

Northeastern  
Society for  
Group  
Psychotherapy  
Annual  
Conference

Groups:  
Here and  
Now

April 27, 2024  
Lesley University

University Hall  
1815 Massachusetts Ave.  
Cambridge, MA

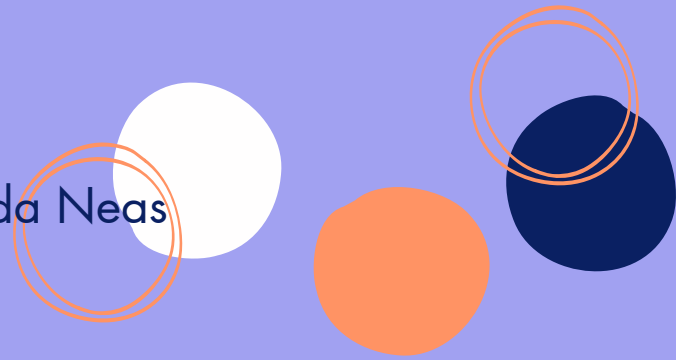


# Welcome Message from the Conference Committee

Welcome, both to those of you new to our conference and organization, and to our returning NSGP colleagues! We are very pleased to be able to offer this in-person conference focused on current ideas in group leadership and psychotherapy, hosted by Lesley University, who is graciously providing us a wonderful new space. NSGP is also very appreciative of the Northeastern Society for Group Psychotherapy Foundation, who is sponsoring our plenary speaker and demonstration group. Their support has allowed us to invite seasoned presenters from different parts of the country who will provide us with current and innovative ideas related to group leadership. They have also generously sponsored our evening reception, where grant recipients will be honored. Finally, the conference committee is grateful to the NSGP Board of Directors for their support.

The conference committee has worked hard to provide you with an engaging day of innovative learning, mentorship, community, and connection. We hope you will join us!

Your NSGP Conference Committee,  
Jenn DeSouza, Kim McNamara, Natasha Khoury, and Amanda Neas



# Schedule

**8:00-8:45 a.m.**

Registration/Breakfast

**9:00-10:30 a.m.**

Plenary

**10:30-10:45 a.m.**

Break

**10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.**

Workshops

**12:15-2:00 p.m.**

Break for Lunch  
on your own

**2:00-5:00 p.m.**

Demonstration Group

**5:00-7:00 p.m.**

Evening Reception

# Pricing

Member/Affiliate

Half Day: \$125

Full Day: \$200

Non-Member

Half Day: \$150

Full Day: \$250

Early Bird (by March 31)

Member/Affiliate Half Day: \$100

Member/Affiliate Full Day: \$175

Non-Member Half Day: \$125

Non-Member Full Day: \$200

Student/Lesley Rate

Half Day: \$50

Full Day: \$75

\*Half day programming consists of either  
The Plenary Speaker and a workshop OR  
the Demonstration Group

Click [here](#) to register

[Equity Rate](#) and [Awards](#) available

# Continuing Education

Half Day  
3 CE's

Full Day  
6 CE's

Social Workers  
(LCSW/LICSW), Mental  
Health Counselors  
(LMHC), and  
Psychologists are  
eligible to receive CE's

# Plenary

## Using the Here-and-Now to Heal the There-and-Then (Past) and Empower the Everywhere-and-Henceforth (Future)

Sense of urgency has been identified as a construct of supremacy and oppression. While here-and-now is an incredibly powerful dynamic in group therapy, the urgency of it can also be excluding communities that are marginalized. This talk will address how to balance using the here-and-now in a way that is illuminating, inclusive, and helps us facilitate corrective recapitulation of oppressive experiences. It will also help us focus on the instillation of hope, interpersonal learning, and socializing techniques toward a just and equitable future in and out of group.

