

groupassets



EDITOR'S NOTE



In planning this spring issue of Group Assets, I had no idea that we would be addressing the catastrophic effects of the coronavirus. Little did we know that many of us, including myself, would be battling this disease. We as a group need each other more than ever. As Darryl Pure, PhD, ABPP, CGP, FAGPA, new Chair of the Foundation points out, the work of the Group Foundation is vital to our recovery personally and professionally, and is also critical to the mental health of the communities we serve. It deserves our continued appreciation and support.

Connie Concannon, LCSW, CGP, DFAGPA
Editor, Group Assets

Building Foundations to Support Communities in Times of Need

DARRYL PURE, PHD, ABPP, CGP, FAGPA
Chair, Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health

These are unprecedented times as the world reels from the effects, physical and psychological, of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen our group therapy community respond to mental health needs in the midst of these challenges.

We call ourselves the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health. It has never felt more accurate and appropriate than now, when we are seeing so many ways in which our donors' gifts over the past few years have helped lay the foundation for the response that has been taking place. We talk about how gifts are used to shore up our infrastructure, which doesn't sound incredibly exciting. But in reality, it has meant that we were ready to stand up and respond to the needs of those affected by the pandemic. And as much as this is an article about the Foundation and the work it supports, I am just as aware that it is about the AGPA community, so many of whom make up our donor community in support of the field they love. We work together as is the case with any good group. So, as I move through what has been done, I want to acknowledge the partnership of the organizations making it possible.

Thanks to ongoing technology grants to AGPA, a website has been developed that has been used to share medical updates, training availability, self-care and resilience resources, and practice regulation changes so clinicians can focus their energy on treatment issues. E-Learning platforms were in place to deliver webinars on areas such as transitioning to teletherapy and caring for front line caregivers, including medical providers. In just the last few months, the following sessions have been offered (These are now recorded webinars that are available for anyone in need of the valuable information included in them.):

- Care and Self-Care in the Age of COVID-19: Challenges and Coping Strategies
- Promoting Our Colleagues' Wellbeing: Group Work with Healthcare Providers
- Technology and Telehealth Practice for Individual and Group Psychotherapy
- Theory and Practice of Online Group Therapy
- Supporting Group Leaders in Supporting the Well-being of Healthcare Providers

As one Foundation Scholarship recipient said: "As I am moving towards working remotely, I cannot express enough appreciation for all of the resources that have been shared



regarding providing group using online platforms. I feel lucky to be a part of a professional association with such expertise on what would otherwise be overwhelmingly uncharted territory."

Speaking of scholarships, the Foundation support at AGPA Connect for students, new professionals, and agency staff provide valuable experiential training and an ongoing connection to AGPA throughout the year. Attendees have indicated the training received at AGPA Connect 2020, coupled with the ongoing connections following the meeting, have made it possible for them to serve their clients and communities during the pandemic. Just a few comments that we have received:

"Even after the conference, I see how AGPA people support each other. Especially in the time of coronavirus, I feel like we are still learning and re-growing together as a large virtual/online group."

"Each year that I have attended AGPA, I have felt a personal and professional 'leveling up,' which impacts my teaching and work with clients. Coming home from the conference this year and into our new COVID-19 world, I feel grateful for how my experiences at AGPA have continued to sustain me through this challenging time."

"The hearts and minds of those attending a conference about connection and care are some of the most needed as we swim through these uncertain waters and work to create a new future together."

Connection is an important theme running through our world today. We need to physically isolate, and yet it is important to remain socially connected and to support one another. The AGPA and AGPA Connect e-communities, also supported by the technology grants, have

been providing a forum for group therapists to support each other emotionally and through the sharing of information that has been immensely helpful. Wrote another scholarship recipient, "The AGPA community became a place of information, support, and solidarity. As many people around me were still making light of the threat of COVID-19, I felt that the AGPA leadership and community were modeling a response that was both caring and responsible."

