



Mid Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society

MAGPS News

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Spring 2015

Volume 23, Issue 1

MAGPS Spring Conference takes up the Challenge of Cultural Competence

by Nancy Hafkin, PhD, CGP, Spring Conference Chair

MAGPS will hold its Spring Conference at St. Elizabeths Hospital on April 18 & 19, 2015. We are delighted to welcome Kimberly Ewing, PhD, and Bridgett Rivera, PsyD, as our guest presenters for "Integrating Authentic Cultural Competence into Group Psychotherapy."

Cultural competency in the group psychotherapist is a critical topic for everyone regardless of years of experience. Frank self-assessment is key to the creation of cultural competence. At our conference, we will examine our own cultural identities—race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, spirituality, and social class. We will look at our world view and the manner in which it directs our sense of sociocultural power and privilege. As group psychotherapists, we will examine our role as a group leader, and the empathy and understanding needed to practice effectively, without judgment and labels.

Our presenters, Dr. Ewing and Dr. Rivera, are teachers, trainers, and therapists, and they have worked in counseling centers, independent practice, and universities. They have extensive experience in teaching cultural awareness in a variety of work environments. Educated in Ohio, Delaware, and Missouri, Dr. Ewing has worked as staff psychologist and training director for over 20 years at university counseling centers and currently coordinates and consults

with Loyola University on the topic of cultural awareness. Her independent practice is in Baltimore. Dr. Rivera was educated in California and has extensive experience teaching undergraduate and graduate level courses in diversity. As well, Dr. Rivera has provided direct service to college students and clinical supervision to masters and doctoral students. She consults to the Loyola Counseling Center on the issues of diversity in clinical and supervisory relationships. She has an independent practice northeast of Baltimore in Nottingham, MD.

We will follow the traditional MAGPS structure of several large plenaries and small process groups led by experienced group psychotherapists throughout the weekend. Among our small group leaders for the weekend are Mary Chappell, Puma Cornick, Judith Fernando, Myrna Frank, Mindy Mecham Jensen, Tom Large, Yavar Moghimi, Bridgett Neamo, Reginald Nettles, Bob Schulte, Siddharth Ashvin Shah, Katherine Thorn, Candice Vinson, and Lorraine Wodiska. Our visiting small group leader is Cooke Read, who will be joining us from Durham, North Carolina.

The Conference promises to be exciting and impactful, and we hope you will join us. Looking forward to seeing you in the Spring!

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Going to the Spring Conference? St E's is collecting donations for Hospital Community Members. Drop off used books (no magazines please) and gently used adult clothing at the Volunteer Coordinator Office, near the front desk.

MAGPS News



"Thank you again for the wonderful opportunity of being your President. My life is the richer for it and for working with all of you."

A Letter from the President

Maryetta Andrews-Sachs, LICSW, CGP, FAGPA

Greetings to all. I have many appreciations and some regrets as my stint as president comes to an end in April. I am very appreciative to the many who served as a safety net and caught me when I missed something. I am very appreciative of Winnicott for reminding me that it's enough to be "good enough" in my various roles. I remind myself that perfection is impossible and boring, but in truth, my life's ongoing mantra will always be, "I must raise my tolerance for the anxiety of displeasing and disappointing others." A supervisor long ago told me that I would make lots of mistakes in my work, but that people would forgive all but "a mistake of the heart." (I have puzzled over this remark for decades—and have found it true except with very traumatized people.) I do try to hold onto the 5-5-5 rule: Will this matter in

5 hours? In 5 months? In 5 years? I do know that anyone running a therapy group—or doing any effective work in psychotherapy for that matter—must be able to tolerate the anxiety of being hated, of making mistakes, of knowing that there will always be someone unhappy with something about the conference you have just run, the session you have just had, the parenting you have done, etc. This is one reason I think anyone doing our work should spend serious time on the other end of the process! We then are in a better position to model living a vibrant life in spite of our flawed humanity. Thank you again for the wonderful opportunity of being your President. My life is the richer for it and for working with all of you.