### Aziza Belcher Platt, Ph.D.

is a licensed psychologist providing culturally-responsive individual and group psychotherapy, family therapy, and psychological assessment. She treats various concerns and specializes in racial-cultural issues, trauma, and grief. She was inspired to get into mental health to contribute to efforts to make therapy more acceptable, accessible, and affordable, particularly for marginalized communities. Social justice and liberation are an indelible part of her work. For patients, she aims to eliminate barriers, structural and otherwise, to seeking and receiving quality and culturally competent mental health care, especially for underrepresented and under-served communities.

As a practitioner, she strives to help the field and practitioners become increasingly more culturally aware and responsive. As a scientist, she focuses on health disparities and evidence-based research to inform culturally responsive clinical practice. As a consultant, she endeavors to help create culture shifts around cross-cultural engagement toward achieving equity. She hopes to integrate the skills from her previous career as a software developer into her psychological endeavors.

**Moderated by: Joseph Shay, Ph.D.**



## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

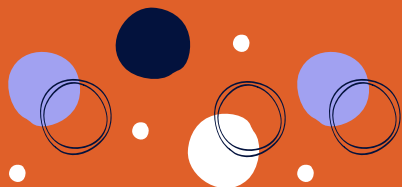
- Describe how the urgency of the here-and-now can impede inclusivity and impact communities that are marginalized
- Identify tools and resources to use the here-and-now in inclusive ways
- Discuss how the group dynamic of here-and-now can facilitate healing of past oppression and facilitate empathy, peace, justice, and a better future



# Demonstration Group

## From Sensation to Relation: Bringing our Bodies Into Group Process

The voice of the body is often subtle, not thought of, and particular to each individual. Our bodies are sentinels to our every behavior, always assessing for safety and providing a foundation for us to respond to all situations. Prioritizing the body allows for wholesome, authentic, and satisfying connections. Conversely, ignoring the body leads to dissociative, intellectual, or partial communication. Through didactic and experiential learning, this group experience will advocate for increased utilization of body-focused interventions in group process.



## Carlos Canales, PsyD, CGP, AGPA-F

is a bilingual/bicultural licensed clinical psychologist in full-time private practice in West Des Moines, Iowa. He is a Certified Group Psychotherapist, an American Group Psychotherapy Association-Fellow, and a Somatic Experiencing® Practitioner. Dr. Canales specializes in working with affect, the body, and relational dynamics. He has worked in multiple university counseling centers, hospitals, and community mental health centers. In 2011, he opened his private practice and in 2019 he founded Vida Psychotherapy, an outpatient group practice.

Dr. Canales has been involved in group work for over two decades. Currently, he is a group supervisor for the Eastern Group Psychotherapy Society (EGPS) and adjunct faculty at Adelphi University in New York. He facilitates three adult process groups for clients, four training groups for clinicians online, and two supervision/case consultation groups in person.

Dr. Canales is a clinical member of the Iowa Psychological Association, Iowa Mental Health Counselors Association, The Society for Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychology – Division 39, The Society of Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy – Division 49 of the American Psychological Association (APA), and the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA). In 2022, the Division 49 of the APA recognized him with the “Excellence in Group Practice” award for his outstanding contributions to the practice of group psychotherapy and applied group interventions. Dr. Canales has served on the board for the Northern California Group Psychotherapy Society (NCGPS), the Iowa Hispanic Educational Resources (HER), and the Iowa Psychological Foundation (IPF). Since 2021, he serves as co-chair of the Fellowship Committee at AGPA.



## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- List fundamental Somatic Experiencing principles and techniques (nervous system activation, resourcing, sensing, interoception, orienting, titration, pendulation, discharge, and the elements of experience: SIBAM)
- Describe the somatic experience of felt security, as an attachment precursor (sensing, feeling, and linking) in groups
- Experience and articulate moments of physiological change (proprioception) around states of intrapsychic and interpersonal safety and danger (neuroception) in groups
- Assess aliveness (connection/disconnection), deadness, and collapse as experienced somatically in group



# Workshop 1

## Which Group Really Needs a Therapist? Group Dynamics in Organizations and Milieu Settings

It has been said that in a therapeutic treatment relationship, the therapist's responsibility is to "get better first." This old adage sheds light on the ubiquitous pulls toward regression, projection, identification, and the development of difficult-to-untangle unconscious communication patterns that emerge in psychotherapeutic encounters. However, less has been said about these dynamics in team-based "groups" common in mental health agencies, and medical and hospital settings (and perhaps also in school settings, organizations, and community groups). Even among highly trained psychotherapists, team and organization dynamics are often examined only in superficial terms and with a conspicuous - perhaps telling - lack of analysis or curiosity.

This workshop will examine what we can learn about group processes in organizations and milieu settings from our experiences with small, therapeutic groups. We will examine such dynamics as isomorphy, introjection, splitting through a group lens, containment, and role theory. Case examples of challenging group processes and dynamics are presented, using group and psychodynamic lenses.

**Kurt White, LICSW, LADC, CGP, AGPA-F**, is the Vice President of Community Partnerships at the Brattleboro Retreat, a private non-profit psychiatric hospital founded in 1834. He is a clinical social worker by training, and he continues to practice with individuals, families, and groups in addition to his other duties. Kurt is an Adjunct Professor at Smith College School for Social Work with over 15 years of classroom teaching experience; he teaches on a variety of topics including foundational and advanced courses in group psychotherapy. He is a Fellow of the American Group Psychotherapy Association. In addition to group, his interests include psychodynamic theory and practice, anti-oppression practice in clinical and agency settings, co-occurring disorders, the history of mental health treatment, complex trauma, and the emerging field of psychedelic psychotherapy.

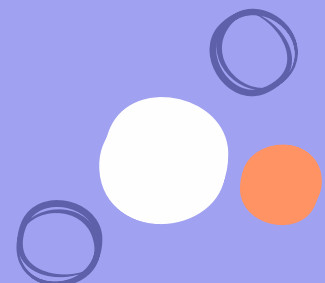
**Zachary Wigham, LICSW**, is employed through the Brattleboro Retreat and is embedded within a street outreach team operated by Groundworks Collaborative, a homelessness services organization serving Brattleboro, VT. He is a member of the American Group Psychotherapy Association. Zach holds prior experience in wilderness therapy, Veterans mental healthcare, inpatient group psychotherapy, and within an Assertive Community Treatment Team. His interests include psychoanalytic psychotherapy, group psychotherapy, and the practice of clinical supervision.



## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Describe common impacts of agency settings and staff-group membership on the mental health agency staff
- Describe a theory of staff interaction that can help reframe work in teams and milieu settings
- Explain three common group processes which can help illustrate challenges for staff and organizations



# Workshop 2

## Developing the Therapist Identity

This workshop is designed to encourage clinicians to take a deeper look at what is meant by a professional identity. It will feature a panel of three clinicians in different stages of their careers. Anaïs Lugo-Guercio will represent early-career clinicians, William Sharp mid-career, and Julie Anderson late-career. All three have applicable experience working with groups. The facilitators will begin with a review of relevant considerations around the development of identity, pulling from literature on the topic. The clinicians in the panel will present aspects of their development, including what contributed to professional growth, goals for future growth, and barriers they encountered. Participants are encouraged to join in the group discussion with questions and thoughts about their own career stage and professional identity.



**Jennifer DeSouza, LICSW, CGP**, is a certified group therapist with a private practice in Arlington, MA. She graduated with her Masters in Social Work in 1999. She has participated extensively in post-graduate training at The Center for Group Studies in New York City, The American Group Psychotherapy Association, The Northeastern Society for Group Psychotherapy, and completed the one-year training program in psychoanalysis at the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute. In her practice, she sees individuals and groups with a focus on developmental trauma and attachment. Jennifer is actively involved in the group therapy community; she is the former Director of the Center for Group Psychotherapy at MGH, former President of the Northeastern Society for Group Psychotherapy, and she currently sits on the International Board for the Certification Board of Group Psychotherapists.

