



the newsletter

# NSGP

Northeastern Society for Group Psychotherapy

Volume XXXVI, Number 2

Fall 2015

## Letter from the President



NSGP has something great to offer and we want you to take advantage of it. Envision an exciting environment of learning, sharing, caring, growth and, dare I say, love. That's

NSGP and we are on a mission to draw you in! As you enjoy this Fall newsletter, picture where you belong because while we need you, conversely you need us!

Some of my early training was in the Self-In-Relation model developed by the women of the Stone Center led by Jean Baker Miller who wrote *Toward a New Psychology of Women*. I'm dating myself by referring to it as the Self-In-Relation model because it's not even called that any more. Still, I find that the tenets of this model serve me well in my work to this day and in my thinking about what makes a group healthy and productive. According to this model, the first step to creating a healthy relationship is engagement. This is an intentional "being with," an effortful giving of your time and attention to another person. It's the first essential step to building a healthy connection.

Joe DeAngelis spoke to the power of engagement on our NSGP listserv in June: "Several years ago, Barbara Keezell asked me if I would join the Registration Committee. I immediately told her no, that I didn't have time. And then I said, 'but tell me about what it entails.' After she spoke for a bit and emphasized that most of the work happens just around the conference (wink, wink), I joined. It was one of the best 'mistakes' I've made. I know that I echo many others when I say that being involved on a NSGP committee has been one of the most enriching experiences of my life. I wouldn't trade it for the world. I say this to those who have never been on one of our many committees. Volunteer for something. Let it change you."

Joe's point is powerful. Joining NSGP and joining a committee will give you an opportunity to meet new people, function with a purpose in the organization (which, trust me, reduces social anxiety) and put you in the Fast Lane to connection and belonging. Go online and look at the different committees. NSGP has 13 active committees: see which one you would like to engage with!

In addition to being a mainstay on the Registration sub-committee of the Conference Committee, Joe DeAngelis was the co-chair along with Pamela Enders of the Publicity and Marketing Committee. They each gave an immeasurable amount of time, energy and attention to the development of a new website along with launching the Publicity and Marketing Committee. As they end their terms as co-chairs, I'm grateful that they have agreed to remain on the committee to share their skills, expertise and generally delightful and lovely selves within the new committee constellation.

Would you like to give the gift of NSGP to someone? You may have noticed a new logo that corresponds to our Share the Connection campaign. Through our Share the Connection campaign you can give someone a year membership for only \$75. Sponsor someone today. It will help get them connected to this remarkable and rich organization. Remember to encourage students to become members too. A Student rate is only \$25!

Get connected and stay connected, dear members! Many of you who are reading this are indeed longtime members of NSGP. However, since you haven't logged in to our website [www.nsgp.com](http://www.nsgp.com) to sign in and renew your membership, we are losing you from our Membership rolls. Getting connected to the NSGP community through the website is vital to you and to us. I appreciate that the ever-increasing move to do the business of this society online has freaked many of you out! But, we want you IN. Please renew your membership today.

Please call us for help to navigate the website if you need it. We don't want to lose you. We're happy to help. You can feel free to call 617-661-5310, email me at [deboracarmichael@verizon.net](mailto:deboracarmichael@verizon.net), email Jenn DeSouza at [smithsilver@yahoo.com](mailto:smithsilver@yahoo.com), the Chair of the Membership Committee or call the office 617-431-6747. We will help you get connected!

Truly, we are having fun these days in NSGP. There is much to do and much to gain from joining with others to expand the mission of our society. I look forward to telling your story in future newsletters.

So, Get connected, Stay connected, Share the Connection!!

Warmly,

Debora Carmichael PhD, CGP  
President, NSGP

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## NSGP Newsletter Committee

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Photography	Joseph Shay, PhD, CGP, FAGPA From the "Cluster Site" Collective—thank you!!
Design	White Design designer_solution@comcast.net

The goals of this newsletter are two-fold:

- To promote the objectives of the Northeastern Society for Group Psychotherapy, an affiliate of the American Group Psychotherapy Association.
- To be a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among members.

## NSGP Executive Board

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Breakfast Club	Corrina Maslanka, BA
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Continuing Education	Julie Anderson, PhD, CGP Debora Carmichael, PhD, CGP
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Newsletter	Jennifer McLain, MD, CGP Kurt L. White, LICSW, LADC, CGP
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Research Committee	Kurt L. White, LICSW, LADC, CGP
Training Program	Joel Krieg, LICSW, CGP Jennifer McLain, MD, CGP

## NSGP Office (617) 431-6747

Office Administrator	Lisa Portscher Messages can be left at the office anytime, and will be answered daily. Monday-Friday 9 am to 5 pm
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## Letter from the Editor

Sometimes it's good to get out of your comfort zone. Familiarity can bring security, ease and a sense of mastery, but in order to grow, I believe we have to challenge ourselves at times, stretch at our growth edges and make room for new perspectives and unexpected discoveries. Isn't that what we so often ask our patients in groups to try? I had the opportunity to put this into practice over Labor Day as I attended the 19th International Congress for Group Psychotherapy in Rovinj, Croatia. Hosted by the IAGP (International Association of Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes), this triennial meeting of group therapists from all over the world offered a chance to work with and learn from clinicians whose practices look very different from mine. The congress catalog is full of workshops inviting attendees to participate in psychodrama, Lacanian theory, Group Analytic theory and a daily "Social Dreaming Matrix," along with a sprinkling of more familiar names from the United States. When choosing what to attend, I initially found myself drawn to titles and leaders whose work I already knew: Walter Stone, Joseph Acosta, and Andrew Eig all led what I'm sure were excellent sessions. As I reflected on my first impulses, I wondered about my desire to travel 4,000 miles only to sit in rooms with faces I recognized.

So I stretched. I signed up for a daily small psychodrama experience group run by an Israeli leader, Iafi Shpirer. I attended a Psychodrama section of the Large Group and made an appearance at the morning Social Dreaming Matrix to share recent dreams and search for ways they informed the larger conference and societal themes through the Social Unconscious. I tried to make space for the different sounds/languages/idioms and varied viewpoints around me in large group meetings. And I learned some more about myself, ways I can feel comfortable and uncomfortable and why I appreciate and practice from the particular theoretical orientation that I do.

It wasn't always easy—the language barriers were sometimes frustrating, and the differences in culture led to feelings of alienation and stereotyping on multiple occasions. Yet we also found ways to connect and communicate that highlighted

the common human feelings and experiences that can be recognized when expressed in any language or culture: anger, the pain of loss and rejection, and joy in freedom of expression. Psychodrama, at least from what I observed in the small sampling of it that I experienced, involves a significant amount of action and re-enacting. This was in stark contrast to the familiar directive of striving to "put all of your thoughts and feelings into words, not actions." In my ongoing small group we went through several "vignettes" where a member (the protagonist) presented a struggle and chose a few others in the group to act this out, facilitated by the leader, in ways which involved role-playing and exchanging of roles in order to embody and capture both the spoken and unspoken essences of the issue. It was disorienting to observe and feel so much while only a few group members were designated to verbalize in specific ways. What it added, and what I will metabolize and take back to my own practice, is the value in viscerally experiencing something from different viewpoints, even if that something is one's own internal conflict. There was reflective power in hearing another member verbalize from the point of view of "the protagonist's tears" or "the door he cannot walk through yet" and seeing it resonate with the original presenter of the struggle in a new way.

Stretching beyond your comfort zone need not entail flying over the Atlantic. For some, it's speaking up in your first NSGP conference experience group or joining a new committee. For others, it's not speaking up, but listening in a different way. It's presenting, saying hello to someone new at lunch, asking a question you might not have asked before. It's also cooking a new dish, watching that debate with an open mind or taking a new step in your personal or professional life. Each conscious choice to expand our experience brings the benefits of exploration and learning. For me, it also renewed the appreciation of coming home.

**Jennifer McLain, MD, CGP**

Co-Editor Newsletter

Co-Editors Jenn and Kurt  
will alternate the Letter from the  
Editor in this space.

## Something to Say??

Next time, see your words here.

Write an email sharing your thoughts or opinions with the Editors and your letter may be published in full or part in the Spring 2016 Newsletter. Please send submissions to:

[newsletter@nsgp.com](mailto:newsletter@nsgp.com).

