://www.magps.org)

## Editor's Note:

Sadly, it is time for me to hang up my MAGPS Newsletter hat. I attended my first MAGPS conference in the Fall of 2015 when the venerable Scott Rutan came to the Tides Inn to speak about the group therapist's responsibility for both knowing and staying true to "thine own self." It was an important time in my professional life. I had recently completed a two-year postdoctoral fellowship and transitioned to full-time private practice; I had also joined my own interpersonal process group and launched my first group with a co-therapist. I was hungry for more learning and exposure to group psychotherapy and eager to feel more comfortable practicing in the here-and-now. Naturally, my experience at the conference exceeded expectations. In a weekend, I'd found a new professional home, made several new friends, and accepted a Board position as the new Newsletter Editor. That Sunday afternoon, I drove back to DC with the knowledge that I had the seeds of new beginnings safely tucked inside my pockets.

Though cliché, I truly mean it when I say that serving our community in this way has been a privilege. I've been given a fast introduction to our diverse and dynamic members—some new and novice, many veteran experts—all of whom are passionate about the power of group therapy, interested in learning about themselves, and looking to enhance their own interpersonal connections. I have also been given a front-row seat to the myriad activities MAGPS organizes and sponsors for its large, active community. I am eternally grateful for the open, warm embrace I fell into after my first conference and I look forward to maintaining my seat on the Board in my new, membership-focused position.

Naturally, my departure means that a new era in the Newsletter is coming. We are actively recruiting members interested in contributing to this invaluable part of our organization. **If you have sharp skills in writing, editing, publication, and/or content organization, please contact me at [Newsletter@MAGPS.org](mailto:Newsletter@MAGPS.org) to learn more about our open Newsletter Committee positions.**

Thank you all for taking the time to read this newsletter and for being a part of my MAGPS Family. I look forward to seeing you all in person soon!

*-Sonia Kahn, PsyD*

## Letter from the President

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

## What's Inside

[Letter from the President](#)



**So, I had "the talk"-with my brother-in-law when we were at a family reunion this summer.** Did it go well? Not sure. Did I accomplish my goals? I think so. In any case, our four conferences in these past two years at MAGPS helped me to prepare.

Walter is my favorite in-law in the world and has joyfully been in my life since 1961, before he and my sister married. Walter is one of those guys. He's smart. He scored 1600 on his SATs, effortlessly received his BA at Columbia, and earned a Master's Degree in Underwater Acoustical Engineering. He's also compassionate. While in the Navy, he led weekend group marathons with Carkhuff & Truax (it was the early 1970s) and was invited to work on their famous empathy scale.

And, he has always been a proud, left-leaning Democrat. For example, his support for the environment included the purchase of 30 raw acres outside Dallas, Oregon where he, my sister and their two daughters (when they were seven and eight) moved to live an alternative lifestyle. For a year, they lived on the land in a four-man tent for a year (it rains in Oregon seven months of the year) while he built a small home for them (now the henhouse). The girls went from a talented and gifted program in San Diego to a one-room schoolhouse. They had no bathroom and no running water. They managed to get electricity from some wires on the main (dirt) road. He milked cows at a dairy, so he could have all the manure he wanted, as he had acres of vegetable gardens he cultivated. Now, he supports our current president. This is unbelievable to everyone who knows him.

There were 20 of us at the reunion. The family knew I wanted to have "the talk," but no one else had dared. I wanted "the talk" to be private and intimate, not as this was not meant to be either a debate (his specialty) or an argumentative brawl. It was meant for us to have healing contact. For a while, I resisted going to the reunion. It felt stressful to address these noisy but unstated issues with

him. One of his daughters used to talk politics with her father all the time-it was an intimate, special part of their relationship; now she can't and has decided to see him less. She misses him; I invited her to be involved. There we were: the three of us speaking on a deck in the high desert of Sun River, Oregon, with family nearby wanting to hear but

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*Lorraine Wodiska, PhD, CGP, ABPP*

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*Rose McIntyre, LCSW, CGP*

giving us privacy instead.

I believe family rifts are happening all over the country. Is anyone else attempting "the talk?" Perhaps, but likely not many. They have not had the benefit of MAGPS, and the thoughtful presentations we have been privileged to attend. So, before I started, I gathered my memories about the conferences.

I remembered Karen Travis and the perils of asking for this conversation, holding my sense of being a respectful leader in the family. I remembered Earl Hopper, knowing that relationships were falling apart at the larger family level and that it is possible to reform a group into a more constructive society. I remembered Alexis Abernethy, holding optimism in my heart and hopefully moving towards transcendence. And I anticipated Bonnie Buchele, experiencing the traumatic impact of politics on my life in DC.

Thoughtfully, I set the frame, requested time and space, and noted my goals. This was official. We were respectful, discussing without raised voices, without hyperbole, without withering statements about character and behavior, without the improbable outcome of changing minds. We left with good feelings for one another and, of course, hugs. So, what did we accomplish? Communication about one of the most divisive topics in America today. Does that make me a better group therapist? Absolutely. Thank you MAGPS.

MAGPS has a new Facebook Page!



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MAGPS block rate.