**Amanda Neas, LICSW**, works in private practice in the Greater Boston area seeing adolescents, adults, and couples. She graduated with her Masters in Social Work from Salem State University in 2013 and worked in community agencies, schools, and clinics before transitioning full-time into private practice in 2017. She completed a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy at the Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis in 2022 and was then accepted as a candidate in the Doctor of Psychoanalysis Program. Amanda joined NSGP in 2021 as part of the Conference Committee and currently serves on multiple committees as well as the Board of Directors. She is enthusiastic about group work and is currently training at The Center for Group Studies in New York, as well as co-leading an ongoing process group with a colleague.



## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Identify why developing a professional identity is important for clinical practice
- Identify four ways to support the growth of professional identity
- Identify personal beliefs and values and how these impact clinical processes
- Identify areas for continued growth and potential resources to develop these skills

# Workshop 3

## Is the "Here and Now" *Really* Here and Now?

Working in the "here and now" is practically axiomatic in any sort of interpersonal group therapy, but what exactly do we mean by "here" and "now"? This workshop intends to critically examine the assumptions that underlie conventional understandings of "here and now," in order to highlight some of the complicated choices that clinicians face in trying to keep the discussion "in the room." For example, climate change is undeniably occurring both "here" and "now," but that does not readily fit with the "here and now" of a traditional process group. These assumptions, and their inherent limitations, have major implications for issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as for the general strategies clinicians may use in facilitating groups. The workshop will provide a combination of didactic discussion, case examples, and use of video clips to encourage participants to think critically about what it means to be "in the here and now."



**Joseph Shay, Ph.D.**, is a psychologist in private practice in Cambridge. He is on the staff of the joint McLean/Massachusetts General Hospital training program, and has an appointment in the Department of Psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School. He is on the faculty of NSGP and PCFINE and is Co-Chair of the AGPA Institute Committee. He has co-edited *Odysseys in Psychotherapy and Complex Dilemmas in Group Therapy* and has co-authored *Psychodynamic Group Psychotherapy* (4th and 5th editions). He has also published widely in the fields of couple therapy and group therapy. He serves on the editorial board of the *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*. He has been recognized as a Fellow of the American Group Psychotherapy Association, and was twice awarded the Psychotherapy Supervision Award from the MGH/McLean residents in Adult Psychiatry.

**Jeff Brand, PsyD**, is a staff psychologist at The Brookline Center for Community Mental Health and has a private practice in Jamaica Plain, MA. At the Brookline Center, he directs the adult group therapy program, including supervision, teaching, and program development. In his private practice, he sees adults in individual, couples, and group therapy. He completed his PsyD at Rutgers University and did his internship at the Cambridge Health Alliance. He has written about trauma and published several articles about group therapy. He was previously on the board of directors for the Northeastern Society for Group Psychotherapy and is currently on the board of directors for the NSGP Foundation. He enjoys being outside.



## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Identify skills for applying "here and now" interventions
- Identify skills to critically evaluate when to deviate from a "here and now" focus
- Develop the ability to balance concerns for a contemporaneous, "here and now" focus with concerns for diversity, equity, and inclusion



# Workshop 4

## Deepen Your Clinical Insight Through Creative Writing Exercises

This workshop will explore an underutilized avenue to insight in group work: writing. For group leaders, guided writing exercises can promote deeper learning and understanding of ourselves and our group members. Group members can use the page as a space to observe and express their emotions, as well as connect with their unconscious needs and desires. In this experiential workshop, participants will learn about how writing can build group cohesion and increase insight about ourselves and our clinical work. Participants will be guided through a progressive series of writing exercises. No writing experience needed!

