



the newsletter

NSGP

Northeastern Society for Group Psychotherapy

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Spring 2017

Letter from the President



Change is in the air, the sea, the earth and just about everywhere—including our groups. The election and its aftermath is being felt all around us

and serves as a jolting reminder that change is always a challenge to experience, yet is also an inevitable part of the process of being and relating.

As an organization, we are also undergoing important changes and developments. Our conference and training committees continue to grapple with the ongoing need to make our presentations and teaching opportunities relevant to evolving trends and practices in our discipline. Our practice development committee works diligently to address changes impacting group therapy. Every one of our Board meetings seem to include at least one introspective discussion where the questions of who are we and what is our mission are raised.

It is important, however, to remember that although change is what we often fear most, it is also what we, as group therapists, are expertly trained to process and contain. The management of anxiety within the community of the group is really what we're all about. I'm certain that many of you, along with me, have felt your clinical and group leadership muscles getting strengthened over recent months.

I encourage all of us to value and cherish our group leadership skills. These skills have been proven to sustain the tests of time. Did you know

that 2017 marks the 60th Anniversary of NSGP and the 75th Anniversary of AGPA? Having turned 60 myself last year, I have some appreciation for the gravity of that number!

I hope that you will be inspired by our history and rededicate yourselves to attending more AGPA and NSGP events. Our June 2017 conference is appropriately titled "Foundations and Frontiers in Group Psychotherapy." In celebrating our longevity, this year's conference is structured to look both backward and forward – an effective way to soberly confront change while also harnessing the collective wisdom and energy we possess to transcend it.

Looking at the impact of change more personally and intimately, our Society has been faced with the losses of dear members, leaders and friends. In recent months, these losses have included the deaths of Shirley Rice, Peter Gumpert and Miguel Leibovich. Many of us came together to honor their memories and to maintain our commitment to our community.

It is fortunate, though, that our recent losses have been sustained alongside increases in new membership and energized efforts to raise awareness of group therapy among clinicians. Our membership committee has worked hard to recruit new practitioners to NSGP and to coordinate efforts to invite Breakfast Club attendees and Training Program graduates to participate in more of our events. The current AGPA President (who is our own Eleanor Counselman, a Past-President of NSGP) has worked tirelessly to promote a Group Specialty Petition (through the American

Psychological Association), designed to recognize group therapy as a specialty among clinical treatments.

These examples of outreach and advocacy for our work point toward forces of change that we can feel invited to embrace and empowered to join. I am honored and humbled to lead the Society through yet another challenging period in our history. What makes things easier for me (and much more fun, too!) is that, as a group, we are changing together.

Steffen Fuller, PhD, CGP
President, NSGP

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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.

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Monday-Friday 9 am to 5 pm

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**Letter from
the Editor**

The late psychoanalyst Robert Langs, who wrote extensively about the central concept of the "Frame" in psychotherapy, turned up and gave a talk in Brattleboro, Vermont some years ago. He made an offhand comment that, although he didn't know anything about group therapy, he had learned a great deal about groups when he once attended a conference on mathematics. "The first thing they did," he said, "was to divide into two groups...one group wanted to do some calculations, and then take some measurements. The other group wanted to do some measurements, then do the calculations. Then these two groups proceeded to try to completely destroy one another!" This was the lesson, he laughingly reported to the audience: "It doesn't matter what it's about. That the first things groups always seem to do...divide into two factions and try to annihilate one another." The hard reality of this has been on my mind this past fall and winter, and now into spring. The world feels like a place fierce and divided, and all too often angry and hateful. People seem to be wondering: Will we all be OK? Will we survive?

Reflecting on this, I have been wondering what possible solution there could be, and whether it does any good to see this kind of pattern, with the knowledge that we have (more than Langs!) about large group dynamics. These toxic energies are isomorphic, and can be seen reflected in many other systems of which I have been a part. I have experienced some new groups that felt "stuck" in a dependency or flight, and others that feel more fearful than I have ever seen in their work at integrating differences. This feels like a time of group leadership under duress, where the pull toward division and even dissolution can be found at all levels of the system, including inside of ourselves, in our small groups, and in our organizations. I wonder—will the groups and institutions that I have come to rely on feel sustaining to me, and generative, and will they be enough?

I am fresh back from AGPA and looking ahead to NSGP in June, and I have an intense awareness that this community is more important to me than ever—though cultivating it and sustaining it is hard work at times! I feel the common bond of love for this work and connection to my colleagues, and to the history of the field. I take sustenance from the enthusiasm of my students and former students, and the great wisdom of the generations ahead and behind. The wish to create, the wish to understand, and the wish to connect—I

am pleased to discover again that, with effort, these are all stronger in me than my own destructive parts. The strength of a community depends largely on the ability of its members to invest in it productively, and to integrate differences, and work to find coherence wherever possible.

Loss also presents a threat to us, as an important generation of our community passes on or becomes less active in our group. I already miss the warm and gentle smile of Peter Gumpert, though I keep a clear vision of him that lives on in my mind. Absent from our recent meetings, I miss the energy and wisdom of Cecil Rice, and the loving and sometimes gruff Don Wexler. Yvonne Agazarian will no longer travel, and so will only be seen at AGPA when it's in New York, though age hardly seems otherwise to have slowed her down. The loss of Jenn McLain as co-editor is especially sad for me, though she is hardly going away from NSGP. Jenn is almost the perfect editor, one who makes the work look easy, always has your back, and rarely drops the ball. She is, seemingly in equal measure, creative, driven, a close reader, thoughtful, and passionate about the organization. The only tempering of the loss is the great pleasure I have in Howie Schnairsohn joining as co-editor with me for the Fall and going forward!

In this issue, and in this spirit, we offer some articles that showcase the work of prior generations—such as in Sara Emerson's interview with Cecil Rice. We also showcase members' experiences at AGPA with some new voices in this issue. There are also some novel applications of group ideas to arenas where our insights and expertise may be beneficial, as in Rob Pepper's unique article. Steffen Fuller, as NSGP President, correctly reminds us that we are at a time of transition, and that we have both the strength and wisdom to see ourselves through. With warmth, sadness, and gratitude, as well as with a plea for you, our community, to be actively invested and connected, we offer this issue of the newsletter, the final one for this team of co-editors.

**Kurt L. White, LICSW, LADC,
CGP, FAGPA**

Co-Editor Newsletter

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

A Conversation with Cecil Rice, Ph.D, CGP, DFAGPA

Sara Emerson, LICSW, CGP, FAGPA

On Sunday March 5, I went to visit with Cecil at his home and talk with him about his life, career, thoughts and reflections, focusing specifically on looking back at his professional life. It seemed a natural time to be looking back in the looking glass of his memories. A few weeks earlier, I had attended the funeral for his wife Shirley. She was buried alongside their daughter and only child, and their two grandchildren. Many know of the losses and challenges Cecil and Shirley faced during their life together. Having turned 80 last year, Cecil, though still bright and wiry, is showing the signs of age. He has had many health challenges since November of 2016, some of which he is still battling.