# Looking Forward to the MAGPS Fall 2018 Conference

## *Trauma of These Times: Impact on Therapists and Our Groups*

with Bonnie Buchele, PhD, CGP,  
DFAGPA, ABPP

(an event co-sponsored by  
The Washington School of Psychiatry)

The Fall Conference offers a unique learning experience through large group meetings and dialogue, didactic information-sharing and demonstration, and small process group experiences. Our goal is to provide a learning environment in which conference members can integrate a deeper understanding of the topical content and consider introducing new material into their work. This conference is intended for psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, psychiatric nurses, and social workers.

Artwork by Karen van Allen



[Register for the Conference by October 26th](#) for the best rate and a guaranteed space.

[Discounted hotel rooms](#) are available until October 15th.

No day-of registrations will be accepted.

MAGPS supports the professional development of students, interns, residents, and clinicians early in their careers by offering discounted rates for first-time attendees and new professionals. Various scholarships are also available, which can be used to cover registration and banquet costs. If you are interested in obtaining a scholarship, you must [apply by October 19th](#).

Scholarship-related questions can be sent to [scholarships@magps.org](mailto:scholarships@magps.org).

[Click here to see the Conference Brochure](#)

Questions? Email [conferences@magps.org](mailto:conferences@magps.org)

*Your Invitation to Our  
MAGPS 2018 Fall Conference  
by Lisa Haileab, PhD and Sally Brandel, PhD, CGP  
Conference Co-Chairs*





We hope you will join us November 2-4 at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, Maryland to learn more about "Trauma of These Times: Impact on Therapists and our Groups." When both group members and leaders are in the same traumatizing situation, special circumstances and difficulties arise. This conference will explore the unique experiences that may emerge in response to this challenging political and societal climate and what group therapists can do to maximize healing forces for everyone. Dr. Bonnie Buchele, a nationally noted trauma specialist and Past President of the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA), will lead our conference work together. To learn more about Dr. Buchele, please read her recommended readings and Lisa's interview with her (see box below).

If you haven't been to the Hyatt, you are in for a treat. The resort has an indoor heated pool and several spa options for the longer Saturday afternoon break. The property also includes several longish trails for walking or running. At the Saturday evening banquet and community meeting (included in your registration fee), we are going to try something new---a raffle of Karen van Allen's original painting you have seen on the Save the Date card, in the Newsletter and on the website. Proceeds will benefit the MAGPS scholarship fund.

The website has information about the scholarships available for students and new professionals. We encourage you to [REGISTER](#) now as we have HARD deadlines for securing the reduced conference hotel rate at the Hyatt (Monday, October 15) and MAGPS conference registration (Friday, October 26). Please join us.

## Interview with Our Fall Conference Presenter, Bonnie Buchele, PhD, CGP, DFAGPA, ABPP by Lisa Haileab, PhD

I was excited for the opportunity to interview Bonnie Buchele in preparation for our Fall Conference. Here is a preview of our upcoming weekend.

**Lisa:** *MAGPS members are looking forward to you leading us in our Fall Conference titled, "Trauma of these times: Impact on Therapists and our Groups." How did you become interested in the conference topic and how do you define, "trauma of these times?"*

**Bonnie:** I became interested in the topic once Lorraine asked me if I would like to be the keynote speaker for the conference. While I was feeling the strain of dealing with my own and my patients' feelings during these times, once she offered the invitation, it quickly grew clearer that I had been struggling more than I had known, with how to think about and manage my own reactions to the societal and political chaos as well as those of my

to varying degrees. Mustering these forces is another matter. If we do not believe those capacities are present, however disguised, unique or even hidden, we will not be looking for how to access them. Many studies have now shown that just as important as the severity of the traumatic event, is the importance of the capacity to work through the pain and recover. Terrible things can happen, but equally important is our ability to really work them through and move on. Although experiencing a trauma almost always brings pain and suffering, it is a time when the rules, what we have grown to expect as normal, is no longer the case. The world is topsy-turvy. In that suspension of the rules, there usually is also an opportunity that only becomes apparent later. Once the pain

patients who were bringing their anxious, discouraged and frightened experiences to me in response to the same events. My insight that I was trying to master a situation which was leaving me feeling helpless at times was confirmed when I periodically had trouble getting myself to prepare for the conference. This temporary paralysis was especially frequent when I was preparing for the first plenary during which I talk about a number of the events that have occurred.

I would define the trauma of these times as the pervasive feelings of insecurity and anxiety related to survival concerns, starting with the United States having its position and status as the undisputed leader of the world challenged; these challenges are coming more and more frequently, internally and externally. The leadership has been unable to provide reassurance and a sense of security that conditions will improve, which is frightening because we look to our leaders for a kind of parental wisdom and grounding. Without being able to provide certainty that answers will be forthcoming for the many problems, fragmentation and scapegoating are more frequent. Many subgroups feel misunderstood. Additionally, change is occurring at an increasing speed, fed by the explosion of technological advances. People frequently feel bombarded by media coverage of all that is happening with safe places to talk about it becoming fewer and fewer due to polarization. Longstanding connections with others and institutions often feel unreliable. In short, the world, very often these days, feels unsafe. Personally, as I began to understand what was happening, I felt some hope that finding answers would be possible.