Maryetta

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Student/New Professional Representatives to be appointed by the incoming President

Interview with Our Conference Presenters Kimberly Ewing, PhD & Bridget Rivera, PsyD

Jen Bissell, LICSW

Jen: *What can conference attendees anticipate learning and hearing about at the conference?*

Kim & Bridget: Participants will gain a deeper understanding of their worldview, which is informed and shaped by the identity dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, religion, spirituality, and social class. After attendees gain deeper awareness and insight into these dimensions, we will cover how to hold on to that experience and facilitate group therapy from an authentic cultural competence perspective.

Jen: *I imagine discussions about race and culture can be intense. When conversations get difficult, in your experience, what helps people stay present, open, and continuing in their dialogue?*

Kim & Bridget: Yes, certainly these can be difficult discussions, particularly in today's society. We are not used to discussing cultural issues, especially with people who might have different experiences or opinions. Also, due to political and current events, we are primed to become anxious or defensive when these topics arise. We spend a great deal of time preparing participants before we start these conversations by having them express those concerns, as well as possible solutions. Things do get difficult and we take our role as facilitators seriously. We see our role as maintaining a safe space for participants, through gauging how the conversation is going, and encouraging processing when the dialogue is more challenging.

Jen: *How do you engage people to enter into these conversations?*

Kim & Bridget: Before we engage people in these conversations we work hard to create a safe space in order to enter into a dialogue. One reason these conversations feel risky is because of the identities we bring into the room, our worldview, and what we have been taught regarding these conversations. Due to this we dedicate a good part of our work to addressing these exact issues.

Jen: *How did this come to be the focus of your work?*

Kim: Talking about inequality and what we now call social justice started when I was a child. I am the African American daughter of two educators who valued speaking up for yourself and being the best you can be. I grew up in the racially and economically segregated city of St. Louis, MO, which is less than 30 minutes from Ferguson, MO. Initially I attended an all-Black, working/lower middle class neighborhood school, but was later moved to a school further away in a predominantly White, working class neighborhood. I happened to be in graduate school while the department's faculty struggled as race and gender issues emerged over hiring a new faculty member. At the same time, the program launched its first ever course on "cross cultural counseling." It didn't go that well. Taken together, these experiences stayed with me. When I became the Training Director for the Loyola Counseling Center's training programs, I knew it was crucial to incorporate this kind of professional development for our staff and then for the trainees. The focus had to include who we are as cultural beings doing this work.

Bridget: I was born and raised in the UK with a working class background. My family immigrated to the US when I was 16. I quickly learned specifically that issues of social class and ethnicity have powerful implications for one's destiny. I was drawn to studying these issues in graduate school and was fortunate enough to be trained at the California School of Professional Psychology where cultural competence was a focus. After graduation, I thoroughly enjoyed integrating these issues into supervision, and from there it grew to become a focus of my work.



Justin Hecht connecting with MAGPS at our Fall Conference, "Becoming Who We Are in Groups."

Feels like a Dream!

Memories of Justin Hecht & "Becoming Who We Are in Groups"

by Nancy Hafkin, PhD, CGP, Fall Conference Chair

Meaning, dignity, belonging, and connectedness were themes explored at our 2014 Fall Conference in Cambridge, Maryland, "Becoming Who We Are in Groups." Under the thoughtful and skilled leadership of Justin Hecht, PhD, we joined together to broaden our understanding of concepts inspired by the genius of Carl Jung, and explored how these ideas can be applied and amplified in our therapy groups.

Attendees of the Fall Conference were enthusiastic about the experience, and, grateful for Dr. Hecht's generosity and ability to demonstrate Jungian principles to us. Archetypes (Ancestors, Endurance, Initiation) were illustrated with movie clips from *The Titanic* and *Mary Poppins*, and from Buddhist philosophy. We also discussed the classic archetype of the therapist as wounded healer; and how as therapists we feel marooned between opposites—the strong wish to be helpful to others and the realization of our own inadequacy. Dr. Hecht demonstrated caring mentorship and an avenue to consistent inner work, encouraging us to feel comfort in living the archetype of the wounded healer.

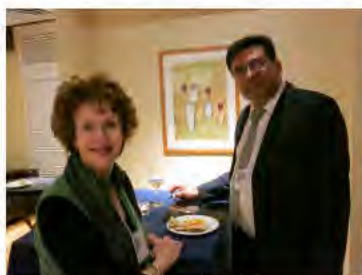


Conference pictures courtesy of Paul Kelner—Thank you Paul!



