

MAGPS FALL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 29, ISSUE 2 Editor's Note

I have found myself in a space of gratitude lately. When I think about the things for which I am grateful, at the top of the list are the different groups in my life -- first and foremost, my family group, complete with my husband and one-year old daughter; my therapy group, which has continued to meet virtually throughout the pandemic and has been a grounding force in my life; the Intensive Outpatient Program groups I have the pleasure of facilitating every day at work; and certainly this wonderful group of colleagues that I've found in MAGPS! I hope that you, too, are enjoying being part of this community and taking advantage of the many opportunities to

connect and learn. In this issue of the newsletter you will find: a preview of the upcoming MAGPS Fall Conference with presenter Dr. Kathleen Issac, complete with a video interview (!); a recap of

Virtual Cinema Series October 16, 2021 MAGPS Fall Conference

November 6-7, 2021

Virtual Cinema Series December 18, 2021

Virtual Cinema Series

February 19, 2022

Virtual Cinema Series

April 16, 2022

the work and upcoming events from the Anti-Racism Committee; information about upcoming Cinema Series events; and a story of a brief glimpse into in-person group during the Read on for more details about these events! pandemic. Please enjoy! Warmly,

Rebecca Abell, Newsletter Editor

Letter from the President Karen Eberwein, PsyD, CGP "Change is never easy but always good." "Change is never easy but always good." -- My step sister's comment, via text, in response to a message exchange where I was talking with

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Margaret Wilmot Francis

her about our family's upcoming move. "We are excited, but the kids are sad to leave their friends and schools," I had texted. "Is change always good?" I thought to myself. Wow! My first *Letter from the President* to you, MAGPS – a change for me and for MAGPS. When I transitioned into the position following the Spring Conference, I had imagined a much different Fall and a much different Letter. We had said "hello" and "goodbye" to cicadas and, finally, this past summer we said "goodbye" to masks. A welcomed change. But then, we reunited again, with masks and the time apart from clients, continued time on Zoom, etc.

disappointment of prolonged social distancing, COVID restrictions, MAGPS is changing and evolving and it's not been easy, but is it good? Members have recognized that MAGPS is not equitable and inclusive. As of Spring 2021, we welcomed a new Board, including new Board members and new Board roles. MAGPS is changing. Several dedicated MAGPS-ers have authored publications related to unique, Black group therapist experiences. Members have been featured speakers at online learning events, have been attending Affinity Groups, are participating in Round Tables, and are engaging in their own independent study specifically related to anti-racism. All are efforts to increase awareness of the personal and systemic racism present within us, MAGPS, and the group therapist community. We must continue to change. Regarding MAGPS more specifically, two Board members have

processes. We will be changing how we organize and structure our Board meetings, our bylaws will be changing, "voting," and eligibility among Board members will be changing. We also want to encourage everyone to be more intentional and aware of how we conduct ourselves at MAGPS offerings, as group clinicians, friends, colleagues, responsible citizens, and community members. Finally, we will be reaching out to you in 2022. The ARC hosted an event a few weeks ago, where Dr. Robin Dean challenged us by asking, "Who do they think you are?" We considered this question in the context of those who are close to us, to those who comprise our more distant relationship circles. The Round Table was awesome, and I would like to tweak the questions a bit, and encourage you to consider the following adaptations, both for yourself and for MAGPS. Who does MAGPS think you are? And, who do they think MAGPS is? What would you like to see change? What do you need, how do you see our organization, how can we involve you more, and are we

making changes in ways that satisfy you and support your professional

welcomed babies into their family. Change! Our website and how we

Board has hired a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) consultant, Dr.