*Note: letters not edited except for space.*

## CLASSIFIEDS

**Psychotherapy Group for Addictions/ Dual-Diagnosis**—Dynamic, process group for men and women to support recovery and improve relationships. Tuesdays in Braintree. **Contact John Grillo, LICSW, 857-234-8059.**

**Boston 2 Offices in suite:** By day & Full time. Near Copley/T. 15x25, Quiet. Big windows, waiting room, staff room, 2 baths, one furnished. **Steve Cadwell, Ph.D. 617-482-2286 [steve@steve-cadwell.com](mailto:steve@steve-cadwell.com)**

## The NSGP Conference Committee is recruiting

Some wonderful volunteering opportunities are available in the conference sub-committees of our cherished event. We welcome all those who would like to contribute to some aspect of the conference to contact either **Ginger Reiber** at [vdreiber@verizon.net](mailto:vdreiber@verizon.net), or **Lucy Jordan** at [LJORDAN3@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:LJORDAN3@mgh.harvard.edu)



# Breakfast Club

## 2015 - 2016 Calendar



**THE RATIONAL MIND & THE ANIMAL BODY: YOGA IN PSYCHOTHERAPY**

Presented by **Douglas C. Baker, LICSW, RYT**

Hosted by Julie Anderson

**SUNDAY  
9/20/15  
11-1:30**

**GROUP WORK TRAINING IN GRADUATE PROGRAMS: HOW ARE OUR STUDENTS LEARNING ABOUT GROUP WORK?**

Presented by **Kurt White, LICSW, LADC, CGP**

Hosted by Suzanne Brennan Nathan

**SUNDAY  
10/25/15  
11-1:30**

**HEALING FROM CHILDHOOD TRAUMA IN A GROUP: A STRUCTURED, 3-YEAR, INTEGRATIVE MODEL**

Presented by **Amanda Curtain, LICSW**

Hosted by Geri & Scott Reinhardt

**SUNDAY  
12/06/15  
11-1:30**

**CULTIVATING THE CURATIVE POWER OF GRATITUDE & FORGIVENESS IN GROUPS**

Presented by **Bob Weber, PhD, CGP, LFAGPA**

Hosted by Deb Filiurini

**SUNDAY  
1/10/16  
11-1:30**

**THE UNCONSCIOUS DANCE: CO-LEADING A PSYCHOTHERAPY GROUP**

Presented by **Julie Anderson, PhD, CGP**

& **Anie Cohen, PhD, CGP, FAGPA**

Hosted by Jim Leone

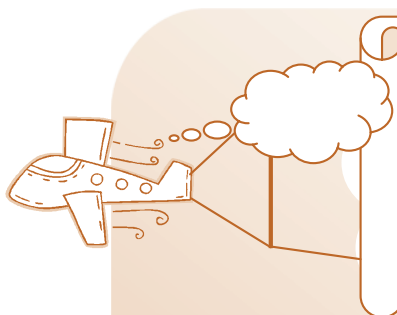
**SUNDAY  
3/13/16  
11-1:30**

**MINDFULNESS-BASED COGNITIVE THERAPY GROUPS**

Presented by **Judith Prebluda, MA, LMHC**

Hosted by Walker & Joyce Shields

**SUNDAY  
4/10/16  
11-1:30**



## Save the DATE!

### NSGP Annual Conference

### June 10-12, 2016



For conference updates, check the Conference Blog  
<http://nsgpconference.blogspot.com>



## Lost and Found in a Large Group

Dasha Tcherniakovskaia, MA

I was awaiting my second NSGP conference with a mixture of intellectual excitement, yearning for more connections, and trepidation about the emotional toll my group participation took on me last year. I was determined to take my therapist's hat off and stop taking care of others' feelings at the expense of paying attention to my own, which was a valuable lesson I learned my first time around. After being emotionally drained and elated for a few days after

last year's conference, I was looking forward to immersing myself into the small group experience again.

I came to the Saturday workshop on "Becoming Comfortable with Uncomfortable Feelings" expecting a small, intimate group. Walking into a room with about 40 empty chairs made me retreat into a cocoon of numbness, my go-to way of dealing with unpleasant emotions prematurely. A part of me was disappointed there weren't only 10 spots in the workshop, and a part of me was relieved at the possibility of being lost (and not having to do the work). As others trickled in and expressed their surprise at the impressive size of the circle of chairs, I melted a little into the soothing not-being-alone-in-my-discomfort sense of belonging even before all the seats were taken by those who were ready (or ambivalent) to face their uncomfortable feelings.

Ronnie Levine, PhD, ABPP, FAGPA, CGP, expertly connected the group within the first hour. She weaved connections by asking questions about feelings, what we imagined was happening with others, and by taking charge in a warm, accepting, and hilarious way. Ronnie played a number of different roles that connected the large group from the start: Ronnie the witty comedian that had the group roaring with laughter and bonding through the shared mirth; Ronnie the expert at providing an opportunity and space to feel, observe and discuss the feelings; and Ronnie the kind and determined facilitator who called on people and evoked in me the ambivalence of wanting to be asked and being terrified of getting put on the spot.

I was loving every second of it but was still fearful of speaking up. As the morning went on, Ronnie gradually released the reins of directive facilitation. She warmly handed them over to the group, which she had just seamlessly connected through humor and direct questions. Ronnie had a thoughtful and powerful way of expressing herself that instantly drew me in, and held a parallel conversation with her hands that only enhanced her words. I was hooked.

Not everyone was as enthralled by Ronnie's style as I was. I was growing increasingly protective of her when I perceived any pushback against her directive leadership. She was the perfect facilitator for what I needed that morning. I was wrestling with my urge to protect her, my need to stop taking care of others' feelings, my desire to be myself without any professional roles attached to the experience, and my need to stay safe in my cocoon. I wasn't called on during the early part of the workshop, so I remained quiet.

By the time I decided to talk, the veterans of the organization were determined to hear the voices of the silent participants. When my urge to speak overwhelmed all of the other conflicting emotions, the group cheered as I, the first volunteer of the silent clique, made myself vulnerable and raised my hand. I shared what was happening within me in response to the group's feedback about Ronnie's leadership.

All eyes were on me, and I felt myself found and seen. I was seen for me. In that moment I recognized how different it is to have all of my group clients' eyes on me but never be truly seen by them. The uncomfortable vulnerability I was experiencing became the prerequisite for joining the circle before I was able to feel accepted by and connected to the other participants.

The experience of feeling found in a large group was sealed when one of the group members timidly shared a story and someone else said, "I am glad you spoke up." It wasn't a reference to the content, but to the act of sharing and asking for



Guy Croteau, Michael Selva  
& Joe DeAngelis



Suzanne Cohen & Tracy MacNab



Marc Bolduc, Greg Chilenski  
& Scott Reinhardt



Marilyn Levitt & Ann Koplrow



Suzanne Brennan-Nathan, Naomi Dogan,  
Bojun Hu & Lee Kassan



Malika Robichaud, Jacqueline Kinley,  
Joe Shay & Sandra Reynolds



Meredith Goldsmith, John Grillo  
& Shunda McGahee

an opportunity to belong. I felt moved and found again.

This experience emphasized the power of group therapy and the process of becoming comfortable with uncomfortable feelings. Ronnie's expert leadership in connecting the group and letting each member deal with uncomfortable feelings within the safe space we had all created made me feel found in that big but intimate group.



## On Finding a Professional Home

**Caleb Englander, LICSW**

**O**n the final day of this year's annual conference, Joel Krieg asked me if I would write something for the newsletter about what it's like to be a second year conference attendee and a second year member of NSGP. This request was inspired by a conversation we had had earlier in the conference when I remarked to him how incredible it was that only a year had passed since my first exposure to NSGP, when I had walked into the conference knowing relatively no one. And now, here in year two, I was on the site committee, helping to set-up the AV equipment, having lunch and meaningful conversations with people whom I knew, and feeling, in a certain way, that I had found a professional home. How much can happen in a year!

So, when Joel asked me if I'd write something, initially I thought I'd write about how welcoming and warm and personal NSGP is, and how it feels so easy to be part of the organization. Of course, I put in my own effort as well: I participated in the NSGP training program, the experiential training group, and attended AGPA in San Francisco this past year. All of these experiences paved the way for strengthening ties to individual members and the organization as a whole, and left me with a feeling of

closeness and happiness over the course of the conference.