**Lisa:** *You were very active in shaping AGPA's response to the September 11th attacks in NYC, Washington, DC and Pennsylvania. Can you share your reflections on that work and how it informs your view of our experiences today?*

**Bonnie:** Yes, I was active in shaping AGPA's response to the September 11th attacks. I feel very proud of the work we were able to do starting with the quick, meaningful, short responses right down to the long-term work that followed in many cases. Personally, I was initially terrified, not helped by the fact that my husband was trapped in DC when the attacks occurred. Quickly I felt so grateful that I understood something about the effects of trauma. Believe it or not, at that time most clinicians were relatively unaware of the impact of trauma on

that only becomes apparent later. Once the pain lessens, we may be able to put things back together in a better way than they were in the first place!

**Lisa:** *How can therapists be mindful of diversity when working to maximize healing forces for everyone?*

**Bonnie:** Recent and ongoing studies have reaffirmed that a key component in the recovery from trauma is the community in the individual's life. Within the context of trusting relationships healing is facilitated when we talk about it, create a narrative, have someone bear witness and feel mirrored. How that community can perform that function is based in the culture of the community. As helpers, we do our best when we understand the individual's culture, accept it, maximize the constructive use of it and be attuned to how it differs from our own rather than intentionally or even inadvertently imposing our culture on the situation. All cultures have ways of listening and supporting but they differ.

**Lisa:** *In the Issue of Psychoanalytic Inquiry, "Today's Bridge Between Psychoanalysis and the Group World" (38:4), you speak to both camps of psychoanalysts and group therapists having and "openness" in order to benefit practitioners and patients. How does your identity and experience as both an analyst and group psychotherapist impact your thinking/openness?*

**Bonnie:** At times the experience has been a bit fragmenting. I have felt torn loyalties when psychoanalysis and the group world have been at odds with each other. I suppose my interest in editing this issue has something to do with integrating even further the differing worlds. Having said that, I have benefitted greatly to being open (when I can do it!) to incorporating aspects of the one within the other, i.e., listening for the analyst's experience of group life in his or her world as well as listening more comprehensively to and diagnosing the difficulties more thoroughly of each individual group member. I also appreciate the limitations of each modality: in a psychoanalysis one never gets to observe the analyst's impact on others directly and their private experience can be quite at odds with others' experience. Conversely, in a group one never has the amount of information nor the intensity that can happen within a psychoanalysis. Recently, the latter has been helped a great deal by the neuroscientific evidence that is now available regarding nonverbal



human beings because it had been neglected as a subject of study. A colleague and I had been working extensively with people having undergone rape and incest so I had a rudimentary understanding, at least as much as was possible at the time. I knew the basics about what was needed clinically and sat in a position, as President of AGPA, to utilize what I knew to the best of my ability. I learned a lot. I saw that there was a far wider spectrum of trauma responses than I had previously known. I could see that people experiencing the same events had varying degrees of distress in response, a puzzling reality, the investigation of which eventually led to the finding that the presence of a secure attachment history is a big factor in minimizing long-term damage following the experience of traumatization. I also experienced firsthand the goodness of human beings in ways I would not have imagined. When I flew, terrified with everyone else on the air plane, into New York immediately after it happened, I was surprised and touched by the kindness of those brash New Yorkers and the therapists there--a life lesson: Out of something so terrible can come such good as well. We truly are complicated creatures with all kinds of potential for evil, but also for good.

**Lisa:** *We look forward to you discussing how to "maximize healing forces for everyone." Can you say something about what you mean and why you are hopeful about what is possible?*

**Bonnie:** My answer to this question relates to the last question. I believe that we all possess the capacity for resilience, healing and being empathic

communication. On that point, I have become aware of the limitations and constructive aspects of the couch. Sometimes it is very helpful to the work of an analysis when the person sits up and I have access to the nonverbal communication in a way that I do not when they are on the couch. Sometimes the couch is useful when the feelings of shame are strong.

**Lisa:** *In addition to doing two fishbowl demonstration groups, you have said you want to try something a little different on Sunday morning. What are you going to be looking for from our members?*

**Bonnie:** On Sunday morning I want participants to bring situations within their personal or professional lives related to the "trauma of these times" so that we can reflect on and learn from them together in discussion, applying what we have been studying in the two days beforehand.

**Lisa:** *In closing, tell us what you like the best about living and working in Kansas City?*

**Bonnie:** I am a city girl, most comfortable in that environment. I love the European feel of Kansas City, even though it is in the Midwest. There is a wealth of good music, art, and food. And there is something very endearing about the sturdiness of people in the Midwest. My family all live in Kansas City as well. I think I would have loved living in DC or NYC, but Kansas City has loads of things that I love with much easier access than is true of the bigger cities.

#### About the Presenter

**Bonnie J. Buchele, PhD,  
CGP, DFAGP, ABPP**



**Dr. Bonnie J. Buchele**, is a psychologist, practicing group psychotherapist and psychoanalyst in Kansas City, Missouri, USA. She serves as a Councilor on the Executive Council of the American Psychoanalytic Association. She is a Past President and Distinguished Fellow of the American Group Psychotherapy Association, Past Director of the Greater Kansas City Psychoanalytic Institute (where she is presently on the faculty) and has served as President-Elect of the International Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes. She held various positions at the Menninger Clinic during her tenure of over thirty years and was a consultant to clinicians working with survivors of 9/11. In addition to publishing



articles, book chapters and books on subjects ranging from trauma to group psychotherapy to psychoanalysis, Dr. Buchele lectures, teaches and consults within the USA and internationally.