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Dr. Hecht also taught us how Jung's ideas on individuation can be fostered in groups. Interestingly, individuation and group membership are paradoxical—being part of a group can reduce shame, facilitate risk taking, and help us hold a vision, which can lead us to separateness and a truer sense of becoming who we are. Lastly, MAGPS attendees learned about a view of the unconscious that is affirming and nurturing of human potential.



In the small process groups, members had a chance to broaden their understanding of dreams, archetypes, libido, and the collective unconscious. Small group leaders for the weekend were Bradley Lake, Lorraine Wodiska & Liz Marsh, Elliot Blum & Ann Reifman, Jonathan Stillerman & Alison Howard, Sally Brandel, and Maryetta Andrews-Sachs & Mary Chappell. Jeff Hudson, our guest small group leader from Austin, Texas, was a welcome and capable addition.



MAGPS is appreciative of Dr. Hecht for helping us to feel more connected with the myths, beliefs, symbols, history, dreams, and stories that enrich our lives and give meaning to our work as group psychotherapists. Additionally, through the efforts of Dr. Hecht, the small group leaders, and the conference committee, attendees were challenged to see group as a permission-giving place where we can take some risks to be ourselves and lead more joyful, fulfilling lives.



Fall Conference Small Group Leaders. Thank you working with us!

(Interview Continued from Page 3)



"People are ready to do this...once we engage them in the process, they make critical connections between each other and inside themselves that we all know will change the work with their clients."

—Kim Ewing



"What has been surprising for me, is once participants get going addressing this stuff, how open, honest, genuine, and willing people are to share their own experiences."

—Bridget Rivera

Jen: *Who and what influenced you? Who were your mentors?*

Kim: Lots of people have influenced me! I have been very fortunate in that respect. But I'd have to credit Dr. Linda James Myers, a clinical psychologist in the Clinical Psychology and Black Studies departments when I was in graduate school. The two courses I took with her, the discussions our class had, along with readings, were life changing. We grappled with concepts of spirituality, healing, and mental health; along with the impact of oppression on both the psyche of the oppressed and also that of the oppressors. Working with Dr. James Myers introduced me to the powerful concept of *world view* as the shaper of what we see and don't see, what we value, how we see ourselves in relation to our environment, and what we see as possible or impossible, real and not real. What I learned in her classes gave meaning to the things I'd noticed and gravitated towards all my life, but didn't fully grasp in importance or connection. I've based my clinical and training work, as well as my personal values system, on things I learned in Dr. James Myers' courses.

Bridget: I had some wonderful instructors in graduate school, including Dr. Donald Viglione, Dr. Don Eulert, and Dr. Neil Ribner. I have also been influenced by Dr. Dana Richards work, which focuses on integrating cultural factors into psychological assessment, a focus of my clinical work. Beyond those academic influences, I'd be remiss to not identify my late father as a strong influence in this area. After emigrating from the UK to Southern California, I watched him make friends with immigrants from Mexico, and offer them support and guidance to become citizens. These powerful interactions, laden with challenges in language and differences in culture, were probably more influential than my formal training.

Jen: *Has there been a parallel process that you have noticed when events become more publicly strained? How has your work been impacted during the course of the unrest across the nation this last year (i.e. Ferguson)?*

Kim & Bridget: Yes, our clients (and the public in general) seem to be more psychically impacted by issues of race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual identity, religion, and spirituality, given the cultural-related and political conflict in the nation. But if our clients are not be aware of how their presenting concerns are shaped or even triggered by cultural identity, they may not share this with their counselor. They may fear having those beliefs dismissed or being judged psychologically dysfunctional, especially if they think the counselor holds different identity dimensions. When we are willing to invite this exploration with our clients, helping them integrate their presenting issue with how they experience their identities, exploring world view, values, and power or powerlessness; we help them heal at even deeper levels.

In terms of how our work has been affected by current events, our experience is that therapists want further training and discussions on this topic, but typically don't know how to engage in these conversations. And because it's 'scary,' they don't seek out opportunities. We call our work *authentic cultural competence* because we have found that through creating an honest, shared container, we may shed light on our *own* identities, sociopolitical power, world views, and values, as they impact what we experience and how we experience others.