However, as I sat with and reflected on this deepening connection and intimacy with NSGP over the past year, I realized that I have also felt and continue to feel ambivalence about this greater involvement. As we know, fears emerge when people join and deepen their experience in a group. For me, I wonder what I'm missing out on by becoming more involved at NSGP. Indeed, there are other organizations, other interests, other aspects of myself that inevitably take a back seat. There are limits to how much time and how many resources we have and to how many places we can be; creating more space for NSGP means that other opportunities are lost.

There is another contributing factor to my ambivalence about deepening involvement in NSGP. For many years, my father, Ted Englander, was an active member of this organization. As I've become fond of saying, sometimes the pillow doesn't fall far from the couch. But I can assure you that that pillow has some mixed feelings about being so close to the couch! On the one hand, it's nice to be part of a place where some of the senior

members and supervisors recognize my name and know my family. There is a warmth and familiarity to that experience that makes it easy to feel "at home." It's also a nice way for me to bond and feel close to my father. Though he has not been an active member for years now, we can still swap stories about experiential groups, workshops, and so forth.

But then, there's the other hand. I think sometimes: "shouldn't I be more differentiated?" I want to carve my own path. I want to see myself and define myself as a distinct other, a separate

*(continued on page 6)*



**Jeff Hudson, Chip Bradish  
& Theresa Cohen**



**Jenn DeSouza, Ann-Keren Kantor  
& William Sharp**



**Sharan Schwartzberg & Ronnie Levine**



**Libby Shapiro, Scott Reinhardt  
& Ginger Reiber**



**Martina Windler & Amy Matias**



**Adam Silk, Eleanor Counselman,  
Marsha Vannicelli, Libby Shapiro,  
Joyce Collier & Suzanne Cohen**



**Richard Kaufman, Charlie Glazier  
& Joel Friedman**



**Judy Ullman, Paul Crowley  
& Sasha Watkins**



# New Research Committee at NSGP

Kurt White, LICSW, LADC, CGP

**A**s announced at the NSGP business meeting in June, the NSGP board has approved the creation of an ad-hoc Research Committee, naming myself as a co-chair tasked with organizing the work of this group. This is an exciting opportunity for NSGP to become more involved with a coordinated and formal study of the work that drives us.

The specific charge of this committee is to explore the possibility of NSGP engaging in research and to establish a relationship with a research partner, someone who can be an advisor and co-collaborator assisting with matters such as seeking IRB approval for projects, planning research projects, etc.

I am pleased to report that we have found such a partner in the person of Nnamdi Pole, a clinical and research psychologist at Smith College. Dr. Pole is a Professor of Psychology at Smith College and a licensed clinical psychologist. He is also an Adjunct Professor in the Smith College School for Social Work, where he annually co-teaches a course on Racism in The United States. He was trained in psychotherapy process research at the University of California, Berkeley. He completed his predoctoral internship at the San Francisco VA Medical Center where he first received training in group psychotherapy. His current research interests are focused on posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and ethnic minority mental health. He spent six years as an Associate Editor of *Psychological Bulletin* and is currently an Associate Editor of the *APA Handbook of Clinical Psychology* in which he is the lead author of the chapter on Stress and Trauma Disorders. Dr. Pole is someone with whom I am also involved in other (non-NSGP) collaborations, and I feel strongly that NSGP is lucky to have him as a collaborator for this project.

I am also pleased to welcome Maya Reddy to this work, who is joining the new committee as a co-chair. Although new to NSGP, she is not new to research, and has an impressive background and strong enthusiasm for this project.

You may be wondering: what research can NSGP do? After all, we are a loosely (though often intimately) affiliated aggregation of clinicians, in practice all around the Boston area and beyond, in settings from private and group practices to college counseling centers to hospitals and clinics. Our theoretical approaches are often different from one another, as are our ways of practicing. NSGP members are also a very busy group and you may wonder how research could possibly fit in with members' busy

schedules. I believe strongly that there is time and space for engagement in research in our lives as clinicians, and that doing so can help to enhance the visibility and reputation of the group psychotherapy community. I also believe that if done right, research does not have to be burdensome: the committee can find ways to do some of the "heavy lifting" so that the clinician in you can become a "clinician-researcher!"

The next step that you will see is an electronic survey that aims to determine which kinds of research questions may be of particular interest to NSGP members, and what people may be most motivated to pursue. Please be on the lookout this Fall for a link to such a survey! I am asking for your participation in this survey; this will help to give the committee an understanding of members' specific interests. This survey is anonymous and is not, itself, a research survey; it also does not obligate you to any future involvement or participation.

As an organization, we have several choices about what kind(s) of research we might engage in. Here are a few examples of the possibilities to help stimulate your thoughts and interests in this area. One approach would be to study, through structured surveys or qualitative interviews, how group psychotherapists think about and approach their work. In this example, NSGP members could volunteer to participate as research subjects; much can be learned by studying *clinicians* who do group work.

Another approach could be to design a study that NSGP members could offer their *clients* the ability to participate in, that could look at questions such as what brought them to group therapy, what has been most helpful to them about engaging in group therapy, and to what extent various areas of their lives have changed since engaging in group work. This kind of approach is low-impact (clients might report on questions through a web-based survey, for example) but has the potential to gather robust data about outcomes, client characteristics, expectations, and other areas of inquiry.

A third approach might involve sampling client input about their experiences in group psychotherapy over time. This approach could also investigate such sticky issues as client dropout, for example, and which areas of client satisfaction change *over time* in individuals (not just populations).

I want to emphasize that a process of Institutional Review Board approval is needed for all human subject research,

and would be obtained before embarking on any research project. Client informed consent to engage in the research process is an essential ethical cornerstone of this work.

Please also consider this to be a call to action for any members interested in being more directly involved in this committee and in the research itself. Feel free to contact me at [kurtlorenc@gmail.com](mailto:kurtlorenc@gmail.com) for more information or to get more involved, and stay tuned for more information to come via email soon!



## On Finding a Professional Home (continued from page 5)

being. But this becomes harder to see and feel that when our paths, in their outward and material form, look so much alike. I want to be both seen and to see myself as a separate, distinct other, and yet I also want to hold on to the bonds that shared experiences and familiarity provide.

As our theories and experiences tell us, the tension between feeling similar to others and yet also different from others are at the very root of joining and being in a group. While it may be unique in my case that an actual parent figure is part of the group experience (rather than transference stand-ins, say), I think the fears about joining and belonging to a group can be seen in group experiences more generally. I feel grateful that NSGP encourages the discussion, and opens the space, for navigating these tensions and talking about one's fears, which ultimately, makes it even more of a place that I want to belong.

I want to end with an image that Sally Henry, the discussant at the annual conference's Sunday Demo Group, shared and which I think bears repeating. As I recall, she likened the group process to a funnel. I picture rice grains gathered together in a funnel: they start at the top, perhaps widely apart, but become closer and closer as they move down, at the hands of a mysterious force, transitioning to an unknown future.



## Two Hours with Two Lawyers

Amy Matias, PhD, LICSW

In late April the Practice Development Committee hosted "Two Hours with Two Lawyers" at the beautiful Brookline Center. In attendance were twenty-six members and friends of NSGP. A thorough presentation was graciously prepared by Nancy Puleo and Jennifer Yelen of Posternak, Blankstein & Lund. They represent mental health professionals in disciplinary matters before state licensing boards and advise practitioners regarding legal, ethical, and risk management issues. Nancy and Jennifer also co-author the "Ask our Attorney" column for the National Association of Social Workers-Massachusetts Chapter's FOCUS. Their presentation was entitled "Ten Tips to Protect your Practice" and was based on a survey of questions our community would like addressed. Below is a synopsis of the highlights of their presentation.

**Subpoenas and Court Orders:** A subpoena is a lawyer's *assertion* that she/he is entitled to the requested information. In contrast, a court order indicates that the lawyer is in fact entitled to it. This makes a difference in terms of how you respond to each request. The important thing to remember about a subpoena is that although you *must* respond to it, it does not, in itself, authorize or require you

to reveal a client's confidential and privileged communications. It is the attorney's responsibility to seek a court determination on this. If this determination is made, you must to obtain written consent before you communicate with the attorney, produce client files or testify. In contrast, there is no legal basis on which to refuse responding to a court order.