## Recommended Reading List

[Click Here](#) for Bonnie's Recommended Reading List

## SPOTLIGHT!

turning the focus on exciting things going on in the MAGPS community

MAGPS CINEMA SERIES  
2018 - 2019 SEASON

*save the date*

The Lunchbox (2013)  
NAVMOON MANN, MD &  
LENORE POMERANCE, LICSW, CGP  
**OCTOBER 6, 2018**

Moonlight (2016)  
REGINALD NETTLES, PHD, CGP  
**DECEMBER 8, 2018**

Call Me By Your Name (2017)  
SONIA KAHN, PSYD  
**FEBRUARY 2, 2019**



FEBRUARY 17, 2019

Film TBD  
KATHERINE THORN, LPC,  
LCPC, BCN  
APRIL 13, 2019

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## *Member News and Announcements*

**Group Psychology has BIG news!** We has been finally acknowledged as a Specialty. What does that mean?

Previously, the American Psychological Association (APA) did not recognize Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy as a "Specialty." Instead, Group Psychotherapy was considered a "Proficiency," which meant that anyone could run groups with a bare minimum of training, such as taking a course or workshop.

Our new status as a Specialty has relevance to insurance reimbursement and to stature in the professional community. Perhaps, most importantly, it reflects on the commitment each of us has for the integrity of group therapy and obtaining the necessary professional competence to conduct groups.

Sally Barlow, Nina Brown, Eleanor Counselman and others at AGPA, the American Board of Professional Psychology in Group Psychology (ABGP) and APA Division 49 (Society of Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy) did herculean work over a period of eight years to make this happen. Other professional

### *MAGPS at AGPA*

Several MAGPS members will be presenting at the 2019 American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, California.

**"Building Bridges of Connection Through Group,"**  
will meet at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel from  
February 25-March 2, 2019.

For registration information, [click here](#).



**Karen Eberwein, PsyD, CGP** has been selected to present a half-day workshop at AGPA Connect 2019, entitled, "Who, What, When, Where, Why, and I: The Group Leader Role and Running Process Groups for Training Experiences."

**Farooq Mohyuddin, MD, CGP, FAGPA, FAPA** and **Maryetta Andrews-Sachs, LICSW, CGP, FAGPA** will

organizations, including the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), American Psychiatric Association, and American Counseling Association (ACA) were watching this process carefully, intending to follow APAs lead.

As Group Specialists, we have new cause to celebrate our profession.

## ***\*\*Member News\*\****

**Farooq Mohyuddin, MD, CGP, FAGPA, FAPA** has been named as a Fellow of AGPA.

**Lorraine Wodiska, PhD, CGP, FAGPA, ABGP** with Lynn Piper formed a 501[c] 3 organization for professionals interested in providing or already providing canine-assisted psychotherapy. The organization is the Society for Canine-Assisted Psychotherapy Excellence (SCAPE) is interested in engaging other professionals, such as dog trainers or evaluators, veterinarians, or companies/ organizations providing or planning to provide canine-assisted psychotherapy. The Mission of SCAPE is to provide mental health professionals, canine professionals and organizations that promote ethical guidelines and standards of practice when conducting canine assisted psychotherapy. In October, **Lorraine** is also offering a workshop at Maryland Psychological Association (MPA) on this topic.

**Sonia Kahn, PsyD** has been elected Member-at-Large of APA Division 39, Section VIII, *Couples and Families in Psychoanalysis*.

**Lenore Pomerance, LICSW, CGP** had an article published in the journal of the American Academy of Psychotherapists (AAP) journal, *Voices*, Winter 2017 issue on Aging and Psychotherapy entitled, *"Reclaiming at 70."*

**David Heilman** earned his doctorate (PsyD) from The George Washington University's Professional Psychology Program and has begun private practice in Dupont Circle.

be presenting a two-day Institute at AGPA Connect 2019 on Existential Issues in Group Therapy entitled, *"Connection, Loss, Existential Angst: How does one Bear this and Find Joy?"*

**Rob Williams, LICSW, Liz Marsh, LICSW, Jen McLish, LCSW, and David Heilman, PsyD** will be presenting a half-day workshop called, *"To Group Or Not To Group: Assessment and Preparation of Potential Group Members"* at AGPA Connect 2019.

The workshop will address how to assess readiness of fit for group work for potential clients, and ways to best prepare them for psychodynamic /interpersonal process group work. The panelists hope to cover this topic through case examples and discussion with workshop participants.

**Lorraine Wodiska, PhD, ABPP, CGP, FAGPA** is presiding over the Half Day Open Session #9 at the 2019 AGPA Connect entitled, *"Being a Group Therapist in Times of Political and Social Upheaval: This is Difficult!"* with panelists

Karen Travis, LCSW, BCD, CGP, FAGPA,  
Earl Hopper, PhD, CGP, DFAGPA, and  
Bonnie Buchele, PhD, ABPP, CGP, FAGPA.

**Myrna Frank, PhD** is presenting a Specific Interest section entitled, *"Longing for Home: Past Attachments and Reparative Re-attachments in the Therapy Group"* for two days, Tuesday and Wednesday, February 26-27.