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(Interview Continued from Page 6)

This process helps psychotherapists' openness, empathy, and perspective, which is needed for true learning to occur. Once we have tapped into that space inside ourselves, we develop deeper awareness and appreciation for our sensitivities and blind spots. As a result, we can engage our clients from a more integrated and authentic place, and can facilitate a similar exploration for them as they participate in this work.

Jen: *What has been the most surprising thing that you have discovered leading people in conversations about culture, race, ethnicity, sexual identity, gender, etc?*

Bridget: What has been surprising for me is once participants get going addressing this stuff, how open, honest, genuine, and willing people are to share their own experiences. You'd think that after I keep doing this that wouldn't be surprising, but I am always genuinely thankful, appreciative, and moved by what I hear people share, and what they take away from the conversations.

Kim: I would agree with Bridget on this. People are ready to do this. They don't always come in knowing it, or even realizing what they've signed up for, but once we engage them in the process, they make critical connections between each other and inside themselves that will change the work they do with their clients. That is immensely rewarding for me.

Jen: *What do you hope we take away from this conference weekend?*

Kim & Bridget: We really hope that participants take away an experience; and, a process or roadmap. Regarding one's experience, we hope participants see themselves as multidimensional, culturally-based people whose work is not immune from personal biases and judgments, and that this is natural and normal. It's our goal for clinicians to be more fully aware of their own identities, how these identities interact with one another, and how much psychic space these identities take up our own sense of self. The process or map we want to share is how to become better and better at identifying personal biases and judgments, how biases and judgments are affecting the work; and what ways we need to stretch, expand, and risk going beyond our borders to become increasingly more effective, authentic, culturally competent group facilitators.

MAGPS Awards & Scholarships

Student Scholarships

Volunteer Scholarships (Retirees and Newer Professionals)

Conference 1st Time Attendee Scholarships

Louisa Schwartz Memorial Scholarship

Barry Bukatman Memorial AGPA Scholarship

*For more information about receiving a scholarship or to make a donation:
see the MAGPS directory, contact Farooq Muhyuddin at 703-635-8444, or visit
<http://www.magps.org/join/scholarship.html>*

MAPGS News is

published twice a year.

MAGPS News seeks to promote the objectives of the Mid-Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society, while also serving as a forum for the exchange of ideas, information, and expressions among MAGPS members.

Do you have something creative to share?

MAGPS News is now accepting announcements, articles, poetry, and artwork.

Submissions:

Karen Eberwein, PsyD
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Advertising Rates:

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Quarter Page	\$100
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The opinions expressed in articles & advertisements are the sole responsibility of the author and may not represent the views of MAGPS.

MAGPS News

The Group as Family:

Using Group Psychotherapy to Promote Relationship Regulation

Trish Cleary, LCPC-MFT-ADC, CGP, FAGPA



"My early encounters with Dr. Satir powerfully shaped my ways of knowing as a clinician."

Editor's Note: Below is a blog article Trish Cleary wrote for the Middle Atlantic Division of the American Association for Marital and Family Therapy. Since its initial posting, the article has been picked up by the Virginia Satir Global Network blog and website for republication. Congratulations Trish!

When I learned March is Women's History Month, I immediately thought of Virginia Satir, one of our very own, as well as an international leader in family therapy. The UN's March 2015 theme, noted above, evokes the empowering dynamics of Virginia Satir and resonates with her affirmation: "Peace Within, Peace Between, Peace Among."

I had the privilege of participating in half-a-dozen training conferences with Virginia Satir held between 1977 and 1981 during the launch of her Avanta Network Conferences. It was thrilling to experience her innovative principles of human-validation-through-personal-empowerment demonstrated with individuals, couples, and families. Her authentic connections engendered our trust and cooperation as she engaged with conference attendees in large and small groups. She invited us to bring our whole-selves into the here-and-now of our connection with her. It was as if each of us became a canvas upon which she imprinted the patterns of her magic so we could retrieve our personal understandings of her later in our own lives and work.

My early encounters with Dr. Satir powerfully shaped my ways of knowing as a clinician. Her family sculpting seminars conveyed her belief that people are basically good, although at times misguided, and captured the essence of healing by showing us that change was an achievable goal. As she co-created a family system with audience volunteers by positioning them physically into emotionally-laden portrayals, she trusted they would become fully alive in the psychodrama to reveal the real issues underlying the identified problem. The principles embedded in her family sculpting trainings metabolized within me over time. They became the foundation of what I refer to as the 4 R's (rupture, regression, repair, and resolution), a helpful and easy-to-remember model developed for clients to effectively approach, identify, and manage internal and interpersonal upsets. In the example of Virginia Satir's family sculpting demonstration that follows, I will identify how the 4 R's are reflected in her process.