**Records:** Nancy and Jennifer reminded us that failure to keep competent, legible client records could result in action being taken against your license or by a third-party payor following an audit. In such cases, poor records can result in a minor complaint mushrooming into something more serious. To meet requirements for content they recommended keeping SOAP notes (Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan) including more details, not less.

**Letter Writing:** The short answer to the question "Should I write a letter for my client?" was a resounding "NO!" The most common situation in which a letter is requested is in a dispute with someone else, such as a custody hearing. Nancy and Jennifer pointed out that once you write a letter you become involved in someone else's dispute and therefore become a target for the other side. If you do decide to write a letter, they recommend stating what the client

reported to you vs. giving an opinion. The reason is that we only know what our clients tell us. There is no way to know the truth in any given situation. Of course, obtain written consent before disclosing mental health information about a client.

**Continuing Education:** CEUs are assessed when a complaint is filed with a board against a licensee or in connection with a random audit. Not having certificates of completion for continuing education units can result in discipline against your license. Nancy and Jennifer noted that a surprisingly large number of licensees do not complete the appropriate continuing education credits. They suggested planning continuing education programs when you renew your license to prevent this from happening.

**Electronic Communication:** Nancy and Jennifer recommend that we do not text or email clients. If you do email a client, restrict the content of the email to scheduling matters. They pointed out the issue of professional boundaries, and that by using email it is easy for either the therapist or the client to slip into a more casual voice using these forms of electronic communication. In addition, what is not said in person can be misinterpreted by clients in ways that increase risk for the therapist. One final

(continued on page 13)

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### Practice Development Committee ...where your practice matters.

Each year, the NSGP Practice Development Committee offers ongoing, informal gatherings in order to educate our community of clinicians and to provide up to date information on all things that effect our practice. Our short format programs are cost effective don't interfere with work or play. They are a great way to connect with other clinicians and learn from the local experts. Our events are open to NSGP members and NSGP non-members. We encourage all who are interested in growing a healthy and successful practice to attend. We look forward to seeing you at our next event.

#### *"What You Need to Know About the ICD 10 and DSM 5 Changes"*

with Erica Kirsners, LICSW at The Brookline Center  
9/27/15 4pm to 6pm

#### *"Saving Now, Saving Later: Tax and Retirement Tips for Your Private Practice"*

with John Schachter and Johanna Schulman at Facing Cancer  
Together in Newton 11/14/15 10am to 12pm

Events to look forward to in 2016

*"Talking about Race/Racism"* with Special Guests

*"Website 101"* with Pam Enders

*"Money Matters in Psychotherapy"* with Ellen Ziskind  
and Bet McArthur

### Does the thought of running a group intimidate you?

- Would you like to brush up on the basics?
- Deepen fundamentals?
- Build your confidence as a group leader?

### We might have just what you need.

Whether groups make you nervous,  
curious, excited or confused, the

## NSGP Training Program

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Weekend didactics and experiential components  
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# ANalyZE This

This question-and-answer column appears regularly in the Newsletter and addresses complex dilemmas in group therapy. Featured are case vignettes presented by NSGP members, with responses by senior clinicians. If you have a question you would like considered for this column, please submit a case vignette of 400 words or less to Amy Matias, PhD, LICSW through the NSGP office, or via email to [newsletter@nsgp.com](mailto:newsletter@nsgp.com). (Please remember to preserve the confidentiality of any group members described.)

*I have a few questions about transitioning a short term, trauma skills group into an ongoing process group that supports the learning members have acquired. My questions concern: establishing safety while shifting towards a new treatment frame, new group contracting, facilitating a different level of member engagement and disclosure, and potentially adding new members.*

*Over the last five years I have been running time-limited Mindfulness-based skills groups for women healing from trauma. Nearing the end of each short-term group, members inquired about the potential of continuing on a weekly basis. They hope to maintain a supportive community, have opportunities to practice skills and most importantly, communicate more about their histories. Once a group has settled into learning and begins to relate to one another, the desire to stay connected with others that understand their experience emerges. I've had the idea of 'someday' offering a long-term group, yet I hadn't taken the time to fully consider changes in the treatment frame and how it would effect the group members' experience until now.*

*Currently, each member agrees the goal of the group is to develop skills and not to process trauma. Many are relieved to know they will not be discussing their histories. When reviewing the contract, I explain why sharing too much information can be triggering to others. Although we process their thoughts and feelings around this issue and explore ways in which they can talk about themselves while minimizing this, it continues to be a source of anxiety in the group. At times, it has limited participation and access to gaining support. I would like some suggestions on how one would go about establishing new boundaries that*

*encourage disclosure and ensure safety and containment. Are there other aspects of contracting for safety that I should be considering in making this shift?*

*I'm also curious about how to facilitate and support personal disclosure among group members with varied traumatic histories. In some cases members' levels of insight vary. Some have been in therapy for years while others are much newer to treatment. The types of trauma differ as well. They include severe bullying, neglect in early childhood, traumatic loss, and childhood physical and sexual abuse. The topic of "Big T" and "Small t" traumas is presented, yet not fully processed due to the nature of the brief group frame. Should I be concerned about members' varied experiences and how it may impact the reconstruction of their personal stories? Is the potential for re-enactment of some aspect of the trauma scenario greater due to the group as a whole not having experienced a similar type of trauma?*

*I would also be interested in ideas about how to add future members who have not experienced the initial mindfulness-based skills group. Although it would be a criteria for new members to have been exposed to Mindfulness training, they would not necessarily share a common language or have had the experience of learning the skills. Could this be a potential barrier in finding a good fit for the group? Would it increase the likelihood of a new member feeling isolated or alienated? How might a group leader deal with these issues and screen for the appropriate member who could tolerate this potential experience?*

*Any guidance from your experience would be greatly appreciated.*

**Signed Trauma in Transition**

**Dear Trauma in Transition,**

Great questions. The idea of taking a cohesive skills group and transforming it into a process group is very appealing but, as you note, complicated. The issues fall into two categories: membership selection for the new group, and leading it. For assembling the new group I

recommend that you avoid renaming an existing skills group into a process group. I believe that your task of establishing new cultural norms in the process group will be very hard with an established cohort, and you owe it to candidates and to the group to be ready to defer entry for some. Each individual should be assessed carefully. Being ready to add suitable people from outside will be essential for the long-term viability of the group so establishing that norm early will avoid shock later.

**"The cultural shift from skills to process is something that will call for explicit leadership."**

Once your members are selected, the first leadership task is member preparation. For your trauma grads it will be important to describe the likelihood of strong emotions, conflicts and unpredictable subject matter in the new group. While these challenges are what make process groups worth doing, I would also use them to try to scare people out of enrolling. If they join, hopefully they won't be shocked when there is anger expressed between group members, etc. When the group starts you must be ready to disappoint their expectation that you'll set agendas and topics. Those responsibilities must shift to them for the process to become energized. At the same time, in the event of conflict or strong emotions, safety will still be your job. In those times I suggest that you lead the group in using their skills training to work through it together.

If you accept my idea of forming a new group, one of the most important criteria will be trying to establish who is ready to handle and benefit from the rigors of a process group. Leigh McCullough (2003) set a GAF of 50 as the lower limit for insight oriented 1:1 work. I know it's awful to cite a single, now obsolete number, but I'd recommend a GAF of 55. Some trauma patients' interpersonal issues may not emerge in a 1:1 intake, so try for multiple intake meetings. Gather collateral information and collaborate with the patient to establish their interpersonal triggers. Once you have a strong enough rapport, I would, as mentioned earlier, try to scare them out of it as responsible group prep. I wouldn't worry about different patients coming in at different levels of healing so long as they can all tolerate emotions. More advanced patients will benefit from helping the less advanced people along.

The cultural shift from skills to process is something that will call for explicit leadership. The format of skills groups inherently make them safer for participants and make the leader the source of the safety, especially in your trauma group where you don't process memories. The central work of a process



group originates in group culture rather than structure. The culture is for participants to be open about themselves, curious about their reactions to each other, and to work together over time to lower the defensive barriers between them. They will look to their skills leader to guide them explicitly in what to talk about. Early on you'll need to be ready to repeat instructions like, "Our work here is to try to talk about what you experience out in your lives and in your pasts, and most importantly, what you experience here relating to each other. This is very different from the trauma group because the agenda for today will become clear only as the conversation unfolds. If there's nothing to say, we may be quiet for a while. If you notice a feeling about that uncertainty, we could talk about that and see where that goes."