I brought lunch and although he claimed to not be hungry he had seconds of everything! I began by asking him to reflect on his professional life, and what he felt had been some of the most meaningful accomplishments and events. After a moment, he said the creation of the Boston Threshold Group was definitely among his most meaningful accomplishments. Boston Threshold was a combined effort of a group from Boston (originally Cecil, Kathy Ulman, and Pat Doherty) in collaboration with Threshold, a mental health organization in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Cecil said originally it was an experiment, a way for him to "pay back" to the community of Belfast which he had left in 1964. He said he had continued to feel a sense of obligation to his community and a strong identification with Northern Ireland. This "experiment" grew out of a meeting with Pat, Kathy, and Cecil in 1996. Cecil contacted several clinics to propose a project of a one-day conference for mental health workers working in Northern Ireland (primarily Belfast) which was a civil war zone. Ramen at Threshold, an umbrella mental health clinic with many components and services, offered to help sponsor the event. Threshold sponsored their

employees to attend the conference free of charge. They did solicit other professionals and did have a fee for attendance, but it was a benefit for their staff.

In 1997, Scott Rutan joined the group and presented a day-long in-service training on Object Relations Theory, with a demonstration group. That was the beginning of what became an annual two-day conference in Belfast that continued for 14 years. In the second year, Cecil joined the planning group, and set out to design a two-day program of workshops, experience groups, and each year a Large group. Over the years, he recounted, many colleagues from across the states participated as faculty, and partnered with staff from Threshold to form strong and lasting bonds. He remembers this as an incredible experience of learning and growth for the trainers. For the participants, the conference provided a sense of feeling appreciated and respected, validated and recognized. Cecil said he also felt that, over time, the conference helped create an international community, bringing people together—in his view, this was the sort of rare event where people truly enjoyed being together. In fact, many of Irish colleagues came to AGPA to gain further group training and eventually participate as faculty.

As our conversation continued, Cecil went back and described his early years of training at Boston University. He and Shirley left Belfast in 1964, before the war was at its peak. He was an ordained Methodist Minister, and came to Boston for a Doctorate in Pastoral Counseling at Boston University Danielson Center. He left Northern Ireland because he wanted further training, but expressed feelings of guilt for leaving at a time when the conflicts, or troubles, were all around and escalating.

At Danielson, he developed deep and long lasting friendships with Jim Smith, Scott Rutan, and Alan Lurvey. Out of these friendships and collaborations, the Boston Institute for Psychotherapy was



Cecil Rice with co-editor Jenn McLain back in 2013

born. Cecil drew the parallel in our conversation about the similarities in the founding of both BIP and Boston Threshold had, but did not think that the BIP was the prototype for the Northern Ireland group. The BIP sought to create learning opportunities and training to help professionals do what they did well and to do it better. They began doing so by offering courses in rented space as one-day learning experiences. From there, the BIP was developed and grew to become a prominent postgraduate training program and treatment center. Many of us owe our professional accomplishments and growth to our experience and training at the BIP.

So, what does all of this say about Cecil Rice? Clearly he is a man with integrity, clarity, creatively and a deep dedication to teaching and training. He has formed and maintained lifelong relationships with a group of colleagues and, with that group, developed, nurtured and maintained two very significant training programs. He has written numerous articles and books and contributed to many professional books and journals. He has never lost his strong Irish accent, which at times has made it difficult for others to understand him. He is soft-spoken and a quiet force who clearly has created invaluable opportunities for numerous clinicians who have in turn affected the patients they treat and the professionals they train.

I feel very grateful and privileged to know Cecil and to be one of the beneficiaries of his visions and labors.



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 Fall 2017 Newsletter. Please send submissions to:

newsletter@nsgp.com.

Note: letters not edited except for space.

Mixed, On-Going, Adult Groups in Downtown Boston, Tuesdays

Group 1. **Adult Interpersonal Group**

Group 2. **Social Anxiety Group**

MBTA Accessible; Some insurance accepted.

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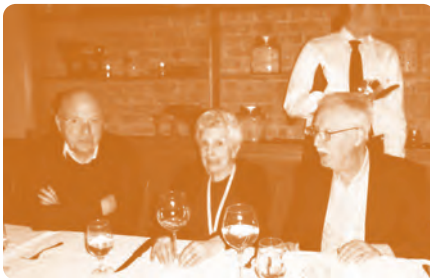
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Eleanor Counselman in her role as AGPA President



Joel Krieg & Deb Carmichael



Sam James, Dorothy Altman & Ramon Alonso



700 plus attendees during Scott Rutan's Plenary address

On Opening Up About Open Secrets

Jeff Brand, PsyD

In his plenary address, Scott Rutan PhD, CGP, DFAGPA offered a taxonomy of secrets, but he also confessed that his many years as a therapist have made him less interested in the secrets themselves and more in the reasons to keep them. The sharing of secrets invariably brings up great emotion—of both pleasant and unpleasant varieties—and AGPA remains a place where we as professionals can explore what it feels like to open up about the unspeakable.

This year's conference left me pondering how to think about secrets hidden in plain sight. Much of group dynamics plays out in front of us. We participate so readily it becomes implicit, and through the process of talking about our experiences we discover again and again what we may already know.

I saw this on a personal level in the second year of a two-year institute, and despite whatever expectations I may have had about returning to the group, the process looked as it often does. Our basic familiarity with each other shaped the features and content, but the process of (re-) building trust, working through conflict, and taking risks in hope of greater intimacy showed up in a recognizable silhouette. Each of us struggled in our own ways. "There I go again," on the well-worn paths of my

personality, my faults worn like smooth grooves on a prayer stone.

The messiness of it—and the humility it calls for in letting oneself surrender to the exploration of being a person—is like a secret written on our faces. It is finding the courage to ask for what you want, only to discover that it leaves you wanting something different. I playfully made a promise to my institute group to try not to be fair, to not let the capriciousness of my emotions keep me from being honest about them. For each of us, to be in a group is an invitation to relate authentically—to welcome the fullness of humanity (that of others and our own)—in order to find greater acceptance in and through relationships. The hurly-burly of emotional life does not lend itself to being "fair" unless we commit to keeping parts of ourselves secret.

Make no mistake: we can be respectful, authentic, and honest without having to be fair. Again and again, I relearn that being my best self often starts by sitting with the tensions I feel when loving and being loved. That I would judge and reject aspects of myself and others is inevitable, but the process of moving beyond judgment involves mindfully recommitting not to being "fair" but rather being honest in ways that honor and accept the many sides of myself and others.

I found this to be true all week, often in ways just as painful as they were enlivening. This was never more true than in the large group. A conference staple, the large group functions as a process space for as many people as want to come; in each of the two sessions I attended, it hosted no less than 75 to 100 people. The openness and anonymity of large group make for wide-open spaces that invite powerful material; in doing so, these spaces also prove themselves as places where people can be easily hurt. The essential question



Howie Schnairsohn, Jenn McLain, Joel Krieg, Jeff Brand & Amy Matias



Annie Weiss receiving her FAGPA



Joe Shay getting letter of appreciation at AGPA



Kurt White receiving his FAGPA

(literally and rhetorically) is, “How are we going to meet each other? How are we going to do the work of including everyone?”