Imagine a large conference room filled with people focused on Virginia Satir's commanding energy dominating the stage. She initiates a sculpting demonstration by requesting that a conference attendee volunteer to portray a difficult family dynamic and for him/her to be the "in-house family member" in the case presentation. Together they determine the "cast of characters" in the family representation. Dr. Satir then draws volunteers from the audience as "stand-ins" to represent the other family members. With great care and attention to detail, Dr. Satir physically positions the family "stand ins" to match the "in-house family member's" perceptions of each family member's particular role, attributes, and interaction patterns, until the family difficulty is accurately portrayed (Rupture).

Dr. Satir instructs the participants to freeze and hold these role-defined postures for what seems

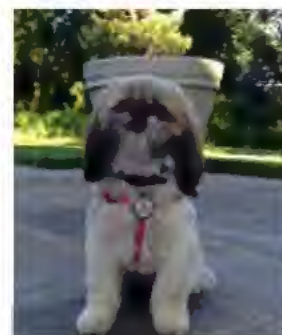
(Continued on Page 10)



Therapy is Going to the Dogs: Animal Assisted Group Experience at AGPA

Lorraine Wodiska, PhD, CGP, ABPP, and MAGPS member, offered a unique workshop at the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) Conference this past February in San Francisco. The topic, "Therapy is Going to the Dogs: An Animal Assisted Group Experience," was presented on Friday morning and highlighted how Dog Assisted Group Psychotherapy is different from the growing practice of clinicians bringing their dogs to work. Stella, a 9-pound Shih-Tzu, copresented with Lorraine during the entire 2.5 hour workshop.

Topics of discussion included the significant amount of training required for therapists and dogs working in a group therapy venue; ethical considerations for therapists, group members and dogs when using Animal Assisted Psychotherapy; how dogs impact interpersonal neurobiology of group members (and the therapist); and finally, benefits and challenges of working with a dog in a group therapy modality. In addition to the didactic material presented and discussed, participants had the opportunity to fully experience the workshop, Lorraine, and Stella; and to share their reactions with one another.



Stella, co presenter of
*Therapy is Going to the
Dogs: An Animal Assisted
Group Experience.*

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(The Group as Family Continued from Page 8)

a very long time. She asks them to continue to hold these positions of collective distress, while she individually checks in with each of them. Dr. Satir gently approaches each family member, one after another, with physical proximity and remarkable rapport as she sensitively inquires about his/her feelings. Throughout this gripping and prolonged sequence, poignant and congruent emotions spill forth from each of them as they share their experiences with her (Regression). As Dr. Satir instructs them to shake off the sculpted postures and the associated emotions, she affirms and acknowledges their willingness to be open and vulnerable (Repair). The sculpting experience for the "in-house family member" is a profound learning experience. In addition, each of the "stand-in" family members also learns something personally significant about themselves (Resolution). We all face interpersonal challenges in our relationships and struggle to make sense of what is going on and to regain emotional balance. Dr. Satir's family sculpting exercise encourages us to look beyond the superficial details of an identified problem/rupture (as it is rarely the real issue), and instead asks us to go deeper to explore how regressive coping strategies, that once worked to protect us, can now be an underlying source of our problem.



Virginia Satir

Jun 26, 1916 – Sept 10, 1988

Virginia Satir continually demonstrated the universal need for congruent connections and deeper understandings in our emotional relationships. Her amazing confidence in people was communicated every time she invited total strangers up to a stage to bond together in the common goal of healing. It seemed likely to me that if she could engage others in the process of healing and change, then perhaps I could too. So over the years, I integrated many aspects of Virginia Satir's model both consciously and unconsciously and now notice how much they are rooted in my clinical work with individuals, couples, families, and groups. Dr. Satir's most significant influence is reflected in the trust that my clients are working toward their personal benefit and for the well-being of others. My experiences as a marriage and family therapist and as a group psychotherapist have provided me a multi-faceted framework. This kaleidoscopic perspective provides insight into the intricacies of a client's internal and interpersonal world. When such insight is elusive, I find that a client's participation in group therapy can be particularly helpful. When a new member joins one of my groups, either from my private practice or as a referral from a colleague, s/he steps into a family sculpture of sorts. Within the secure and confidential space of group, members' attachment and relationship patterns come into focus in the interplay of group activity.