As the group process deepens and ventures into conflict or stronger connections, the potential for energizing trauma reactions will increase. With this population I would err strongly on the side of safety and active leadership. I would make it explicit in the ground rules that in the event someone gets triggered, you and the group will reach into the skills tool box to work together to help people manage their emotions, sort out past from present experience, and communicate effectively to other members. If anyone has strong angry reactions toward another member, I always want them to direct their words and anger toward me until they can understand what they are feeling and communicate it to another group member humanely. Personally, I think the power of angry words spoken with the intent to hurt is so great that no therapy group member, PTSD or not, should be subjected to it without the leader intervening.

I hope these ideas help rather than inhibit your wish to start this group. I think it will be a great service to your group members.

**Ken Jaeger, LICSW, CGP**



### **Dear Trauma in Transition,**

In response to your dilemma about transitioning a short term, trauma skills group into an ongoing process group, the short answer is that I have not had success transitioning groups from one format to another. I would recommend closing the time-limited group then contracting for a new group.

In terms of designing a trauma group, I would refer a clinician to James Chu's writings on stage I trauma treatment in *Rebuilding Shattered Lives*. His acronym SAFER is a good starting place for assessing patients and designing a group. S is for Safety and Symptom control; A is Acknowledgement of the impact of trauma (i.e. as a source of their symptoms); F is for Functioning; E is for Emotion (i.e. ability to experience and express emotion without becoming dysregulated); and R is about Relationships (e.g., is the individual able to maintain at least one supportive relationship, even if it is with the therapist?).

If individuals do not have these capacities, a skills group is preferable to help group members acknowledge the impact of trauma and gain support around the symptoms without going into history. I have heard many times, "I thought I was the only one [in the world] who did that or felt that." I have found it helpful to deal with the symptoms by explaining how trauma caused such symptoms.

A structured group would help to ensure safety and reduce the likelihood of members "spilling" their trauma stories. When individuals begin to work on their trauma, they often become overwhelmed, dysregulated, stuck in the trauma and/or dissociated.

Possible options for structure include expanding the skill set beyond Mindfulness or looking to other designed groups such as Ann Koplow's "Come One. Come All," or Lisa Najavits' "Seeking Safety" program.

My skills groups include "Assessing and Attending to Safety", "Emotional Regulation Skills", "Distress Tolerance Skills", and "Interpersonal Skills" (similar to DBT), and take about one year to complete. Members stay as long as they find the group valuable and are often really creative in the ways that they use the skills. The most successful members usually stay for at least 2 years.

As part of the contract, it is important to address "trauma triggering." Triggers are often identified only when they occur. I tell members that I don't need to know why something is a trigger, only that it is one, so that we can avoid it as much as possible. Clinicians need to be alert to members becoming triggered in group and ready to do grounding or distress tolerance exercises as soon as this occurs because dissociated patients are not able to take anything away from group, other than possibly a sense of failure or danger.

I like to engage the whole group in the grounding exercise, asking each member to rate their distress before and after the exercise.

I clearly recommend that the purpose of the group is to address current and future issues. I require each member to have an individual therapist so that historical traumatic issues that come up can be addressed there. If historical, triggering materials come up in the group, I set limits on this content as quickly and as gently as I can. Once again, some kind of distress tolerance activity is often helpful.

In terms of adding new members to a trauma skills group who do not have the mindfulness skills, there are a few options. One is to include mindfulness activities in each meeting so that new members can catch up over time. Another possibility is to do some brief individual work on the mindfulness skills before bringing new members into the group.

If one were to determine that a group is ready to do some processing, one needs to have plans for managing the dysregulation that can come up as this occurs. Pacing traumatic disclosure is terribly important because the speaker and other members can easily become overwhelmed. *The Trauma Recovery Group: a Guide to Practitioners*, first author Michaela Mendelsohn, PhD., outlines a very contained approach. I personally prefer to do trauma processing in individual therapy. There, I only need to manage the patient's and my own dysregulation and even there it can be a challenge to keep individuals grounded.

In a process group, the question emerges of how to manage varying levels of trauma experience. It is important to avoid competition between members. I think of the analogy of surgery. I believe that there is no such thing as "minor" surgery. I try to foster an attitude of respect for one another's experience as valid, important and unique. Often it is helpful to point out experiences that are similar between members. When competition begins to emerge, I quickly move in to interrupt. One of the damaging consequences of trauma is the lack of empathy by significant others in one's life. It is important not to repeat that empathic rupture in group. I suggest to members that they may not understand the impact of a situation and encourage them to see the situation from the perspective of the individual speaking. For we as clinicians frequently listen to something and really do not understand elements of it.

**Tanya Gurian, APRN, BC**



## An Invaluable Resource, For Free!

Annie Weiss, LICSW, CGP

**P**erhaps the idea of starting your own private practice group is exciting, but daunting. You are not quite sure you have “enough experience,” “enough training,” or “enough confidence” to pull it off. Perhaps you are frustrated with how one of your groups is progressing, stymied by challenging dynamics, or unsure about whether and how to address something that is brewing below the surface. Perhaps you are aware of some countertransference developing that you could use some help sorting out. Perhaps you want to discern how best to shepherd your group through your own personal transitions, such as pregnancy, illness or even retirement.

You know that NSGP is full of inspiring, experienced and wise clinicians who might be able to provide great perspective or information for you. But did you know that, as a member of NSGP, you could mine those resources for free?

Each member of NSGP is entitled to one free hour of consultation with a senior group leader each year. Many experienced, wise and beloved clinicians offer their time each year to any NSGP member who wants to spend an hour sorting something out. NSGP members

who have utilized the Consultation Benefit describe the experience with resounding enthusiasm. Clearly, it is a precious opportunity for burgeoning group leaders.

Amy Matias says: “I took advantage of the NSGP consultation benefit a few years ago. At the time I was in the process of starting a group. I now have two groups going in my private practice and see the clinician I was originally referred to for weekly supervision. It got my practice off the ground and has been an invaluable resource.”

Howie Schnairsohn has had gotten three valuable perspectives at different stages:

“My first year in NSGP I consulted with Mark Sorenson, 2nd year with Bob Weber, and third year with Eleanor Counselman. Mark assured me that what I was doing, yes indeed, resembled something called group psychotherapy; Bob enlightened me that it was OK to lead groups and have fun at the same time; and Eleanor helped me turn the fear I had about leading a process group with agency staff into a source of pride. I cannot thank them enough, really!”

The Consultation Benefit is also enormously valuable to experienced therapists who can use a fresh

perspective from a trusted colleague. Virginia Reiber calls it a “particular blessing for NSGPer’s”: “The consultation service has been not only one of the best perks of NSGP for me, but an essential one. And I have used it three times in the past five years. As a solo proprietor in a busy private practice in the outer suburbs of Boston, I do not have quality peer supervision or consultation. We types don’t always have easy access to thoughtful colleagues, and I have been that person for over twenty-five years. When tough clinical dilemmas emerge, which life tends to produce at times for us in this business, it can become an echo chamber in our heads, and then we are talking to ourselves...I am no stranger to it, but when I found that it emerged for me just before major surgery and a planned absence of almost two months from my practice, I knew I had to have help...I could not clear it up by myself, because it was about me...When we have a witness who is a trusted member of our professional community, we can hear ourselves think, and figure it all out. This we all need, even when we are an old pro.”

In case you are wondering if you have a good enough reason to take up a

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### Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy Groups For Depression (reoccurrence) Prevention

Offered by: **JUDITH PREBLUDA M.A., L.M.H.C.**

781-643-2313  
Medford, MA 02155

This is a **10 week psycho-educational group**, based on the now famous research of Zindel Segal, Ph.D. This research combines Mindfulness Meditation and Cognitive Therapy to prevent, or shorten reoccurrences of Clinical Depression.

The format is similar to Jon Kabat Zinn’s MBSR model, where Mindfulness and Cognitive Therapy are taught in a secular environment as skills and tools.

I believe that **anyone can learn Mindfulness with the right instruction**, and it is a great joy for me to see people learn and use this life-changing skill. Based on Neuro-science brain research, Mindfulness has been incorporated into many of the latest psychotherapy models of healing. Empirically proven to change the brain’s “Wiring and Firing”, this practice creates a **peaceful internal environment based on being Present** with whatever is happening within or without. This gives rise to many other beneficial states of mind.