As large group often reflects the zeitgeist of our times, this year was no exception; in both theme and content, the large group was racked by racism. This was true not only in terms of concern for our country, but also for the naked moments of privilege and bias that unfolded in real time on both individual and group levels. As the conversation roiled, different perspectives called out to be heard, only to go unmet and with great angst. Participants found themselves buffeted by their own feelings, sometimes hurt and offended, sometimes forgiving and full of gratitude.

There are similarities in the process of relating to ourselves, to each other interpersonally, and to large groups. Even in writing about these events, I feel a sense of shame to see prejudice leak out in an organization I consider to be my “professional home,” just as I feel shame when I catch sight of implicit bias in myself. Equally, I feel proud to be a part of an organization that is trying in good faith to have these conversations, just as I feel a new sense of possibility when I am honest about my own shortcomings.

The missteps and enactments are not failures in the process, but rather a part of it—ugly and pimpled, clumsy and awkward—a secret so weighted with shame it is hard to admit. In moments of mindful awareness, we come back to our intentions and to what we hope such a space might be. In so doing, we may be able to return to the proverbial chaos—be it internal or external—with a willingness to listening to ourselves and others, perhaps with the hope of holding onto their complexity and our own.

The fetid, rotten stench of racism is this country’s greatest and most public secret, a kind of malignant social unfairness in which prejudice chokes the humanity of the other. This is not to be confused with what is perhaps the intrinsic unfairness of a natural human ambivalence—an

injustice of the heart, perhaps. The latter can be bent towards our values but only through the work of trusting the very process that can be so painful to sit with. We disavow the former when we expose the secret lie in our projections.

If one purpose of secrets is to strangle ambivalence, confronting secrets with authenticity opens the door for many emotions. I knew this to be true in myself in sorting through mixed feelings as I left another AGPA conference. I believed it was naked before me as I boarded my bus in sight of Trump World Tower, which overlooks the U.N. Hidden in plain sight, it could only be a secret by virtue of being everywhere.



Quarantine and Containment

Zach Wigham, MSW

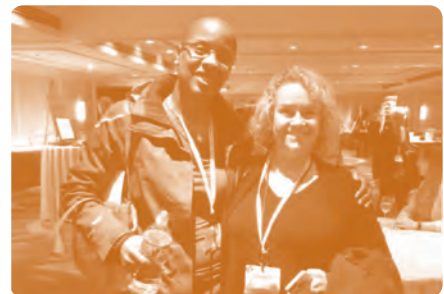
Stepping through the hotel’s doors to the 2017 AGPA Annual Meeting brought me to a whirlwind of new faces and freshly forgotten names. Traveling from Vermont, this was my first conference as a brand new AGPA member. I was fortunate enough to have been awarded a generous scholarship to attend. My work at the Brattleboro Retreat’s inpatient units as a Group Facilitator propelled me to the Annual Meeting, seeking a week without what can feel like airtight locks.

I was led to group psychotherapy years ago, from other work, similarly airtight.

(continued on page 6)



Steffen Fuller addressing the NSGP dinner



Shunda McGahee & Jenn DeSouza



Kurt White & Heather Baron at the AGPA Foundation luncheon



Annie Weiss & Jenn McLain



New AGPA fellows Kurt White & Annie Weiss!!!



Amy Matias, Annie Weiss & Oona Metz



Joe Shay, Larry Kron, Marilyn Lanza & Charlie Glazier

Quarantine and Containment

(continued from page 5)

For six years, I served in a nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons defense unit with the 104th Fighter Wing, MA Air National Guard, teaching chemical weapons survival courses to base personnel. My first encounters with scared, tired, proud, bored, and hostile groups occurred strapped, taped, and zipped inside plastic suits. I soon found that the science-laden career field jargon was the least confusing obstacle I encountered—much more confusing were the wars and humanitarian crises my work supported.

Funny, then, how I couldn't clearly remember why I had registered for the Specific-Interest Institute on Trauma, Revenge, and Restoration on its first morning. The Institute lingered in the air throughout the entirety of the conference and, still absorbing into my skin, shaped my experience. We encountered trauma's disorienting impact and the importance of the group in restoration. More importantly, we explored the affective realm of trauma which contoured experience, lifting our process from reptilian to human. I don't believe we could have fully engaged the goals of the institute without the group engaged in working through familiar group themes of anger and conflict. However, during this institute, anger and conflict highlighted dynamics of submission, domination, humiliation, and attacks on one's dignity otherwise blunted.

Just as I witnessed breakdown behind the visor of an airtight suit, Wilfred Bion witnessed breakdown within the armored confines of a tank. Prior to psychoanalysis, Bion had served in the British Royal Tank Corps during World War I, gradually being promoted through the commissioned ranks. His "commensal communication" during containment speaks to the witnessing, holding, dignifying of others. It relates to warding off violence by assuring the subjective a realm within which to speak without punishment, without incurring wrath and thus begging a violent response. This form of communication appears to be a necessary feature of relational mutuality and of restoration from trauma in group work.

The study of trauma treatment in psychotherapy tends to focus on the victim, the survivor, and on the work of repairing the aftermath of wrongs. The concept of defense mechanisms, as a whole, appear to point to the traumatizing potential of each day of life. This focus on victimization is fully justified, though partially concealing. In group, as in society, the perpetrator lives with us, must reconcile with us, may be us. In group, and through my institute experience, the most important question



Helene Satz, Joe Shay & Marsha Vannicelli



Joel Krieg, Liz Detrich & Kurt White

was not how we respond to violence but how we consider our own capacity for violence.

In my own reflection on this question, I perceived myself and other members to have developed a quality I thought of as "quarantine." Perhaps akin to an introjective process, I see this as a cordon-off a part of one's self because of its history of and potential for perpetration or wrong-doing. Our group work found us bumping up against quarantined parts of ourselves as conflict and anger broke out, as ruptures occurred, and as retaliation was sought. Equal parts guilt and shame, anger and fear, emerged as we saw each other split apart and cauterized back together. My own anger, a symbol to me of my aid in the conflicts of my enlistment, was recruited once again into the group process. Yet, this time that anger, a break in the seal, didn't destroy or instill terror.

Rather than quarantine, it was the group's ability to share the task of containment which drew us together. Containment required the mutual restoration of dignity accomplished through the witnessing and acknowledgement of humiliation. This seemed only fully possible by our survival in the face of each other's wrath. In this way, we resisted our containers becoming contaminated, or identifying with projections. Ultimately, our restoration required a multi-person process in which conflict was navigated through until asymmetries in power could be consensually balanced.

For the rest of the Annual Meeting, the experience of the Institute lingered in the air like vapor. As splits had been sewn together, I felt the vitality and clarity needed to observe my own affective



Zach Wigham, Joel Krieg & David Mou



Deb Carmichael & Steffen Fuller

vulnerability and to offer that to the members who crossed my path. I can only imagine that group process holds a particular alchemy to turn toxins into nutrients. My experience of the Annual Meeting was one of leaving quarantine, passing through decontamination, walking someplace new, walking home.