*The \*NEW\* 2018 MAGPS Directory is now available online.*

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Join us for the 2016  
Academy Award  
Winning Film (Best  
Picture), *Moonlight*

**Be sure to RSVP to our second movie of this season,  
*Moonlight*,  
presented by Reginald Nettles, PhD, CGP  
on December 8, 2018**

To RSVP, email [cinema@magps.org](mailto:cinema@magps.org)  
and let us know how many people will be joining us!



Information About the  
2018-2019 Median Group

by Rose McIntyre LCSW, CGP  
MAGPS President Elect, AKRI  
Consultant Candidate



I am writing you today on behalf of myself, Diane Shaffer, and Karen Stefano to let you know about the Median Group at the WSP and our upcoming 2018-2019 schedule.

The Median Group is a "Reflective Think Tank," focusing on social and cultural engagement. It emphasizes dialogue and the reflective mind. Our median group has been meeting monthly at the Washington School of Psychiatry for over 3 years.

The Median Group was the idea of Patrick de Maré, who had been a student of Wilfred Bion. He thought that the Median Group, whose membership lay in number somewhere between Bion's Large and Small groups, had its own unique dynamics. According to de Maré, "In the Median Group we move beyond the personal and familial insights, entering upon the socio-cultural domain, where we explore our social assumptions. The aim is not so much to socialize individuals as to humanize society."

Through the Median Group's "microculture" and "extended dialogue" (de Maré's terms) members can explore widely held social and cultural assumptions. The group becomes a vehicle to hear and reflect on the voices of others, leading towards cultural change, increased awareness, tolerance, curiosity, and acceptance of differences. The group evolves toward a state of "Koinonia," a term developed by de Maré meaning impersonal fellowship, fellowship with humankind, or human communion.

De Maré envisioned the use of Koinonia and koinonic dialogue as essential for the resolution of social conflicts. His writings communicate that the ideal container for hatred and paranoia is a Median group. As the initial frustrations of a group come to be expressed through hate, dialogue is used to transform this hatred into what the Greeks knew as Koinonia, the state of impersonal fellowship. In this environment we have a collective opportunity to progress toward greater social resolution of differences, and move toward hope for fellowship. We become better able to understand social and cultural biases and assumptions, and can increase our awareness and tolerance both of self and other.

Please know there is no charge to attend the Median Group, and coming once does not commit you to coming monthly. People attend as their schedules permit.

You do not have to be a clinician to attend. Diversity on all fronts is welcomed.

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**All meetings are on Sundays from 2-4 at the Washington School of Psychiatry.  
The Median Group Schedule for November 2018-August 2019 is as follows:**

November 11, 2018  
December 2, 2018  
January 6, 2019  
February 3, 2019  
March 3, 2019  
April 7, 2019  
May 5, 2019  
June 9, 2019  
July 14, 2019  
August 4, 2019

We are hoping to get CEUs in place for all who are WSP members and we will be looking for volunteers to write up monthly summaries of the work we do. We welcome and encourage participation from new members. We request that all new members contact Rose McIntyre LCSW, CGP ([yethappens@verizon.net](mailto:yethappens@verizon.net)) or Diane Shaffer PsyD ([dcshaffer26@gmail.com](mailto:dcshaffer26@gmail.com)) to have a brief conversation about the what the Median Group is and the purpose or opportunity of the work we are doing.

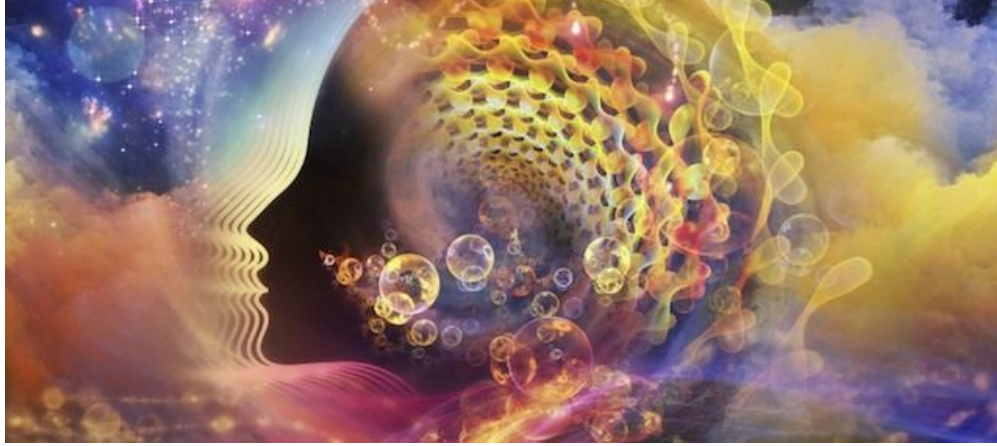
In addition, all participants are encouraged to read Patrick DeMare's papers on the Median Group, which are published in this book:

[Small, Large and Median Groups: The Work of Patrick de Mare.](#) (2012). Ed. K. Stefano & R. Lenn. New York, NY: Karnac.

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I look forward to continuing our work together and welcome any questions!





## Reflections on the Spring Conference

Arushi Kapoor, MD, MS

I truly enjoyed Dr. Abernathy's lecture and small task assignments as we engaged in discussions on race, ethnicity and answered questions personable and yet conflicting within many of us. She was a great speaker and the content was on point in setting the backdrop for the process group during the day. Her Wakanda reference was memorable!