Please see my website: **[www.jpbodymindtherapy.com](http://www.jpbodymindtherapy.com)** for further description and referral information.

### Apply for an AGPA Scholarship Today

Attending the AGPA Annual Meeting allows recipients to learn and grow personally and professionally, making connections that will last a lifetime. Through the generosity of its donors, the Group Foundation will again offer **multiple funding opportunities** to attend AGPA’s **2016 Annual Meeting, February 22-27 in New York.**

To apply for a scholarship, visit AGPA’s website **<http://www.agpa.org/Foundation/scholarships>**, where there is detailed information and required application forms. **Application deadline is November 1, 2015.** Additional questions? E-mail: **[dfeirman@agpa.org](mailto:dfeirman@agpa.org)**.

**APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED FOR A NEW SCHOLARSHIP THIS YEAR!**

***This year we are for the first time accepting applications for the new Lorelle H. Machen, Ph.D. Memorial Scholarship for an individual who demonstrates experience in or a commitment to work in an agency or institutional setting with the severe and persistent mentally ill. The scholarship was endowed by Leslie Vestrich and our own Eleanor Counselman in memory of Leslie’s Mother (Eleanor’s Aunt), who spent much of her career working on behalf of this population. The Group Foundation is grateful to Ms. Vestrich and Dr. Counselman for their generosity in establishing this scholarship fund.***

# Paperless Practice

Michael Selva, PsyD

**O**n October 26th, the NSGP Practice Development Committee sponsored my workshop on "Paperless Practice." The presentation was based on my perspective as a psychologist in private practice who is also an experienced IT consultant and trainer.

Many mental health professionals have longed to see the day of the "Paperless Office," but until recently this goal has been elusive and expensive. The previous generation of Electronic Medical Record (EMR) systems required the purchase and installation of costly software on your computer. Since your clients' Personal Health Information (PHI) was stored on your own equipment, you were at risk for misuse or loss of the data. Things got even more complicated and expensive if you saw patients in more than one location.

Two recent developments in information technology—"Software as a Service" and "cloud storage"—have given rise to a new generation of EMR systems that are significantly more affordable; you pay a small monthly subscription fee instead of a large up-front cost. You receive insurance payments in a more timely fashion, since insurance companies process electronic claims more quickly than paper claims. Since record keeping and billing are integrated, you may be able to file claims yourself rather than paying for a third-party billing service. You can access your records from multiple locations using any Internet-connected device including a tablet or smart phone. From a risk management perspective, it is far better to pay a vendor to encrypt, store, and backup your data at a remote location than to perform these functions on your own equipment.

My presentation featured a live demonstration of one of the many cloud-based electronic record keeping and billing applications currently available. I showed how a therapist might go through a typical work day, starting with the "Dashboard" view of upcoming appointments, copayments, and outstanding invoices. After each visit, the therapist writes a progress note, updates the treatment plan, generates an invoice, and records the amount paid by the patient. If applicable, an invoice is electronically transmitted to the patient's insurance company. This can all be done using an iPad or other tablet device via Wi-Fi. At the end of the week or month, the therapist can review financial data including a list of insurance claims awaiting payment, an invoice aging report, and a summary of payments received over a period of time. Since this information resides in the Cloud, it can be accessed from the therapist's home office

using a computer or tablet connected to the Internet.

I also showed electronic versions of everyday "paperwork" including a registration form, privacy policy, consent form, and related documents. One piece of paper is still required for obtaining a patient's hand-written signature; the signed document can then be scanned and uploaded to the EMR system, and the original can be shredded. As "electronic signature" technology becomes more standardized and less expensive, there will be no need for hand signing of documents.

During the Question & Answer session, we discussed some of the problems that may arise from putting clinical and financial data in the "cloud." For example, in the event of the therapist's retirement or death, how would another clinician gain access to these files? How secure is the data from hackers? What happens to the data if the software vendor goes out of business, or you wish to switch to another vendor? There are solutions to all of these potential problems, but it is necessary to develop a detailed plan and to create multiple levels of backup.



## An Invaluable Resource for Free!

(continued from page 10)

respected colleague's time for free, it might be helpful to know that the group leaders who provide complimentary consultation enjoy the opportunity and receive great "benefits" as well. One clinician says, "I have had two wonderful experiences. In the first instance, the consultee came back two more times after the consultation to get some more help. And this year, the consulted actually hired me as a supervisor. So I have loved it." As Joe Shay describes it, "It's a privilege to be called upon to help a colleague with a concern, and it's been very gratifying to be of use. I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience."

Barbara Keezel describes her experience giving a consultation as "a win for everyone," stating, "The person wanted some recommendations about leading a workshop and getting a group started. She was successful in her venture, and I greatly enjoyed meeting with her. She was new to NSGP, and I believe this gave her a connection & she has stayed involved."

The Consultation Benefit can provide invaluable support or information, and serves as another opportunity to create delightful connections throughout the NSGP community. This year, take advantage!

For more information, contact Annie Weiss at [annieweiss@aya.yale.edu](mailto:annieweiss@aya.yale.edu)



## Who Ya Gonna Call?

*You are picking up your office after your group at the end of the day. You're a little troubled. Something feels amiss and has felt that way for a few weeks. Your attempts to address the dynamic have fallen flat, and you worry because some members are beginning to talk about what else they could do on Wednesday night. Yikes! Even your consultation group is bit stymied or you don't have such a resource.*

## Who Ya Gonna Call?

Worry not. You're a member of NSGP, right? And NSGP is here to help with the

## Consultation Benefit

Here's how you set up a consult. Call or e-mail Annie Weiss ([annieweiss@aya.yale.edu](mailto:annieweiss@aya.yale.edu) or 617-244-9009). Annie (or another committee member) will find out what your concerns are and provide you with the names of 2-3 senior NSGP who have agreed to offer one free hour of consultation per year.

That's right. All members of NSGP are entitled one free hour of consultation about group psychotherapy per calendar year. What a deal!



# NSGP Foundation and NSGP Boards Meet to Strengthen Ties

Lise Motherwell, PhD, PsyD, CPG, FAGPA

The Board of the NSGP Foundation hosted an informal gathering with the Board of the NSGP at my home on January 31, 2015 to talk about their shared endeavors in support of group psychotherapy. Walker Shields, Board member and past-Chair of the NSGP Foundation made the following comments:

*"We are here this evening primarily because each of us, in his or her own unique way, loves the work of group psychotherapy! Each of us has had meaningful personal and professional experiences in that work and has come to value it enormously. Stated very simply the mission of the NSGP is to provide for group psychotherapy in the here-and-now. The mission of the NSGP Foundation is to provide for group psychotherapy over the long term in New England.*

*We believe the best way to learn about the principles of group work is through experiential learning: that is, in a process group that allows for attention paid to the emotional and interpersonal lives of its members and to the group in its entirety. To provide opportunities for this unique kind of learning for our community is the primary task of NSGP. To provide endowment for the future of this work and over the long term is the primary task of the NSGP Foundation.*

*My initial encounter with the opportunity for learning in a process group occurred when I was a first year resident in psychiatry at McLean Hospital in 1970. Our group of twelve (we were all very young residents at the time, and in fact we were very green in many, many ways) met weekly with Norm Neiberg, a senior NSGP faculty member, as the leader for our experience group over ten months during our first year of training. While I had been active in groups of many kinds during college, medical school, and the military, for me this experience was truly extraordinary! It opened a vast and crucial new vista for all of us residents as young clinicians. But it also gave me the opportunity to become more fully aware of how I was relating to other people in my life and to learn important lessons about the meaning of emotional intimacy. It allowed me to find alternatives to old impasses*



Suzanne Cohen and Lise Motherwell

*and, in their place, to attempt to build and deepen creative and more intimate connections in all kinds of relationships. It was the beginning of a process that has continued for me to this day.*