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- 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.*

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\$50 - Business Card: 3.5" w x 2" h

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

Texting in Class: Using A Modern Analytic Technique with Rude Students

Robert Pepper, PhD, LICSW

As much as cell phones in group therapy are distracting and rude, they are just as distracting and rude in the classroom—with one major difference. As a group leader, I have more leverage to control the environment than in the classroom. The contract between leader and group members is vastly different than between professor and the class. Group members come to therapy to resolve interpersonal problems; students come to class for a grade.

The bane of the college professor's life, these days, seems to be texting in class. As a Professor of Behavioral Science at the New York Institute of Technology in Manhattan, I have firsthand experience with this irritation. It is impolite, distracting and has reached epidemic proportions. Within the last several years, I have had to compete with cell phones for my students' attention on a moment-to-moment basis. Clearly, the tacit message to me is that whatever is going on in class isn't half as interesting as what's going on in cyberspace.

The problem is compounded because some students legitimately use their computers to take notes (*some*, not all). It's often impossible tell which is which without actually walking behind someone and taking a look. Last semester, I walked behind one such student and saw that she was doing her online shopping during class. I looked at the outfit she was about to buy and said out loud: "The dress on the left suits you better!" She was embarrassed but she came up to me after

class and thanked me for alerting her to a serious problem—she realized that she was addicted to her electronic devices. And she was right, it is an addiction. So what is a professor to do? I tell my class about the online video of a professor, who in utter frustration takes a student's cell phone and smashes it against a wall. I tell my students that he's my role-model—I want to be like him when I grow up.

I have developed my own creative solution to the nuisance of texting in class, using a technique from my training as a group therapist. Had I employed a mirroring intervention in the college classroom, taking out my cell phone and texting during the lecture, that technique would have bombed. Most likely no student would have noticed; they'd have been all too busy texting! I decided to use the technique of out-crazying—an extreme form of joining. The idea is to go along with the behavior to the point of absurdity rather than try to oppose it. It's based on the concept in physics that two objects cannot occupy the same place at the same time.

This is how it works. At the beginning of each class, I enter the room and blow a whistle and shout: "TEXT!" The students have five minutes to text as much and as fast as they can. I insist on it. If I see a student not texting, I approach them and say, paradoxically and with humor: "When I tell you to text, you text. I don't care if you don't get a signal. I don't care if you don't have anyone to text. YOU TEXT WHEN I TELL YOU TO TEXT!" Then I leave the room.

After five minutes, I return and blow the whistle again. This time I say: "Texting stop!" Does it solve the problem? you ask. Yes and no. While most students stop texting, there are some who don't; they

try all types of clever ways to hide it, but they can't hide from a determined text detector. Some students place their pocketbooks in front of them and text behind the bag. One student put his cell phone on his lap. Another put his phone in his gym bag, placed the bag on his desk and actually stuck his head in the bag! He must have thought that he was invisible. When I see this sort of thing happening, I never address the offender directly. I turn to an attentive student and say: "What's the unspoken message to me when someone continues to text after I blow the whistle?" One student replied: "The message is—'F*** you'" He hesitated a moment and added: "I never thought I say 'F*** you' to a Professor." I said to him: "Good work. That's extra credit." This often leads into a discussion about motivation, particularly as it applies to adolescent oppositional behavior. It's as if they are saying: "No adult is going to tell me what to do!"

Another very cooperative student pointed out that my whistle-blowing technique was somewhat flawed. He told me, in front of the class, that I would get a stronger, louder whistle if I held the whistle upside-down. Eureka. It worked. I said: "You also get extra credit for that piece of advice!"

A good way to approach a group resistance is to join it, go with the flow. The law in physics states: two objects cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Who am I to challenge the laws of the physical world? Adding a dash of humor points to the absurdity of challenging my classroom authority and defangs the power of oppositional group behavior.



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Bliss Online? A Firm Maybe

William Sharp, PsyD, LMHC

A friend of mine recently asked me to share spread the word about a post-election support group. What was different about the request was that it was for an e-therapy platform that allows one to talk to a mental health counselor in a secure call via a phone app called Everbliss (everbliss.com). The site advertises *"Know yourself. Getting to know yourself better is a power move. It let's [sic] you create positive change, become more confident and make stronger choices."* Wow. Now that's a claim. In fact, it is a claim that I both love and hate. I love that it is not selling a set of skills, but rather a path to insight that seems to fall in the positive psychology realm. On the hate side, it's another "e" in my life, and I am with Sherry Turkle (*Alone Together, Reclaiming Conversation*) that some conversations really require you to be with a person with whom you have a relationship and in-person.

As a researcher, I am also aware that this could be a sign of my age. The last social media platform I joined was Twitter because my publisher wanted me to have a presence. Snapchat, Instagram, and the like just don't call to me, and when I was in my 20s, I never imagined saying something like that.

I decided to use the NSGP listserv as a consultant to get others' thoughts and feelings about apps, online counseling, etc. (Yes, I am aware of the irony of consulting a listserv- but thought it was a good sample to pull data from!) Here are some of the best responses:

"It's hard to get behind a therapy platform billed as "everbliss"...The consumer capitalist culture hollows itself out with promises that can't be kept...I expect to be put out of business by a clever algorithm at some point. Until then, I think I'll keep trying to get better at what I'm doing here...and everbliss can pick up the pieces."

"I noticed my reaction to this posting: a sequence that went from dismissal, to curious, to enthusiastic especially about the DoSomething.org gang. Since the election, and since I've begun working more closely with one of Boston's homeless communities, I'm more inclined to think that the professional boundaries I was trained to have (which have led to perfectly inaccessible care through insurance) could be re-examined. I'm certainly not sure of counseling or therapy via app (what about

suicidality?? and the like) but I'm open to considering how our expertise might become truly more available to help struggling people everywhere."

"I will share my biases and brief experiences. I am trained as a psychodynamic-relational psychotherapist, so am dis-inclined to do individual psychotherapy out-of-my-room b/c, 1) I am trained to use metaphor, 2) I use my somatic responses in the room to inform process, and, 3) to me, the screen is a barrier to psychodynamic process, but not for discussion of observed cognitive processes. Also, not so bad for family discussions, or committee meetings. The encryption issue is paramount in my decision to limit the process with a patient to in-room communication. That said, for more than three years, I have had communication via email and text about changes in scheduled sessions and/or requests for extra appointments by established patients..."

"I have had flexible but thoughtful boundaries, I believe, sometimes because I am working with hard-to-reach young people. I know some marketers who tell me that e-counseling is the way of the future, but I don't like it. Maybe it would work better with CBT, but my approach is humanistic (with a hefty dose of psychoanalysis from my student years), and I need to interact with a human in the room."

"I have a bias against 'device-based' therapy, mostly because of what neuroscience studies tell us about human communication. Close to 99% of communication is non-verbal...This "right-brain to right-brain" experience is essential for emotional connection [and] it's a powerful part of healing in psychotherapy...I'm sure many of us have heard clients expressing appreciation for the comfort or safety or calm of our offices; I just can't imagine that someone sitting in a living room or at a kitchen table has the same experience. I have used both phone and video with established, long-term clients when necessary. And for rural areas and people who can't access therapy for other reasons, phone or video is a great solution. But for clients who can come to an office, there is nothing that can replace real person-to-person contact."