In the world of group psychotherapy, good-fit enactments often occur and powerfully reflect secure connections that influence positive self-esteem for group members. More often, however, bad-fit enactments occur and highlight family distortions, disruptive behaviors, and incongruent communications. As group members project their own family patterns onto each other and unconsciously assume varied roles from their families of origin, bad-fit dynamics in the group play out as internal and interpersonal ruptures with corresponding regressive feelings. While these interaction patterns in the group are similar to one's family-of-origin dynamics, the good news is that they are not the same. The difference is that the group-as-a-whole contains, witnesses, and reflects on the ruptures and regressive feelings between and among its members.

The beauty of group therapy as a holding container for exploring family issues is that it is a powerful medium for healing, growth, and change as members take risks to experience vulnerabilities they might not otherwise dare to express with a spouse, family member, or co-worker. As group members observe, consider, and mentalize their own and others' behaviors and beliefs, they see how these dynamics can play out differently than they did in their families of origin. As repair and resolution become the new experiences that allow for deeper levels of self-awareness, group members discover how sincere communication patterns can powerfully reshape the quality of their relationships both in and out of the group.

I am thankful for Virginia Satir's powerfully healing gifts. Her influence allowed me to develop an integrated sensitivity to family and group therapy dynamics.

Expanding Our Reach:

Outreach Development Project Committee

Could your colleagues benefit from additional training in Group Psychotherapy?

Are you are interested in developing outreach programs on behalf of MAGPS?

Would you like to offer continuing education or workshops to local agencies?

Would you like to offer a group or support group on behalf of MAGPS?

If the answer to either of these questions is "Yes" or "Maybe," please contact:

Venus Masselam

Venus@masselam.com

This past Winter, Venus piloted a transition support group on behalf of MAGPS, and participants said the following:

"The group brought me back in touch with MAGPS and gave me lots of new ideas to ponder regarding life's transitions."

"We accomplished as human beings, open and confident, dealing with the most important questions we face at this time in our life..."

CONSULTATION GROUP FOR CO-THERAPY PAIRS

We are forming a consultation group where co-therapy relationships can develop and where both therapists can explore the complexities and satisfactions of running groups together. Our perspective is psychodynamic/relational; our focus will be on the unconscious and interpersonal elements in the group and in the cotherapy relationship.

We have worked with each other as group co-therapists for over twenty-five years during which we have co-led time-limited groups, open-ended groups and couples groups. We are both on the faculty of the Washington School of Psychiatry's (WSP) National Group Psychotherapy Institute, which Molly chairs. Barry serves as chair of the WSP Supervision Training Program.

Time: Mondays from 3:15 – 4:30

Location: Dupont Circle

For further information, contact either of us.

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CINEMA SERIES

Film: A Late Quartet

Saturday, May 9, 2015

Discussant: Ceil Berlin, LCSW

6014 28th Street
North, Arlington, VA

Light dinner served at 5:45pm

Movie from 6:30-9:30pm

\$10 donation for food/drink

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2.5 CE/CME's available for purchase

Witnessing the Process...

A Clinical Consultation Group

offered by Trish Cleary, MS, LCPC-MFT-ADC, CGP

Fellow: American Group Psychotherapy Association



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Contact me for details about this multi-disciplinary group.

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Led by Lenore M. Pomerance, MSW, CGP

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Lenore is a Clinical Social Worker with more than twenty years' experience working with individuals, couples, and groups. She has specialized in the psychosocial issues of menopause, sexuality and aging, chronic illness, as well as end of life challenges.

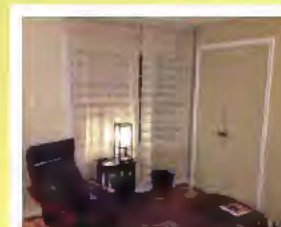
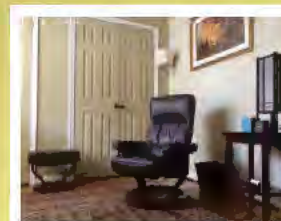
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