Donnica Wingett MSW, LICSW

To start, I felt welcomed by the engaging atmosphere and hospitality provided by the community; folks were friendly and the space created was comfortable. As we moved into the plenary and small group sessions, the phrase, "if you see something, say something," began to resonate with me. The conference allowed me to re-recognize the importance of applying this actively in daily life and therapeutic practice, and not only while in transit! Many times, I stay silent and inadvertently perpetuate the cycle of racism. I am now reminded that it is not enough to simply think and know this behavior is not ok, we must act with courage; and we must do so every time. Now, I know this won't be easy. But I know that many of us are in this effort together; this is a point where our stories overlap. I am grateful for the inspirational opportunity to share with other professionals at the MAGPS Conference as we strive to continue figuring out how to be our best selves in work and play.

Molly Milgrom, LCSW, LICSW

The conference was great! I really appreciate the

My experiences at the MAGPS conferences has provided me with deep insight into myself that I believe is necessary for me to move to the next developmental level of becoming a psychologist. Lastly, I really appreciated the openness and genuine desire of participants to connect and be helpful to one another. I love that this space exists and look forward to continually be a part of the evolution of this organization.

Martha Solt (MSW in progress)

Allow my to start with my conclusion: if you missed attending this year's MAGPS Spring Conference, you made a big mistake.

Milieu. It started in the parking lot. Two people introduced themselves and invited me to join them going into the building. "This is one friendly group," I thought. And I was right. The conference attendees were open, inclusive, non-competitive and egalitarian in a way I could never have imagined. Title-, discipline-, and experience-rank were nowhere to be seen. Everyone used first names, and everyone was treated as both student and teacher.

Large Group/Plenary. World-class teacher, group-leader, academic, and mentor, Alexis D.

Abernethy, PhD, served as the plenary speaker on the topic of "Cultural Competence, Spirituality, and Transpersonal Psychology." What

opportunity to volunteer and attend for free. The didactic portions and speaker were very interesting, but the small group experiences were really where I got into the trenches and was able to begin integrating the topic. I really appreciate being able to debrief afterwards and ask questions relevant to me. This conference has helped raise my awareness and will certainly trickle down into better care for my clients. Thank you!!!

Tyne McGee, PhD Candidate

I appreciate receiving the scholarship to attend the spring 2018 conference. I believe that this conference provides a safe and effective space for therapists to experience the discomfort necessary to produce personal and professional growth. This was my second time attending the MAGPS spring conference. Between both of my experiences, exactly one year apart, I could feel my personal and professional growth; even my colleagues noticed a change in me that would provide great benefit to my client.

and Transcendence in Times of Crisis." What could be more apt in our polarized society? The lively presentation offered resources, perspectives and techniques on the concepts of culture, otherness, and difference. While the stated purpose of the conference was to help attendees become better group therapists, I've been wondering whether that is a deceptive head fake. The real purpose of the conference may have been to help all of us become better people.

Small Group. Nine small groups were facilitated by experienced group leaders. My group was comprised of six other members, each admirable in unique ways. I learned about personal challenges and the brave people facing them. While the small group experience was new to me, I never felt my contributions or issues were unworthy. This is partly due to what other group members brought forth and partly due to the group leader whose experience, openness to input, and smooth voice created an environment for all to learn.

I am grateful for the generosity of MAGPS members who funded the scholarship. If you have hesitated to attend a MAGPS conference because of one excuse or another, discard those excuses. Sign up.

## Beginning Again

by Gina Sangster, MFA, MSW, LICSW

I'm suffering from an acute flare-up of Imposter Syndrome. Though chronic and incurable, it only manifests in its most virulent form after exposure to certain stimuli. I should have known I was headed for relapse when I excitedly messaged Sonia Kahn after attending my first ever Mid-Atlantic Group Psychotherapy conference and told her I wanted to write something for the newsletter. This kind of impulsivity is a typical warning sign of the inevitable crash coming my way.

I can't bear to look back at the actual email messages, but I recall being so enthralled by my experience at the conference, I felt I had discovered the tribe I had always longed for and despaired of ever finding. Everyone was welcoming and friendly, the topics discussed and the small group experiences were serious and meaningful-I was in love. Then time passed...

I'd had a number of ideas for group therapy themes for a long time, but hadn't facilitated a group in more years than you could bribe me to confess. Then my most recent idea-a group for adults who had suffered the early loss of a parent or sibling (basically, the centerpiece of my life story)-got hold of me and wouldn't let go. I can't remember which I saw first-a posting for the conference or Rob Williams' group therapy consultation group- but I felt certain these were signs. Two learning opportunities presenting themselves to me in quick succession, both focused on group psychotherapy. Clearly, it was meant to be.

Our practice owner often says, "If you find you've got a number of clients with the same or similar issues, think about forming a group." That seemed simple enough, but I'd also hoped to bring in some new folks, along with those from my own caseload, and I knew I needed help. After joining Rob's consultation group, I was relieved to learn that at least one other member had joined without an actual



consultation group, I was relieved to learn that at least one other member had joined without an actual therapy group underway. I felt optimistic about my idea and received positive feedback from colleagues in my practice and the consultation group; then began the slow slog from idea to fruition. What would the flyer look like? Would referrals come in steadily, or would I cull from my own clients? How far and wide would I try to market my idea?