Considering my own work, I too have allowed some scheduling to take place over email and text with established patients, and phone calls for some patients who go out of the country for short periods. Otherwise, attempts at contact via text or email usually get a "call me" response or if they are just reporting and not making any request for a contact, I simply delete or say, "Got the message."

A Google search results in lots of articles both pro and con eTherapy. WWFS? (What would Freud say?) Freud certainly didn't see this coming and so this is hypothetical, but he was definitely in favor of analyzing his own theories and making changes as he went along (the seduction theory, the topographical model of the mind, one or two drives?) but he wasn't so happy when others would do it. How would he see this? Is the unconscious powerful enough to come across the eUniverse? The future of therapy with the generation becoming adults now is going to be different, that is for sure- or will it? Generational shifts are often a debate between personality and development psychology researchers. Jean Twenge (*Generation Me, The Narcissism Epidemic*) for example feels narcissism is on the rise and has data to prove it. Jeffrey Arnett disagrees and says there is an old tradition of bashing the youth and their ways (he has the data to show why Twenge's data is wrong.) So maybe eTherapy is just the clinical world's expression of the process of social evolution. Where we choose to make our stand certainly says something about us, and we will have to wait for this to play out to see what it says about our shared world.



CLASSIFIEDS

Miscarriage Support Group for Women. Ongoing group meets Thursdays from 7-8:15pm in Central Square, Cambridge. **Contact Claire Blood-Deschamps, LICSW, at (617) 386-6552.**

Sublet Available, Brookline Village 1 Harvard St., accessible by T or car, furnished, days and some evenings \$10/hr. **Call William at (617) 216-3871.**

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DAY
1

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Panel of Discussants to Include:

Scott Rutan, Ph.D., CGP, DLFAGPA

Sara Emerson, LICSW, CGP, FAGPA

Suzanne Cohen, Ed.D., CGP, FAGPA

Steffen Fuller, PhD, CGP

DAY
2

SATURDAY, JUNE 10TH 2017

A Full Day of Workshop Offerings
An Afternoon Community Meeting
NSGP Dinner Party

DAY
3

SUNDAY, JUNE 11TH 2017

Full Day Guest Lecture and Demonstration Group:

The Effective Group Psychotherapist

Molyn Leszcz, MD, FRCPC, CGP, DFAGPA

Social Hour



N S G P

Northeastern Society for Group Psychotherapy

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, CGP through the NSGP office, or via email to newsletter@nsgp.com. (Please remember to preserve the confidentiality of any group members

Dear Analyze This

I am ending a group that I have been leading for about 10 years. As I enter into this process I am aware of not only the feelings of the members, but my own feelings as well. The group is a long-term mixed-gender psychodynamic group in the age range of mid-twenties to about forty. It is uncertain whether the agency at which I work will find a new leader for this group. This is something I have no control over.

One question I have is about how to manage my own feelings around my leaving the group. My reasons for leaving center around making a decision for myself that negatively impacts the members. For various reasons and life circumstances, I have decided that I no longer want to run evening groups. I care about this group and hope that another leader is found to take my place.

I am also wondering about how much I should disclose to the group about my feelings and reasons? I would like to give the group enough information about why I am leaving to help them understand. My hope is to minimize the negative impact of my leaving (and the possible termination of the group), particularly for members who have experienced previous significant loss or abandonment. I recognize the importance of having a termination process with the group and I am wondering how much to be a part of the process with them in what I share and how much to step back. What should I be thinking about in terms of processing both the goodbye and my "killing off" of the group. How do I help members with feelings about a

process that I caused and they did not choose?

My final question is about managing the transfer of the group to another therapist, if one is found. What should the transition process look like? Should I have the new therapist attend the group before my departure? What would this look like if I did? Or, is it better to let the group have an ending with me and start anew with the new leader? What if there is no time for a smooth transition?

Thank you for your advice,

The Tentative Terminator

Dear Tentative Terminator,

The decision to stop leading a group is sure to stir up feelings for the leader and the group. It's clear you care deeply about the group and its members. How could you not? You've been at the helm through the group's highs and lows over the past ten years. You raise some great questions around navigating a very important period for the group.

I can sense your trepidation in facing the group's feelings (and maybe some of your own as well). To move from "Tentative Terminator" to "Confident Terminator" there are three areas on which to focus: 1. clarifying whether the group is ending or transitioning, 2. managing your countertransference feelings, and 3. the various challenges around

"Imagine how powerful it could be if you invite, tolerate, and even cherish their uncomfortable feelings."

It is paramount to first clarify if the group is transitioning to a new leader or ending. Relying on your agency to find a new leader puts you and the group in a difficult spot of not-knowing. The uncertainty around the group's future makes the group's work (are they saying good-bye to you or to the entire group?) less clear. If you think the group would benefit from continued work together, I would work very actively to recruit a new leader. If you cannot find someone within the agency, see if you could bring someone into the agency to lead your group. Put a time frame on the search. If you are unable to find a replacement leader in that time, you can move forward with processing the group's ending. The sooner you are clear about the group's future, the sooner you and the group talk about the feelings around the group's fate.

Just as all kinds of feelings can get stirred up for members around endings, the same is true for the leader. Use appropriate spaces like therapy, peer supervision, and/or individual supervision/consultation to explore and better understand your thoughts, feelings, and associations about ending with the group. You might find it helpful to explore your own experiences with good-byes. What is a "good"/"bad" good-bye for you? Have you had them? What have they been like? What do you imagine your leaving will do to the group? Is there space to consider the opportunity to openly talk about feelings about good-byes as a gift to the group?

You mentioned a hope to minimize the negative impact on group members. Members are going to feel what they feel. The leader's job is to invite and welcome all their feelings. What do you imagine happening if you encouraged members to talk about all their feelings? Imagine how powerful it could be for members if you invite and tolerate (or maybe even cherish) their uncomfortable feelings. It is likely your group members have struggled to own their uncomfortable feelings (like anger, disappointment, sadness, etc.) toward others (maybe especially parental figures) because they experienced or feared retaliation, overreactions, or not being heard. In leaning into group members' uncomfortable feelings, you validate their experience and communicate that their feelings aren't crazy or too much. You reinforce the maybe somewhat foreign idea that feelings (comfortable or not) can be talked about.

Regarding how much to self-disclose about your feelings, it's complicated. One of the tasks of the group leader is to manage his/her feelings in the service of the group. As you come to know more about your thoughts and feelings about ending through therapy, supervision and/or consultation, you might find more clarity around what would be helpful and not to share with the group. If we think of self-disclosure on a continuum of transparent to opaque, there are strengths, weaknesses, and challenges with every point on the continuum. For example, when you disclose less, there's more room for the group members' fantasies and assumptions, though you risk frustrating their understandable wish to know what's going on for you. While more disclosure could help the group more fully understand your decision, it could foreclose fantasies and access to

members' internal worlds. I recommend using your past decisions about self-disclosure in the group to help you with this one. If the group knows you as being consistently on one end of the continuum, it's probably wise to maintain that position now.