Kimberly Burdine, who has been working with us – facilitating our own

register for membership has changed. The Anti-Racism Task Force

(ARTF) has evolved into the Anti-Racism Committee (ARC). Our

growth? SPOTLIGHT! Exciting Events in the MAGPS Community

Fall 2021 MAGPS Conference



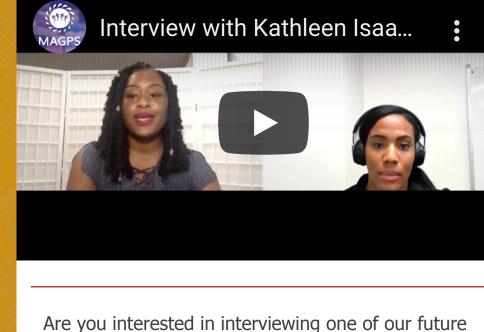
Working with the Intersection of Identities in the Group Process In a time of overwhelming uncertainty, socio-political crisis, and isolation, people are craving connection. Group provides an opportunity to share experiences, connect and feel seen, validated, and accepted by others. However, many individuals have struggled to access these positive benefits of the group, particularly those with marginalized identities. How do we create a group environment that invites the entirety of one's experience including the parts of themselves that are othered and discriminated against? How do we shift from creating connection through harmful conflict to a healthy exploration of differences?

Creating Connection Through

Empathy:

work with trauma and integrate the intersections of race, sexual orientation, and gender identity into the group process. To view the full brochure, click here. Below, Margaret Francis, one of our MAGPS Student/New Professional Representatives, interviews Dr. Issac about the upcoming conference. Check it out! **REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE**

Dr. Kathleen Isaac will share how to use empathy and principles of liberation psychology to





also has a part-time private practice

focused on serving BIPOC and LGBTQ+ clients with integrative treatment

approaches, where she specializes in trauma, health psychology, and cultural issues. Dr. Isaac has been featured on

multiple media platforms. She is committed to promoting the use of mental health treatment and reducing mental health

Yes, please contact me! Select

speakers?

Maybe Select

stigma. A Note from the Anti-Racism Committee In February 2019, the MAGPS Board agreed to form the Anti-Racism Task Force to examine the systems and policies that inherently uphold racist and oppressive structures. Over the past 20

strategy that would ensure progress and be sustainable over time. I am happy to announce that the work of the Anti-Racism Task Force continues but as a newly formed Board Committee. With the leadership of Karen Eberwein, our new Board President, and Liz Marsh, our President Elect, the ethos of our organization to tackle systemic racism and marginalization has been established. We have hired a consultant to assist the Board in this work, and to support us in organizing the new Anti-Racism Committee. We are proposing several initiatives that we hope will garner the enthusiasm and participation of our membership:

1. Continue the work of the Anti-Racism Task Force by offering monthly events, such as Racial

months, the ARTF worked closely with the Board and with membership to develop an anti-racism

Affinity Groups, quarterly Round Tables, working with community leaders to bring diverse perspectives and experiences to our conferences, and to be in dialogue with the Board and with each 2. Offer training to members who are interested in leading the Racial Affinity Groups

3. Offer continuing education opportunities in Racial literacy, addressing bias and prejudice in groups, understanding the complexities of intersectionality, and more. 3. Hold Town Hall meetings twice a year to engage the community in the work of MAGPS and the

4. Create bi-directional outreach opportunities with agencies, universities, and neighboring training institutes who are committed to deconstructing systems in the field of mental health that privilege the White majority and undermine the health, well-being and progress of people who have historically been marginalized because of skin color, age, physical ability, religion, sexuality and gender identity.

Please consider volunteering for the Anti-Racism Committee. We are looking for people to help with outreach, communications, and event planning. We are also looking for volunteers who will help us update our on-line reading list, and to lead Racial Affinity Groups. Contact Alison Howard at alisonhoward32@gmail.com to talk about volunteer opportunities. We will be holding a Town Hall on October 13th, and we hope to see many of you there.

The MAGPS Cinema Series is back and we are remaining virtual again this year. It was so much fun to gather around and discuss the movies from the comfort of our own homes that the Committee

wants to keep the tradition going. This year the Cinema Series' theme is "Otherness" and each movie will focus on how society enacts "otherness" in various forms. So mark the dates in your calendar! All movies will be available on a digital platform so you can watch them prior to our Zoom discussion. If

you have a movie recommendation, please contact Jackie and Lenore at cinema@magps.org!