Nor is our work focused on our community alone. An annual grant from the Group Foundation maintained community outreach structures that have been called upon to provide support to local communities affected by the pandemic, including trainings and support groups for frontline caregivers in systems such as hospitals, public health systems, and college counseling centers. These grants have also supported programs for the mental health professionals doing the work.

I took on the position of the Chair of the Group Foundation because I believe that good mental health can improve quality of life and well-being and that group therapy plays a key role as an effective modality. I believe that we could make an impact in the world through the power of group. Right now, in challenging circumstances, we are making an impact, and it is thanks to the donors of the Group Foundation, the members of AGPA, and the strength of our organizational communities.

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We appreciate the provisions these planned gift donors have made for the Group Foundation.

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2020 Contributions to the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health

GIFTS ACKNOWLEDGED HERE ARE FROM JANUARY 1, 2020 THROUGH APRIL 15, 2020

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TRIBUTE GIFTS

The following individuals were honored by the contributors listed with a program in their name at the recent AGPA Connect Meeting in New York (donors are listed in italics).

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Group Foundation Honors Scholarship and Award Winners

During AGPA Connect 2020 in New York, the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health, the philanthropic arm of the AGPA, sponsored a luncheon honoring scholarship and award winners, as well as the generous contributors who make the program possible. A myriad of tuition, travel, and monetary awards, supporting the training of group therapists and the use of group in communities to effect change, were distributed through the Foundation. Those recognized included:



Francis Kaklauskas



Les Greene



Stephan Wolfert, Dawn Stern, and Alisha Ali, DE-CRUIT



Sean Mayberry, StrongMinds



Rudy Lucas, and Christine Schmidt, Co-Chairs, Eastern Group Psychotherapy Society Work Group for Racial Equity

- The Alonso Award for Excellence in Psychodynamic Group Therapy was given to Francis Kaklauskas, PsyD, CGP, FAGPA, and Les Greene, PhD, CGP, DLFAGPA, for their editorship of the *Core Principles of Group Psychotherapy: An Integrated Theory, Research, and Practice Training Manual*.
- DE-CRUIT of New York received the Aaron Stein Memorial Award for its creative use of groups in non-therapeutic settings to benefit the community, through their work using Shakespeare to help treat trauma (<https://www.decrUIT.org>).
- StrongMinds of Maplewood, New Jersey, received the Humanitarian Award for its work providing life-changing mental health services to impoverished African women, and specifically its use of talk therapy groups to treat women with depression (<https://strongminds.org>).
- Two Social Responsibility Awards were given; honoring an AGPA Member(s), Affiliate Society or affiliated organization for exceptional acts of service that benefit the community at large. Robert Klein, PhD, ABPP, CGP, DLFAGPA, was recognized for his lifelong dedication to meaningful causes that promote social justice, and responding to traumatic events by supporting caregivers and survivors. The Eastern Group Psychotherapy Society Work Group for Racial Equity was recognized for its efforts to respond to racism and help deepen understanding of racial dynamics that impact our lives, our groups, and our organizations.
- 176 individuals received scholarships to attend the meeting, supported through endowed scholarship funds and private donations.



Robert Klein and Karen Travis

Research Grants Awarded

The Group Foundation awarded two research grants in 2020 for clinical research reviews that demonstrate the effectiveness of group psychotherapy. Recipients were:

- A *Meta-analysis and Systemic Review of Psychoeducational Groups for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse*. Principal investigator is Tammi Dice, PhD, Assistant Dean, Old Dominion University, and Co-Investigators are Steven Myran, PhD, Associate Professor, Old Dominion University, and Alexis Wilkerson, MEd, Doctoral Student, Old Dominion University.

- *Efficacy of Group Psychotherapy for Reducing Non-Suicidal Self-Injury*. Principal investigator is Sara Rose Masland, PhD, Assistant Professor of Psychological Science, Pomona College, and Co-Investigators are Lois Choi-Kain, MD, EdD, Director of the Gunderson Personality Disorder Research Institute, McLean Hospital and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, and Ellen Finch, BA, Doctoral Student, Harvard University.

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