Finally, if you transition the group to a new leader, there are a number of ways to orchestrate it, ranging from lots to little exposure/interaction between the new leader and the group. If possible, I'd have the new leader attend the beginning of a group, introduce him/herself, and allow time for group members to ask questions. Individual meetings with the members and the new leader can be helpful and containing, providing an opportunity for the leader and the members to get to know each other and a therapeutic alliance to begin.

I hope you find this useful. Good luck!

Joel Krieg, LICSW, CGP



Dear Tentative Terminator,

Thank you for your wonderfully direct and honest question. The simple fact that you are asking the question demonstrates the degree to which you care for your group.

All of us will go through the process of terminating with our groups, either by choice or by fate. We won't work forever, and we won't live forever. We fall ill, take vacations, go to conferences, and "abandon" our group members for a host of other reasons. The fact that we have such human limitations needn't cause our patients permanent harm. The vagaries of life in groups can be transformed into opportunities for growth. As leaders, we can help this transformation by facing these circumstances alongside the members of our groups.

Elvin Semrad, the spiritual grandfather of psychodynamic therapies in this area of the world, taught that the central dilemma of being human is the seeming impossibility of bearing our grief. Sadness is a melting emotion that makes us vulnerable and open to the most tender aspects of this existence. Deep within each of us, there is a profound anxiety that we cannot face the challenges of living if we are broken-hearted, bereaved, or simply sad. You can help your group members to turn toward and grow resilient in the face of this anxiety.

In your description of your group, I note some negative attributions toward yourself as the leader. You ask how to

"manage (your) own feelings" about leaving the group, and what you should be thinking about "killing off" the group. It is as though the feelings are dangerous or destructive. This sounds like a guilty part of you. That part wants some guidelines on safely negotiating the transition while keeping your emotions under control. Of course, guilt is a natural response to the choice you are making. However, that guilt alone can't guide you safely through the process. What will free you to more openly work with your group is a compassionate understanding of your own responses. In addition to guilt, you may feel a wish for self-care, anxiety, anger, sadness, relief, and a constellation of other emotions. These are normal, human responses. When one attempts to exert control over these aspects of experience, they often become an overwhelming flood of voices, all speaking at once.

If you acknowledge and accept each of these responses, they can be seen as the workings of your human heart. This part of the process can be very difficult. It involves facing mortality, grief, and our own responsibility for the choices we make. Some of this process involves introspection and finding confidence in our life-enhancing decisions. Some of the process involves seeking the support and counsel of trusted colleagues. By asking your brave question, you have already started down this path.

Once you have found this confidence, I recommend that you share your responses with your group. Taking responsibility for your important life decision provides a model for your group members. It demonstrates for your group members that all "abandonment" is not abandonment. That is, there are separations and losses in life. This is difficult for the group leader as it is for group members. As you are leaving, you are also sharing deeply from yourself. Members can witness you bearing and articulating your own feelings about loss and about connection.

Any termination pushes us into the urgency of the moment: whatever we have to say to one another, we must try to say now. When the leader is open-hearted toward people in the midst of such emotional experiences, the lesson is that the unspeakable can be spoken and the unbearable can be borne.

Termination is also a time for assessing what gains have been made, and what work remains to be done. This is even

more true when the one terminating is the leader. Finding a clearer way to measure and express the progress that has been made helps build a bridge to the future of the group and the group members. You can share with them your admiration for their progress, as well as your vision of the work that lies ahead of them. They can talk about their group experience, their appreciation and their disappointment. All of this can be observed and held in the body of the group.

This leads us to your final question: how to handle the transition to the new leader. I hope that there will be one, and I encourage you to advocate for this outcome. The group has worked for 10 years to create a safe and healing environment. What a shame if this sacred space is lost. Assuming that a step-parent for the group will be made available, I lean toward having the new leader observe silently for a few sessions. This allows the new leader to absorb some of the working ethos of the group, and gives the group members some exposure to the new leader. It is rarely a good idea

"Any termination pushes us into the urgency of the moment."

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to thrust a step-parent into the family, no matter what the institutional pressures might demand. The final meeting, however, should be you alone with your group. You are the one who has had the relationship with the group, and you all have the commonality of your grief.

Best good luck with this. Everyone will survive and be better for the experience. You may all leave with sadness in your hearts, at the same time knowing that you have taken important steps toward learning how to bear the life that lies ahead.

Tracy MacNab, PhD, CGP, FAGPA



Making Workshops Great Again: Find Your Sentence and Kill Your Darlings, A Workshop with Joe Shay, Ph.D.

Barbara Schmitz, LMHC

On Sunday, October 23, 2016, the NSGP Professional Development Committee sponsored a workshop entitled, "Making Workshops Great Again: Find Your Sentence and Kill Your Darlings." Joe Shay, Ph.D., who has presented workshops nationally and internationally on topics related to individual, couples, and group psychotherapy, offered an inside look at what makes a presentation engaging and effective. Throughout his talk, Joe demonstrated techniques such as audience polling, humor, and the use of audio-visual media to inform and engage the group. Joe emphasized the importance of establishing a culture of safe interaction, much as clinicians do in therapy, in order to create connections between the presenter and individual members and within the learning group itself.

Many participants reported that they experience performance anxiety when presenting to an audience. Worries that "no one will show up," that technology will be unfamiliar or fail, fears about not

being "good enough," and "not having anything worthwhile to say" were cited as shared concerns. Dr. Shay reassured the group that these are common to most presenters, suggested acceptance of these as expectable anxieties, and offered some tips to address them.

According to Joe, preparation is crucial to a good workshop and to quieting anxiety. He stressed the critical importance of knowing your audience in order to make your message relevant. Presenters should develop a "sentence" that they would like attendees to leave the presentation with, a sort of "take-home" message. Another key point, implied in the workshop title, is to avoid trying to do too much in a presentation even if you find it relevant or amusing: as Joe said, "kill your 'darlings.'" Presenters are wise to get people talking, always assessing the group's level of engagement. One way to encourage active participation is to start with more closed questions, moving to ones that are more open. Another way is to encourage cooperation over competition by commenting on the group's helpfulness or willingness to talk.

Many attendees related to some of the common difficulties that occur when giving a presentation or workshop. Noting that participants in workshops are also members of a (workshop) group, Joe

offered some theoretical background on group behavior. According to Joe, three toxins that are common in therapy groups are also common in workshop groups. It is helpful for presenters to be aware of these, which are fear, embarrassment, and shame.

One specific problem mentioned was the participant who seems to have an axe to grind, dominating the group. Joe suggested respectfully validating the participant's comments by highlighting the parts you agree with and then quickly pivoting to another question or to your next point. A similar difficulty occurs when a participant asks provocative or "know-it-all" questions. Here, Joe suggests using self-deprecating humor or noting that the question is "regrettably, beyond the scope of this workshop."

Joe Shay's workshop was a great example of the influence a properly prepared and engaged presenter can have on the presentation group. He modeled the techniques he described, soliciting participation from all, encouraging each to develop their own example presentation "sentence," and frequently illustrating his points with humorous cartoons and videos. Participants left with a warm sense of group and with practical ideas for a more successful presentation.



Are You A Member of Our Online Community?

The NSGP Listserv serves as our organization's online community. It is a source of information including NSGP happenings, other educational events relevant to group therapists, and of course referrals.