**Oona Metz, LICSW, CGP, AGPA-F**, is a psychotherapist and writer. Oona has been a therapist for 30 years and more recently discovered the power and joy of writing. She has published articles in The Psychotherapy Networker, Cognoscenti/WBUR, Commonwealth Magazine and the Los Angeles Review. She sees individuals and leads four weekly groups in her private practice offices in Brookline and Arlington.



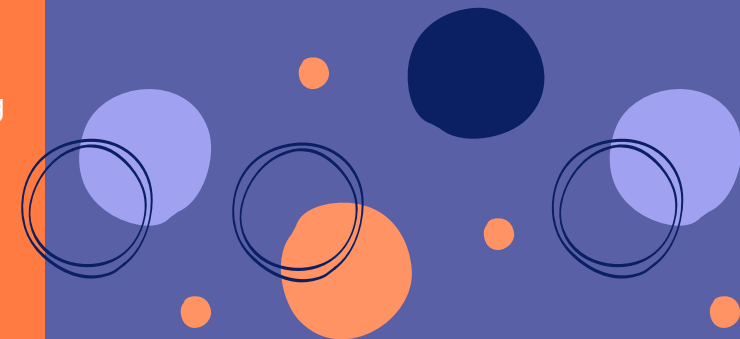
**Sarah Stone, MFA, LICSW**, is a therapist in private practice who enjoys helping people connect with the healing power of writing. Her poetry, translations, and criticism have been published in literary journals including Jacket, Mandorla, and Sentence. She first became interested in group dynamics through teaching poetry writing workshops, and has taught literature, creative writing, and basic book-making skills to people aged 17-82 at Ivy League universities, Brookline Adult and Continuing Education, and the Mass Poetry Festival.



## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Demonstrate increased insight into different emotional states of themselves and others
- Review writing exercises that can be used in group settings
- Name three benefits of the co-leadership therapy model



# Workshop 5

## Exploring Intrasubjective Landscapes

Group therapy typically focuses on the interpersonal and the inter-subjective. In this workshop, the focus will be primarily intra-subjective. Freud once said, "The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego," and this workshop is designed to explore and expand upon this concept. Bodily ego means an ego that arises from our sensory perception, also known as the embodied experience. Participants will be encouraged to examine their inner landscape, exploring the inner terrain of the body, mind, and unconscious through a guided body scan that connects them to the here and now. One major task of group therapy is to help our patients develop the language to describe their inner struggles. To most effectively support this task, we as clinicians must first acquire these skills.

This workshop will offer didactic learning about the concept of the intra-subjective, including what it means to experience a state of mind in the "here and now." The presenters will lead a mindfulness practice of inner landscape exploration, followed by an exercise of creative expression that can be utilized with their groups. The workshop will end with a group discussion and a question-and-answer period with the leaders.

**Scott Rutan, Ph.D.**, is a past president of both NSGP and AGPA, as well as a Distinguished Fellow of AGPA and Lifetime Achievement Awardee of NSGP. He founded the Center for Group Psychotherapy at MGH. He is a well-traveled lecturer, both here and abroad (most recently teaching a group of Iranian psychotherapists). Dr. Rutan has authored and co-authored over 50 articles and several books.



**Samantha Dorian, MDiv, MA**, is a candidate in the clinical doctoral program at the Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis. She works with inpatient populations who suffer from experiences of schizophrenia. She holds a Master of Divinity in Religion and Culture, is a visual artist, and teaches mediation in the Theravāda tradition, a Vipassanā practice that seeks insight into the "true nature of reality." Sam is also in the process of founding the organization Sculpt.Your.Mind, which aims to create safe spaces for people seeking alternative ways to explore and know their own minds.



## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Utilize a particular exercise to engage with their body's "here and now"
- Define their inner landscape and gain a better understanding of "self" exploration for their clinical practice
- Develop techniques that enhance the clinician's ability to facilitate the patient's description of their inner landscape

# Conference Committee

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Kim McNamara, LICSW

## Committee

Natasha Khoury, LMHC  
Amanda Neas, LICSW

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