*The NSGP Foundation began as a task force, called the endowment task force, almost twenty years ago. This task force was appointed and authorized by three successive NSGP Presidents and its current board. Just as this task force was beginning to do its work, a terrible tragedy occurred in our community: the violent deaths of the daughter and two grandchildren of Cecil and Shirley Rice. Those of us on the task force wanted to join with Cecil and Shirley and respond to this horrific event by forming a special fund in memory of those members of Cecil's family who died. In 1998, working closely with Cecil and Shirley, we created a fund you all know of as "The Rice Memorial Fund" dedicated to the study and reduction of violence in groups, families, and individuals. Once the Rice Memorial Fund had been established, those of us on the Endowment Task Force formed an entity that could assume fiduciary responsibility for this endowment and others that would secure the future of group psychotherapy training, research, and education in New England.*

*With the aid of many people, including those among AGPA's leadership and a variety of legal consultants in our area, we formed the NSGP Foundation, Inc. and had our first meeting in June of 1999. We have continued since that time to pursue our mission. In particular each year we hold a Garden Party fundraiser. The first of these events was held at Lise Motherwell's home in May of 2000. Since then, perhaps to symbolize the hope of growth*

*brought by the spring season, we have chosen to hold our annual fundraising gathering in May. The objective of these events, held subsequently in the homes and gardens of various Foundation board members, is not only to raise funds and awareness, but also to enjoy the pleasure of being together, and to generate enthusiasm throughout our community and the community at large for the future of group psychotherapy.*

*How does the Foundation distribute its endowment funds? The primary way is to give scholarships that allow recipients to learn about group psychotherapy at the NSGP Conference or its Training Program. In both we provide the opportunity to be in an experience group, and to attend the Principles of Group Psychotherapy Course (a requirement for Certification as a Group Therapist), workshops, or a demonstration group. In addition, we fund the Special Presentation at the conference, which defrays the cost of bringing in outside speakers. In this regard the Foundation needs the assistance of everyone in our group psychotherapy community to help us find and reach out to those who might attend our conferences and who might enroll in our training programs. With your help we may find ways to provide scholarships to a wider and wider circle of professionals in the fields of mental health and education.*

*The NSGP Foundation now accepts contributions towards its General Fund and for two named funds. The first of these funds is the Rice Memorial Fund, as mentioned above. The second is the Anne Alonso Scholarship Fund, which provides scholarships to the NSGP Annual Conference and its Training Program. The fund is named in honor of Anne Alonso, a truly extraordinary leader and teacher for many years in NSGP and AGPA. Anne's enthusiasm and support for the Foundation at the outset was a crucial factor in its formation.*

*Hopefully, our goal to provide scholarships to a wide circle of clinicians in conferences and training activities will lead to a greater depth of understanding of group process, better prepared group therapists, and greater access to groups by clients. It*

(continued on page 13)

## NSGP Foundation Garden Party



Larry Kron and Marsha Vannicelli



Belinda Freidrich, Joyce Shields  
& Naomi Dogan



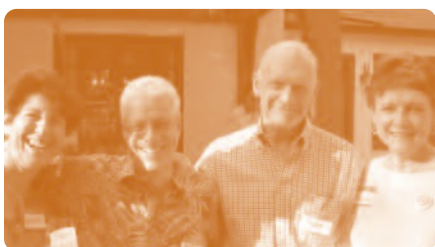
Jim West winning a raffle basket



Group at the NSGP Foundation Garden Party



Brenda Smith and Diane Finkel



Barbara Keezell, Alan Witkower,  
Walker Shields & Suzanne Cohen

## Two Hours with Two Lawyers (continued from page 7)

concern is accidentally cc-ing someone on an email, breaking confidentiality with the client. Nancy and Jennifer suggest reviewing your electronic communication policy with clients upon intake.

**Termination:** Nancy and Jennifer pointed out that you must do everything you can to ensure appropriate termination. If the client's actions interfere with the termination process, this should be thoroughly documented. If treating a difficult client, they suggested asking yourself if the client is likely to benefit from continued treatment or not. If unsure, consult with another professional and document the consultation. This will help protect you in the event a complaint is made.

**Working with Children of Non-Intact Families:** Unfortunately, this is the most fertile area for Board complaints. The most common mistake in this area is releasing records to a parent involved in a custody dispute. In fact, a child's clinical record should not be released to either party or to the Court, even with a signed release from one or both parents. Julie and Nancy pointed out that only the Court, by way of a special *Guardian Ad Litem*, can waive the child's privilege and/or make a determination as to the release of psychotherapy records. If there is no active custody dispute, authorized release from a parent or legal guardian will suffice.

**Billing:** This is another area of frequent complaint by clients. The take-away messages are to be transparent and consistent in your billing practices. Billing practices should be given to clients in writing in the first meeting. Any changes should be also be provided to the client in writing.

**Peer Consultation:** Peer Consultation is valued by the Board. However, too much peer consultation about a case could be seen as a sign that you are practicing outside your area of competence. Of course, you must maintain confidentiality for your client in peer consultation settings.

**Informed Consent:** In the first session, Informed Consent Forms should be provided to the client, which include:

- The purpose of the services
- Risks related to the services
- Limits to the services because of the requirements of a third-party payor
- Relevant fees and costs
- Reasonable alternatives
- Clients' right to refuse or withdraw consent
- The time frame covered by the consent
- Confidentiality, and
- Limits to confidentiality

Nancy and Jennifer pointed out that if the treatment changes, we must obtain a new informed consent from the client before implementing treatment.

Many thanks to Nancy and Jennifer for their time and energy putting together and providing this valuable information to us. Thank you to the Brookline Center for their donation of their lovely space. Thanks as well to the Practice Development Committee for providing this very informative seminar.



## NSGP Foundation and NSGP Boards Meet to Strengthen Ties

(continued from page 12)

*is likely to increase attendance at NSGP Conferences, the training programs offered by the NSGP, and membership of NSGP as well."*

In the ensuing discussion I invited Board members of NSGP to comment further about how we might work together to provide scholarships most effectively. Deb Carmichael, President of the NSGP, spoke about the value of scholarships awarded last year for the NSGP conference. NSGP Board members and Chairs of the Training Committee, Joel Krieg and Jenn McLain, spoke of the growth of NSGP training activities as a result of the availability of scholarships. Kathy Ulman, Past-President of the AGPA, and also Board Member and Past-Chair of the NSGP Foundation, spoke of the evolution of the Foundation from its beginnings and its value as a continuing focus for involvement and interest by group therapists of all ages. Howie Schnairsohn, an NSGP member, summarized the gathering well: "It is helpful to be able to put faces to the names on the Foundation board. Not only do I now know who people are, but how the Foundation and NSGP connect."



Oona Metz and Arnie Cohen



# Progress Notes

**Progress Notes** features a variety of items that reflect progress for NSGP members or committees. Please let us know ([newsletter@nsgp.com](mailto:newsletter@nsgp.com)) if there's anything you'd like noted, whether an article you've published, a speech you're giving, or a notable change in your life.

**Steve Cadwell's** one-man-show "Wild & Precious" has had a great summer run. In the show, he promotes group therapy and celebrates 50 years of Gay Liberation! He will be performing to benefit the AIDS Harbor to Bay Ride. Also, his show will be an open-workshop at AGPA in NYC in February with **Libby Shapiro** and **Chera Finnis** moderating discussion afterwards. He continues his Boston private practice and teaches group at Harvard and BUSSW and in NSGP's Training Program.

**Eleanor Counselman** co-taught a workshop called "Affect in Supervision" along with **Kathy Ullman** at AGPA and also chaired a panel called "Group Psychotherapy of the Future." In April she gave a workshop for PCFINE called "Affect-Based Couple Consultation," and in June at NSGP she gave a workshop called "Affect in Supervision." She is the co-author, along with Robert Schulte and Yavar Moghimi, of an article called "Reading Plays to Enhance Group Therapists' Learning and Wellbeing" that will appear in the *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*.

**Pamela Enders** is rekindling her feminist leanings since she was appointed to serve a three-year term as a Commissioner for the Cambridge Women's Commission. She continues to offer performance coaching to those who wish to improve their public speaking skills and she also continues to offer business/marketing coaching to therapists who want to enhance their online professional presence.

**Jean Fain's** new Self-Compassion-Based Eating Awareness Weekend Trainings are attracting participants from across the country. When she's not running self-compassion groups for everyday eating issues, she's been writing about food and body-image issues for WBUR's CommonHealth blog.