It is a free member benefit open to all members in good standing.

The listserv offers three ways to receive postings:

Regular version: Receive each email as a separate post (you can delete without reading if the subject matter is not relevant to you).

Digest version: Up to 25 emails are bundled together.

Abridged version: Worried about too much email? This version sends just one summary email of new activity each day. It requires a Google password which you can easily get via Google.

To sign up, send an email to Lisa Portscher at [Lisa Portscher <support@nsgp.com>](mailto:support@nsgp.com).

Questions about list etiquette? Contact Listserv moderator: Ellen Ziskind, LICSW

Technical questions? Contact Listserv manager: Eleanor Counselman, Ed.D.

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

The Consultation Benefit is FREE!

Here's how you set up a consult. Call or e-mail Annie Weiss (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!

The Consultation Benefit cannot be used to address an emergency situation. It is not available to students as they have consultation built into their programs.

Practice Development Workshop: Bringing Group to Life on the Page

Judi Garland, PsyD

On November 13th, the Professional Development Committee sponsored a workshop on sharpening clinical writing skills. Suzi Naiburg, Ph.D., LICSW led this inspiring workshop. Dr. Naiburg is a graduate and faculty member of the Massachusetts Institute for Psychoanalysis. She leads several writing groups, is a writing coach, and is the author of *Structure and Spontaneity in Clinical Prose: A Writers Guide for Psychoanalysts and Psychotherapists*. She also has a private practice in Belmont.

On this crisp autumn Sunday, ten group psychotherapists gathered around a long wooden living room table. The workshop participants had a variety of writing backgrounds. Some of them write blogs, others write for themselves, and others had written in the past and wanted to resume a passion of theirs. Throughout the course of the afternoon, participants engaged in exercises to stimulate ideas and palpable images in writing, and then went on to write and share a longer piece of work.

Dr. Naiburg shared with the participants some practical exercises about breathing life into narratives about our work, and weaving in a clinical teaching. We worked on making the clinical material vivid and engaging, and then going on to tell the reader about an important clinical point.

The first exercise was a strategy to open up space for new ideas and images, to make a narrative lively, as a clinical story is told. It was based on DeBono's method of lateral thinking. Each workshop participant was instructed to think of a non-clinical interest of theirs, and list several words associated with that interest. For example, one participant makes jewelry, and listed solder, diamond, torch, and saw. Then the writer paired one of those words with something in her clinical work. Following the above example, these pairings were made: solder-bonding, diamond-authenticity, torch-passion, saw-opening up. Participants then experimented with weaving their non-clinical images in with their clinical narrative, resulting in vivid sentences that kept the listener engaged.

Dr. Naiburg went on to teach several storytelling styles. She suggested not writing from the past tense, but using the present tense to lead the reader into an unfolding narrative. She distinguished several different narrative styles, and gave examples of each, drawn from Yalom,

Eleanor Counselman, and other well-known authors. Each style is designed to involve the reader in the clinical experience, bringing him or her right into the moment.

In the workshop, each participant took about 20 minutes to write a narrative using one of the styles discussed. Afterwards, each participant shared his or her work and we gave one another

supportive and constructive feedback on our writing. The experience of this workshop left many of us feeling energized, as a palpable buzz of enthusiasm for writing filled the room.

Many thanks to Suzi Naiburg and to the Practice Development Committee for bringing this inspiring workshop to NSGP.



NSGP

Breakfast Club

Stay Tuned for the 2017-18 Schedule!

13

The NSGP Training Committee would like to recognize members of the 2017 Principles of Group Psychotherapy Training Class!!!

**Stephanie Best
Nina Carmel
Kelly Chandler
Tris Dashti-Gibson**

**Marilyn Downs
Pamela Lane
Corrina Maslanka
Nathan Stein**

These students will complete the *Principles Course* in May 2017. *If you meet any of the students at future NSGP events, please extend a warm hello!*

THANK YOU also to the Training Faculty for 2017 for volunteering their time and expertise: **Joe Shay, Julie Anderson, Kurt White, Ken Jaeger, Theresa Cohen and Scott Reinhardt**. We would like to congratulate them on a successful program thus far and a job well done!


****Much appreciation to the NSGP Foundation for their generous scholarship support of the Training Program.****


Thanks also to **Annie Weiss** who led the first year-long weekly Training Group (Sept. 2016-May 2017) as a separate new offering of the Training Program this year!!!


Coming up: The committee will open registration for next year's Training Experience Group in the summer and for the 2018 Principles Course in November 2017. Please check the website at **www.nsgp.com/training/** for more information, or feel free to contact Joel Krieg at any time with questions about group therapy training at NSGP **kriegjoel@gmail.com**.


Progress Notes


Progress Notes features a variety of items that reflect progress for NSGP members or committees. Please let us know (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.

 **Alan Albert** recently attended an artist residency program which he was awarded from the Ragdale Foundation in Lake Forest, Illinois, a residency program supporting writers, artists, and composers in furthering their projects. He was there for three weeks in January, and had the chance to work on his second book of poems. Coincidentally, he had a chance to see *Hamilton* in Chicago while he was away and reports that it was a total joy and a "must-see"!


 **Douglas Baker's** first book, *Five-Minute Mindfulness: Walking*, was just released on 1/1/17, published in the UK and US. It's a simple, user-friendly guide to Mindfulness, and the practice of mindful walking, which takes meditation from the cushion into the rest of the day as we move through the world. He will be offering ongoing yoga and meditation classes again this year, as well as teaching CEU courses on using mind/body practices in therapeutic settings, including a course this summer at Smith College on ACT and Mindfulness. He has an ongoing mindfulness-based therapy group and a short-term skills group on managing anxiety and stress with yoga and meditation.


 **James Tyler Carpenter** presented "A Discussion: Psychotherapy and Neurobiology" and "Wild & Precious: A Performed Case Study of Extreme States" at the ISPS-US Annual Meeting in October. In January, he also was an Instructor at the Expert Witness Workshop and Trial Advocacy Training Program at Harvard Law School.

 **Eleanor Counselman** published two articles, both in the January 2017 issue of the IJGP: "Reading Plays to Enhance Professional Development" (co-authored with Robert Schulte and Yavar Moghimi), and "First You Put Your Chairs in a Circle: Becoming a Group Therapist," which was based on her AGPA Presidential Plenary talk. She is enjoying her work as AGPA President and is learning a lot about mental health advocacy. She has worked hard on a 300+ page petition, co-sponsored by AGPA, to have group psychology and psychotherapy approved as a specialty by the American Psychological Association. If approved, specialty status within APA should help group therapists in other disciplines make the same argument. She is also very much enjoying her two little grandchildren.

 **Bette Freedson** will be co-leading a women's weekend at Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in June. At the Brief Therapy Conference in San Diego in December, she presented a short course on use of "The SOLVE Method" for brief and lasting therapy with kids and teens and she


continues to teach for The Sweetser Training Institute, located in Saco and Brunswick, and for AdCare of Maine.


 **Karin Maria Hodges** joined esteemed colleagues, Drs. Sally Barlow, Francis Kaklauskas, and Nina Brown at the 2017 AGPA Annual Conference as they co-presented, "Integrating Research and Theory to Create Playgrounds for Learning." This open session asked, "Does leader knowledge of group psychotherapy research influence group processes and/or bolster treatment effectiveness?"