This is when the first symptoms of Imposter Syndrome began to emerge. How could I put this kernel of an idea out into the larger group psychotherapy world? I'm not established in the group therapy world of DC; I don't even have CGP at the end of my name! I've been a social worker since the eighties but my career path has been circuitous-from family service agency to psychiatric practice to inpatient to child welfare and now private practice. Did the groups I co-led back in the day even count as experience? Is there a statute of limitations on these things?

Every few weeks I'd sheepishly say something to a client or colleague about my group idea. I revised the flyer a couple of times and finally displayed copies of it around our practice suite. I think I sent an announcement to the clinical social work list-serve, but I couldn't risk sending something to MAGPS. I can't pretend to belong to that tribe, can I? What if someone ferreted out my fraudulent claims and exposed me to ridicule? It felt safer to keep it on the down-low.

Then a couple of my clients brought up the group in session. They'd been thinking about it! You know how a client feels when they realize that we actually keep them in mind in between sessions? That's how I felt. But this meant I had to take my group therapy idea seriously.

I interviewed several potential members who were referred to me and fit the profile: death of a parent at age 10, age 18; multiple deaths of close family members throughout their lifetime, starting in childhood. But as all of you true experts know, without sufficient individual work, joining a group too soon can be a disaster. Luckily, my Imposter Syndrome didn't prevent me from identifying this problem and-rather than accept someone into the group who clearly wasn't ready-I was able to suggest that joining the group later on might be a good idea. Going through this process a few times also required me to keep clarifying with my colleagues-and with myself-exactly what I had in mind and why certain clients might not be a good fit, or not yet. The person who cannot begin to speak about a parent's death twenty years ago without feeling overcome with anxiety needs more time in individual therapy before entering into a psychotherapy process group; someone who feels overwhelmed by the idea of a year commitment to a group may not be ready to confront their avoidant attachment style.

While all this was going on, I frequently asked myself why I didn't just keep doing individual and couples work instead of climbing what felt like a steep and treacherous hill. My only-child self, always lurking in the background, wanted to retreat, forget about this audacious group idea, go back into hiding where it's safe and familiar. At the same time, I continued to be surprised by the conversations I was having with several clients, conversations I had begun tentatively, including one referred to me almost in the eleventh hour who expressed gratitude for discovering that such a group was being offered. My uncertainty finally gave way to their enthusiasm, which then rekindled my own, eventually leading to the formation of a group of four, with a possible fifth. By the time this goes to press, my Early Loss Adult Psychotherapy Group will have started.

One client suffered the loss of a parent to suicide at age seven, another the loss of one parent to cancer at age 14, followed by the other parent's suicide some years later. An adopted client who never knew her birth family and lost an adoptive parent at age 11; a client who lost both parents within three years of one another before the age of thirty. These are the backstories that form the foundation of this journey we are taking together. How do these early losses impact later attachments? How do these traumas affect our ability to navigate our way through a world of Mother's Days and Father's Days? What of the rituals of life-birthdays, weddings, promotions, graduations-that must be experienced in the shadow of early loss? Now that we know there are others like us-whose life stories began in loss-can we begin to feel more connected to others, and allow ourselves to risk the vulnerability of attachment?

As I write this, my sense of fraudulence begins to wane; I understand it pretty well at this point in my life. It's chronic and incurable, yes, but also permeable and susceptible to influence, inspiration, and the motivational impacts of challenging myself in the final chapter of my clinical career to rekindle my love for group work-long dormant, never forgotten.

## Advertisements from Our Community Members

### Group Therapy for Therapists

## Group Therapy for Therapists

Openings available in Therapy Groups that are exclusively for therapists. These groups offer a rare opportunity to be with other relationally oriented therapists who value authentic interpersonal connections and here-and-now processing. Groups meet weekly and consistently offer the deep emotional support and direct engagement similar to what many of you have experienced through process groups at AAP, WSP, AGPA institutes, Tavistock, etc. The emphasis is full awareness and expression of our lived experience as we encounter and process with each other. We work to build interpersonal safety by respectfully speaking our truth and by tending to boundaries, damaged feelings and misuse of power, resulting in greater vulnerability, intimacy, healing and growth--the alchemy of group therapy. Participants increase their capacity for empathy, compassion and love, and are better able to voice difficult emotions and let go of shame. Through this experiential process a greater wisdom and comfort with group dynamics will evolve, and you'll notice more gratifying and loving relationships with your spouses/partners, children, friends, and clients.

### DETAILS:

1. Groups are ONLY FOR THERAPISTS, novice through seasoned.  
Limit 8/per group.
2. Location/times (groups meet weekly for 75 minutes):
  - Group 1: Dupont Circle--Tuesdays 9:10-10:25am (2 spaces)
  - Group 2: Dupont Circle--Thursdays 9-10:15am (space for 2 males)
  - Group 3: Bethesda--Fridays 12:00-1:15pm (space for 2 males)
  - Group 4: Dupont Circle--(Forming, time/day/start date TBD)
3. Costs. \$125/session (sliding scale is available for grad students, new practitioners, and agency employees).  
Gender and cultural diversity are promoted.

To discuss further please  
call/email

Nicholas Kirsch, Ph.D.