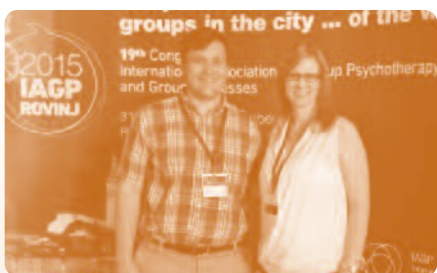
**Nancy Goldner** led a workshop in May, "Five Tips for Living Solo," at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, an educational program for older adults located on the UMass Boston campus. Her article "Single Adults: An Emerging Area of Practice" appeared in Massachusetts *NASW FOCUS*.

**Karin Hodges** was a member of a team that designed a school curriculum, "Teach TEAMWORK" (available free from APA website) and co-presented this at APA Conference in Toronto. Karin continues to enjoy her individual and group private practice for children and teens in Concord.

**Renee Hoekstra** will be offering a class called "Parenting the Emotionally Extreme Teen" starting this, which will include mindfulness, education on adolescent developmental norms, and DBT content.

**Joanne Lipner** moved her office from Brookline to one in Newton Center. Joanne led a Special Interest Group at the NSGP Conference in June titled "Rupture and Repair in Group Psychotherapy."

**Jenn McLain** presented a workshop with **Kurt White** at the International Association for Group Psychotherapy Congress in Rovinj, Croatia in September on their experiences as co-leader and member in past "Continuous Online Groups" to further explore this modality with the international group community. In July, she began leading a Training group for the MGH/McLean psychiatry residency program. Jenn and her wife are also excitedly expecting their first baby in December!



Kurt White and Jenn McLain at IAGP Congress

**Oona Metz** has moved down the street to a new office in Brookline after 17 years at her former location. She loves her new office which offers her plenty of room to run groups and plenty of sunshine. She continues to practice in her Arlington office as well.

**Scott Rutan** will be the Featured Presenter at a 3-day workshop for the Mid-Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society on November 13-15, 2015.

**Howie Schnairsohn** has retired from almost 20 years of employment with North Suffolk Mental Health Association, and has become Associate Staff at Boston Institute for Psychotherapy and has taken on a co-leader in his young adult group there. In addition, he has obtained his CGP credential!

## Congratulations


**Howie Schnairsohn, LICSW** on receiving his CGP certification!!!

**Joe Shay** presented "'Why Should I Believe You?': What Does Trust Have To Do With It?" at the annual dinner of PCFINE. At the annual AGPA conference in San Francisco, he chaired a panel entitled "Mapping Theory to Technique," and then chaired a panel of PCFINE faculty who presented at a conference entitled "Couples on Fire: What Should I Say and Why Should I Say It?" Joe also led a weekend Experience Group in Portland, Maine for a group of senior clinicians who have been meeting for more than 25 years. He then was a panelist in an AGPA teleconference discussing the topic of "The Courage to Explore: Solitude and Group Therapy," followed by leading a workshop at the annual NSGP Conference entitled "Couples Gone Wild: The Top 10 Complications in Couples Therapy." Joe also taught two seminars for PCFINE on topics in couples therapy. Finally, his book *Complex Dilemmas in Group Therapy* (co-edited with **Lise Motherwell**) was translated and published in Korean.

**Bob Weber's** book, *The Spirituality of Age: A Seeker's Guide to Growing Older*, coauthored with Carol Orsborn, Ph.D., will be released by Inner Traditions Publishers this fall.

**Annie Weiss** is looking forward two new roles this fall: she will be the new group consultant for the Brookline Community Health Center, and will be serving as a Program Assistant for the Internal Family Systems (IFS) Level 1 training. Later this year, she looks forward to the publication of an article that she wrote with **Scott Rutan** about the BIP Observation Group training experience.



 **Kurt White** presented with **Jenn McLain** at the IAGP Congress in Rovinj, Croatia in September. Last March, he presented as NSGP training faculty on the role of the leader in group psychotherapy. He also successfully completed leading a year-long training group at the Brattleboro Retreat, and looks forward to starting another such group for this year's students in Fall. Over the summer, he presented on various topics at the Smith College Seminars.



Elizabeth Dietrich and Kurt White at IAGP Congress

## Caption This!

Please submit a caption for this cartoon to [newsletter@nsgp.com](mailto:newsletter@nsgp.com).

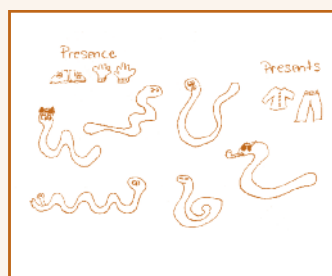
The winning entries will be announced in the next issue.



Drawn by David Goldfinger

## Fall 2015 Cartoon Caption Winner from 2015 Spring

Selected by the Cartoon Committee  
(Ellen Ziskind, Alan Witkower, & Oona Metz)



**Winner:**

Snakes...Why did it have to be snakes.—Marc Bolduc

### ADVERTISE YOUR PRACTICE, GROUPS or OFFICE SPACE in the next NSGP NEWSLETTER!

NSGP members can now  
purchase advertisement space.

All ads (except classifieds which  
can be text) **MUST** meet these  
requirements or will be returned  
for revision:

- 1) Submitted as a high resolution  
PDF\* with fonts embedded in  
the file.
- 2) Must be 300dpi at 100% size,  
black & white only.  
*\*The PDFs should be ready to  
print directly from the file  
without need for further  
processing.*

- \$20 - Small Classified ad  
(25 words max)
- \$50 - Business Card: 3.5" w x 2" h
- \$100 - 1/4 pg vert: 3.5" w x 5" h
- \$200 - 1/2 pg horizontal,  
7.125" w x 5" h or  
1/2 pg vertical, 3.5" w x 10" h

Questions? See details above or call  
the NSGP office at (617) 431-6747.

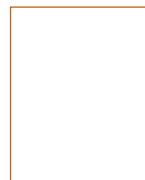
*The ads will not be edited for accuracy.  
NSGP does not endorse these groups.*

## SHARE THE CONNECTION!

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or other clinician to join NSGP!  
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## Mark Your Calendar:

NSGP's 35th Annual Conference!

June 10, 11, & 12, 2016

### NSGP Upcoming Events Calendar

Sept. 27, 2015	<b>Practice Development Event</b> 4–6—with Erica Kirsners, LICSW <i>What You Need to Know About the ICD 10 and DSM 5 Changes</i> At The Brookline Center
Oct. 25, 2015	<b>Breakfast Club</b> 11–1:30—with Kurt White, LICSW, LADC, CGP <i>Group Work Training in Graduate Programs: How Are Our Students Learning about Group Work?</i> Hosted by Suzanne Brennan Nathan—West Roxbury
Nov. 14, 2015	<b>Practice Development Event</b> 10–12—with John Schachter and Johanna Schulman <i>Saving Now, Saving Later: Tax and Retirement Tips for Your Private Practice</i> At Facing Cancer Together—Newton
Dec. 6, 2015	<b>Breakfast Club</b> 11–1:30—with Amanda Curtin, LICSW <i>Healing from Childhood Trauma in a Group: a Structured, 3-Year, Integrative Model</i> Hosted by Geri and Scott Reinhardt—Newton
Jan. 10, 2016	<b>Breakfast Club</b> 11–1:30—with Bob Weber, PhD, CGP, LEAGPA <i>Cultivating the Curative Power of Gratitude and Forgiveness in Groups</i> Hosted by Deb Filiurin—Cambridge
Feb. 22-27 2016	<b>AGPA Annual Meeting</b> in New York City <i>Transformation in Group: From Isolation to Connection</i> Scholarships Available!
Mar. 20, 2016	<b>Breakfast Club</b> 11–1:30—with Julie Anderson, PhD, CGP and Arnie Cohen, PhD, CGP, FAGPA <i>The Unconscious Dance: Co-Leading a Psychotherapy Group</i> Hosted by Jim Leone—Belmont
Apr. 10, 2016	<b>Breakfast Club</b> 11–1:30—with Judith Prebluda, MA, LMHC <i>Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy Groups</i> Hosted by Walker & Joyce Shields—Belmont
June 10-12, 2016	<b>Save the date: 35th Annual NSGP Conference!</b>
July 30–Aug 4, 2018	<b>Save the date: 20th IAGP Congress</b> in Malmö, Sweden

For more information or to sign up, please call 617-431-6747 or go online to [www.nsgp.com](http://www.nsgp.com).