 **Barbara Keezell** performed at AGPA's Annual Meeting in March, in the Red Well Theatre Group's Special Institute dramatic reading presentations. She participated in both plays, *The Great God Pan* and *Dinner with Friends*.


 Last fall **Joel Krieg** began a men's group in his private practice and continued leading process groups for first-year mental health counseling students at BU's School of Medicine.

 **Marilyn Levitt** gave a solo benefit recital of art songs & operatic arias in the main sanctuary of Emmanuel Church this past November 2016.

 **Amy Matias** presented a 90-minute workshop at Boston College entitled "Introduction to Meditation" which was well-attended. She continues to run two groups a Mixed Gender Interpersonal Group and a Women's Trauma Support Group.


 After 6 years, **Jenn McLain** is stepping down as NSGP Newsletter co-editor to free up more time for trips and family fun! She would like to thank everyone with whom she worked over the years, and says, "It was an honor to be entrusted with the written representation of our Society and I enjoyed that it allowed me to interact with so many interesting members! Shared stories are powerful, and I look forward to many more years of readership under **Kurt White** and the new co-editor **Howie Schnairsohn**."


 **Rebecca Eddy Muccilli** started analytic training at MIP this fall and started a new group for women recovering from Eating Disorders, "Food and Mood."


 **Rob Pepper** published an article entitled: "Freud, Newton and Einstein—Strange Bedfellows Indeed" in the Fall 2016 edition of *GROUP*. The premise is that there are similarities between the laws of physics and laws of human emotions.

 **David Poles** is starting a new group, "New Beginnings Weekly Group for Men."


 **Scott Rutan** delivered the Opening Plenary Speech for the AGPA Institute in NYC in March.

 **Barbara Schmitz** is very pleased to announce the establishment of her private practice. She works with late teenage and adult individuals, couples, and groups.

 **Howie Schnairsohn** successfully completed his first group in the private sector, "Process Group for Care Providers" in December. It was a 10-week group and although membership was small, attendance was at 100%. (He offers a 'thank you' out to **Ken Jaeger** for subletting his cozy office!) He is especially pleased to be filling the shoes of **Jenn McLain**, and joining **Kurt White** as newsletter co-editor for the Fall issue.

 A group of **Marian Shapiro's** poems, under the title *Songs From A Quaker Heart*, were set to music by composer Pamela Marshall, and performed by the excellent Arlington-Belmont Chamber Chorus. She says of this, "She had come upon my work on a shelf of Lexington authors at the Lexington Public Library, contacted me, and chose a group of poems for her inspiration. It was deeply wonderful, especially since I am also a musician and old choral singer." The concert will be repeated in May. She continues both her work as a poet and as a psychologist.

 **William Sharp** had 2 chapters published in the collection *Doctor Who Psychology: A Madman with a Box*.

 **Joe Shay** presented a workshop entitled "Making Workshops Great Again" for the NSGP Practice Development Committee. Joe also taught "Foundations of Group Therapy," the introductory module for the NSGP Group Therapy Training program. For AGPA, Joe is Guest Editor for the 75th Anniversary celebratory online issue of the International Journal of Group Psychotherapy examining 18 current models of group therapy, the current state of research in the field, and future challenges to be faced by group therapists. In addition, for the 75th anniversary, Joe created two videos offering birthday wishes to AGPA from numerous AGPA members. At the AGPA conference, Joe presented the workshop, "Projective

Special Thanks

to **Jenn McLain, MD, CGP** for her many years of hard work and devoted service to the newsletter! She will be missed!

Identification Goes to the Movies.” For PCFINE, Joe continues on the Board and also in other roles, presenting, for example, “Couples Gone Wild” and “Betrayal and Affairs” to the year 2 class, as well as presenting “Couples on the Ledge: ‘I’m so out of love with you, I’ve got nothing left’” at the annual PCFINE faculty dinner. In April, at Grand Rounds for the HUHS Counseling and Mental Health Services, Joe will present Formulation and Interpretation in Action.

Outstanding Recognition!!

Joe Shay, PhD, CGP, DFIGPA was awarded a special Letter of Appreciation at the March 2017 AGPA Conference.

Annie Weiss has been having a great time running the Experiential Training Group with 10 terrific and enthusiastic members. She is also co-leading one of the Observation Groups now housed at the Brookline Center with **Tracy MacNab**, as well as consulting to the group team at the Brookline Center. She was also granted Fellowship through AGPA this year and led her first Institute at the AGPA annual conference!

Congratulations

to **Annie Weiss, LICSW, CGP, FAGPA** and **Kurt White, LICSW, LADC, CGP, FAGPA** for being awarded Fellows of the AGPA!!! Well-deserved recognition for two hard-working, talented NSGPers.

Kurt White was proud to be recognized as a Fellow of AGPA this Winter, and especially so to be in such excellent company as recent Fellows **Annie Weiss** and **Oona Metz**, and while our very own **Eleanor Counselman** is President at AGPA. He also co-presented a workshop with Dr. Geoff Kane, on The Use of Self in Group Psychotherapy, at AGPA. In December, he presented “The Troubled Triangle: Developmental Neurobiology of Addiction, Attachment, and Trauma” at the Brattleboro Retreat, and in January he presented “Ethics for Substance Abuse Professionals” for the Vermont Association of Addiction Professionals.

Caption This!

Please submit a caption for this cartoon to newsletter@nsgp.com.

The winning entries will be announced in the next issue.



Drawn by Renee Hoekstra

Spring 2017 Cartoon Caption Winner from 2016 Fall

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



Drawn by David Goldfinger

Winners

1st:

“That’s what happens when you owe me money.” —Robert Pepper

2nd:

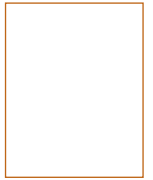
“As you can see, group, some of today’s icebreakers will be less safe than others.” —Caleb Englander

3rd:

“REMEMBER, no oral aggression in the group!” —Scott Rutan



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Save the Date!

NSGP's 36th Annual Conference!

June 9, 10, & 11, 2017

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the newsletter spring 2017

NSGP

Northeastern Society for Group Psychotherapy

NSGP Upcoming Events Calendar

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Apr. 23, 2017 | Breakfast Club 11–1:30—with Maria Mellano, LICSW <i>Psychodrama: Bringing Group Work to Life</i> Hosted by Suzanne Brennan-Nathan—Roslindale |
| May 7, 2017 | Practice Development Event 4:00–6:00—with Carol Dallinga <i>Marketing Your Practice: Thriving in a Changing World</i> Location TBD |
| June 9–11, 2017 | NSGP 36th Annual Conference: <i>Foundations & Frontiers in Group Psychotherapy</i> At Simmons College, Boston |
| Feb, 26–Mar 3, 2018 | Save the Date: AGPA Annual Meeting Houston, TX |
| Jul. 30–Aug. 4, 2018 | Save the Date: XX IAGP Congress Malmö, Sweden |

For more information or to sign up, please call 617-431-6747 or go online to www.nsgp.com.