301.442.7618

[nicholaskirsch56@gmail.com](mailto:nicholaskirsch56@gmail.com)

[bethesdapsychotherapist.com](http://bethesdapsychotherapist.com)

### **Process Group for Therapists**

Facilitated by: Trish Cleary, MS, LCPC-MFT-ADC, CGP, LFAGPA &  
Ginger Sullivan, MA, LPC, CGP, FAGPA

This experiential group is designed to help clinicians grow in relational awareness, self-reflection, and expressive connection.

Limit 10 members. Wait-list openings are available.

For more information: <https://bit.ly/2NCe2Jo>

## **Supervision/Case-Consultation Group for Area Clinicians - Fall Term**

Facilitated by: Trish Cleary, MS, LCPC-MFT-ADC, CGP, LFAGPA & Ginger Sullivan, MA, LPC, CGP, FAGPA

This 4-session group provides clinicians at all levels of experience a confidential and supportive setting for the exploration of clinical challenges.

Register now for Fall Term

For more information: <http://bit.ly/2N1VUZC>

## **Bringing Your Dog to Work?**

Lorraine Wodiska, PhD, CGP, FAGPA, ABGP with Lynn Piper, PhD formed a 501[c] 3 organization, **Society for Canine-Assisted Psychotherapy Excellence (SCAPE)**.

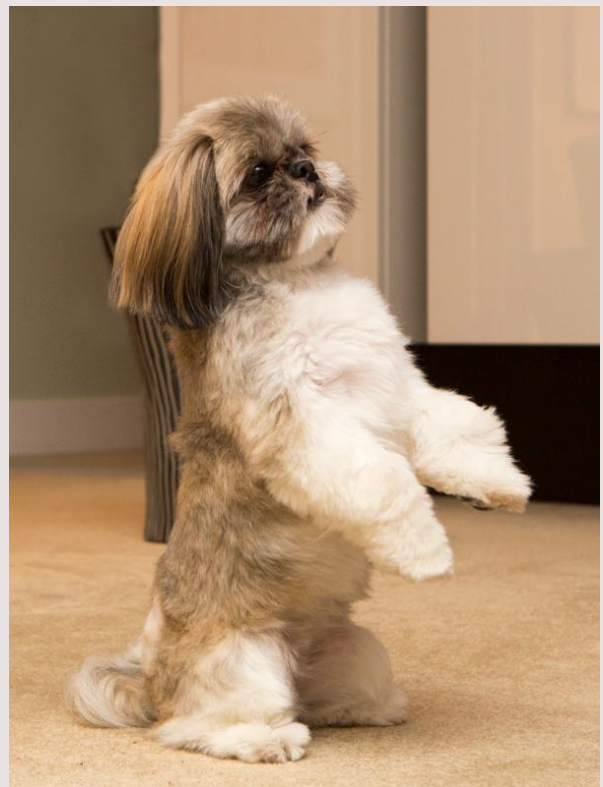
We are professionals interested in promoting and providing ethical canine-assisted psychotherapy. We are now accepting members and invite you to look at our website:

[www.scapecanine.org](http://www.scapecanine.org)

If interested, contact:

Lynn Piper: [lynn@scapecanine.org](mailto:lynn@scapecanine.org)

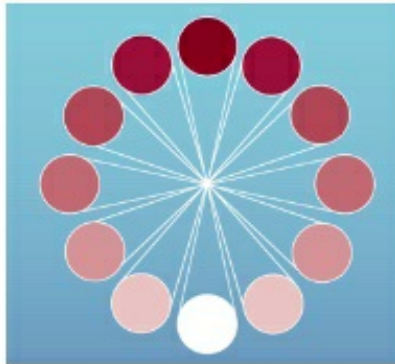
Lorraine Wodiska: [lwodiska@gmail.com](mailto:lwodiska@gmail.com)





**\*\*\*Beginning Fall 2018\*\*\***

## ***NEW CONSULTATION GROUP FOR GROUP THERAPISTS***



**Focus:** Open to those currently leading or wanting to lead therapy groups, this group will explore the theoretical, technical and emotional complexities of psychodynamic group treatment, including the ways in which our personal histories and present lives impact our group leadership/co-leadership.

**Format:** Through case presentations and group process, we'll use what gets evoked in each of us to better understand group dynamics and ourselves as group therapists. Some meetings will have an open agenda for the group to use as desired/needed.

**Consultant - Jonathan Stillerman, PhD, CGP:** As a Certified Group Psychotherapist, I have been leading groups for 20 years. I've also been training and supervising group therapists, including conducting workshops at the American Group Psychotherapy Association annual meetings, leading process groups at Mid-Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society conferences and serving on the faculty of the National Group Psychotherapy Institute and the Supervision Training Program at the Washington School of Psychiatry. Last but not least, over the years, I have personally participated in a variety of groups - process, therapy, training and supervision - and believe deeply that such experiential learning is essential to becoming a group therapist and sustaining a successful group therapy practice.

**When & Where:** Weekly on Thursdays, 4-5:15pm; 1801 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 400

**For more information:** If you're intrigued by this opportunity, please be in touch by phone (202-429-4939) or email ([jstillerman@hotmail.com](mailto:jstillerman@hotmail.com)). I'd love to talk with you further.



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