Anti-Racism Committee Chair Cinema Series

Alison McGrath Howard, Psy.D., M.Ed, CGP

(Pronouns: She/Her)

MAGPS Presents *2021-2022* Virtual Cinema Series Dates Mark your calendars for the Virtual Cinema Series. **October 16, 2021 December 18, 2021 February 19, 2022 April 16, 2022** Meetings start at 7pm and will be held on Zoom Please contact Lenore or Jackie for movie recommendations

16th, 2021 at 7:00pm. We will be discussing the movie "Otherhood," which you can watch on Netflix! All are welcome and the event is free!

Click here to register for the first Cinema Series

discussion on October

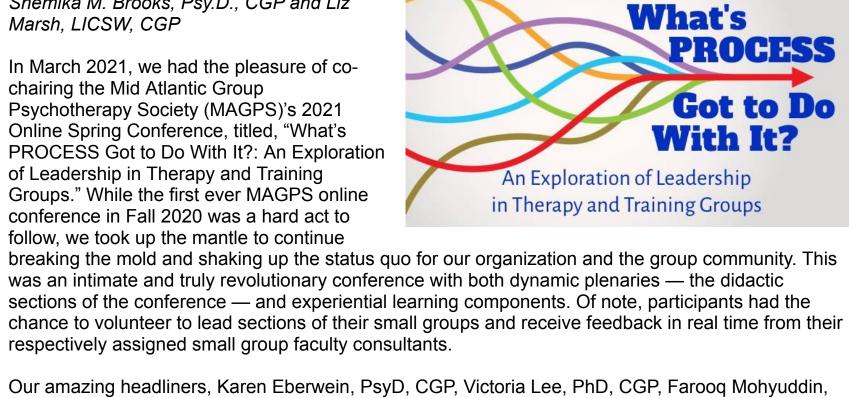
LOOKING BACK Reflections on the Spring Conference

Post Process: Remembering the Last Conference Shemika M. Brooks, Psy.D., CGP and Liz Marsh, LICSW, CGP In March 2021, we had the pleasure of co-

chairing the Mid Atlantic Group

Psychotherapy Society (MAGPS)'s 2021 Online Spring Conference, titled, "What's PROCESS Got to Do With It?: An Exploration of Leadership in Therapy and Training Groups." While the first ever MAGPS online conference in Fall 2020 was a hard act to follow, we took up the mantle to continue respectively assigned small group faculty consultants.

along the way.



Spring Conference

March 20-21, 2021

plenary sessions throughout the weekend to aid in conference attendees' exploration of the differences between the facilitation of psychotherapy groups that we provide as a mental health service to our patients and clients, and the training groups that we participate in during conferences such as those held biannually by MAGPS. In addition, we were challenged to think about the ways in which different aspects of our identities affect our work as group leaders; how power and privilege enter and impact our healing and learning spaces; and how bias may affect the ways in which any group process may evolve. We were excited to coordinate this unique conference. Typically at the MAGPS biannual conferences,

MD, CGP, FAPA, FAGPA, and Lorraine Wodiska, PhD, CGP, ABPP, FAGPA delivered insightful

there have been specifically designated small group leaders who facilitated each small group section throughout the weekend. Instead, this particular conference involved designated small group faculty consultants, who observed each small group section and provided feedback to the conference attendee/ volunteer facilitators of the small group segments. Our faculty consultants were: Maryetta Andrews-Sachs, LICSW, CGP, FAGPA; Sally Brandel, Ph.D., CGP; Arthur A. Gray, Ph.D., CGP; Marcus Hummings, Psy.D., CGP; Gloria Myers Beller, LICSW; Christopher Straley, MSW, CST, CGP; Ayana Watkins-Northern, Ph.D., CGP. Perhaps the most meaningful of the conference plenaries was a fishbowl group that was held with the small group faculty consultants as the identified group members. This team of incredibly experienced and gifted group psychotherapists processed with one another their own experiences of learning how

MAGPS leadership, members, and all other conference attendees all agreed, by way of evaluations and verbal feedback that this was a powerful way to digest complex concepts and to learn new skills; to get more process group experience while having the opportunity to demonstrate specific learnings; and to participate, be observed, and receive feedback. The model that was implemented during this conference benefited all who were in attendance and who engaged in any capacity. Who knows?! -maybe there is room for this kind of hands-on training for all future Small Group Leaders.

to lead training groups, their relationships with one another, and their relationships with other mentors

From the bottom of our hearts, we want to say thank you to all who presented, consulted, and moderated; to all those who contributed behind-the-scenes efforts that helped this conference to transpire and to all those who attended and/or supported the conference. The Spring 2021 conference would certainly not have been a success without each and every one to who took part in any capacity.

Feedback from Conference Scholarship Recipients I really want to thank Dr. Lorraine First I want to say thank you for I enjoyed the conference! The Wodiska who encouraged me to such a well thought out and preconference readings are attend this conference and organized conference. I can informative and create an

my professional and emotional conference. Huge thank you to wonderful family that's very

so professionally, intellectually to Dr. Arthur for not allowing me groups, tools I can use, and emotionally generous to me to sit on the sidelines; he made increased confidence in

life-in fact in many ways she has my professor Dr. Alison Howard welcoming, secure, yet open to saved my life in both those ways. for sharing this opportunity with growth. I leave the conference Thank you Dr. Wodiska for being me. I also want to say thank you with a better grasp of process

previous conferences; without truly say I enjoyed this anticipation for didactic and her I would not be here. She has experience, and I have been experiential (interpersonal and been so instrumental throughout moved to become a member. I intrapersonal and professional) my life and has gently nudged felt nothing but good energy and learning. The large group of me in the direction of improving good vibes this entire attendees present as a

sure that everyone felt as if they facilitating (by simply observing who come on to your path. The conference has been so impactful in that I have learned so much as a professional and I also have learned so much about myself in such a short time that it really is so unbelievable. The care, the sensitivity and the thoughtfulness of the committee and it's leaders is truly amazing and a rare experience.

was. This is what I was looking

branch, but honestly if I joined a

local branch I'd want to join this

one. If not the only local branch

mean the way it was organized

etc. This is the best Zoom

and made so clear where to be,

anything I have EVER attended.

-Anonymous

for! MAGPS is not my local

and as I have observed to all

truly appreciate that. I am helpful and provided me with many think pieces and skills this year. Thought it was good I thought it was going to be more didactic with more feedback and

looking forward to growing with myself in personal and you all and in this organization. professional spaces. Thank you for the opportunity! -Margaret -Syreeta Wright This conference was extremely I really enjoyed my experience overall at this event. The necessary to navigate process plenaries were very informative groups. I do hope that these and well run, and the presenters conferences continue to thrive. were very knowledgeable. My -Kara Callaghan They are an excellent source of small group experience was knowledge and a great way to very fulfilling and left me I attended AGPA for the first time meet like-minded professionals. wanting more time and connection with my group -Anonymous members. Oh, how I wish this

were a part of the group and I and participating), and a greater

opportunities to lead like this one This conference was a unique take on process group. The conference leads and the small group consultants were integral in the learning process and the facilitation of process groups. It or in addition to my local if I join a is my recommendation that local branch. Even the logistics! I MAGPS has this conference again (in person) with the small group consultants included. I what link to use, how to get there would also suggest that more time be given for the process portion that follows.

was in person! My one suggestion would be that events need to stick to the schedule as provided. Starting events early is essentially breaking the contract that the organizers made with participants, and the fact that it happened was very unfortunate.

awareness and acceptance of

-Anonymous -Anonymous To apply for a scholarship to our upcoming conference, send an email to Cristina Secarea at scholarships@magps.org.

MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

We Did it Twice!

this session was held in my screened-in porch with a ceiling fan whirring and an air purifier purring nearby. We sat nearly three feet away from one another around an oblong glass patio table. The

Lorraine B. Wodiska, PhD, CGP, ABPP, FAGPA We Did it Twice! Twice. In person. Tuesday noon group. July 20th and July 27th. On June 20, 2021, we held our first in-person group since March 10, 2020! As I have a home office,

agreed upon rule was that you and everyone in your home had to be two-weeks post your second vaccination. We had been meeting on Zoom for 17 months and I thought my brain had adapted quite nicely to that

venue, that the sessions were excellent, and that we were working with therapeutic factors, group dynamics and engaged in healing interpersonal work. In fact, through AGPA workshops and elearning, I have been teaching how to use Polyvagal Theory to conduct effective online groups and I felt exceptionally prepared about how to offer excellent group therapy under "virtual" conditions. I stopped thinking about Zoom as a compromise and instead experienced it as a full therapeutic venue.

There were seven of us (counting me) on July 20th and one person was on vacation so he could not join that week. As a group, we had talked for some weeks about meeting in person but noted it would be difficult because one person, who was immunocompromised, had moved to the rural Midwest over a year ago to stay safer. However, post vaccination, she was coming back to DC to look for housing and we took that opportunity to talk about an in-person group therapy session. We discussed the last time we had met in person in March 2020 when unbeknownst to me, I had been surging with COVID viral loading and had spread it to a couple of group members (another story, indeed). I certainly did

porch, everyone vaccinated and meeting in a nearly outdoor space. A few people had not met one another in person before and even I had not met one member face to face. Newsflash: We *look* different in person. We *feel* different in person. We *sense* one another differently in person. We *look* at one another differently in person. We *smell* one another in person, really. And we see the whole person including all idiosyncratic movements, and not just the upper body.

not want to do that again so we were being extra cautious about the setting, hence the screened-in

At first, I was shocked that all my senses were buzzing: it was difficult to concentrate. It reminded me of something my son had said after returning from his Denali Mountain climb in Alaska: he had to acclimatize to colors again, as he had seen only white snow for weeks and upon his return to a town, he experienced vibrant color as an uncomfortable sense overload.

Bringing me to my senses early in that session, a woman reported on a group dream she had the night before. In the dream, we were meeting in a strange office that was beige and filled with file cabinets. She knew that we group members were there but could not see us because of the cabinets. She was sitting behind one of them and peeking out to see who was there. We shared what it might mean if it were each person's dream and considered hiding both behind the cabinets and hiding what was in the cabinets. Each person had different secrets over these 17 months and began to be more open about these very issues. Paradoxically, most members mentioned that it was more difficult to hide when the group was conducted on screen because our homes and spouses and

One week later: July 27th. That day, our senses were more used to one another but our vacationer was just joining us. He nearly tripped on his way to a seat, as he was one of the members who had not met most of us before. He mentioned his instantaneous understanding of how difficult it would be for children attending school for the first time since the pandemic and meeting their classmates in person: it was disorienting and unsettling, just too much to take in at once. He had a similar reaction as mine, as he was not able to focus for a few minutes but was integrating the sights, sounds and smells of the place and the people.

children and pets and pictures were on view for comments. So now we were thoughtful about what

He needed to acclimatize. This was the last session for one of our members and the group proceeded with our formal goodbye. It was richer in person. Much richer. Oddly, we did not know that it was also a goodbye to our in-person sessions. The Delta Variant was in town.

At any rate, it was a sweet interlude to be back in person and the work seemed more intense and present. We are Zooming again and hoping for a calmer, healthier time when we can be in the same

room. Until then, we are grateful for the experience we have with one another but know that something more sense-sational awaits us. Groups that heal are first and foremost safe. This safety does not mean that no one will ever get hurt but it means that safety is a priority and the group will work to make sure that individual members are healed and supported way more than they are hurt. Groups that heal are intentional about celebrating and acknowledging individual differences as well as the collective shared experience. Groups that heal create space for individuals to learn about themselves while they are learning about others. Groups that heal are inclusionary and they invite people in to step out of their comfort zone rather than forcing someone out of their comfort zone. Groups that heal can make individuals feel loved in a way that is only possible within the group, and that shows the true power of groups.

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they have on view now that we were meeting in person.

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Thank you for taking the time to read our bi-yearly newsletter. Please let us know what you think by emailing Rebecca at newsletter@magps.org. Mid-Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society

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