

The Group Therapist Perspective



GPASC Group Psychotherapy Association of Southern California



GPASC President

Irene Harwood,
MFT, LCSW, Ph.D. Psy.D., CGP, FAGPA

Coming Events:

- Annual Conference
(Oct 28, 2007)
- Anger Management
and beyond
(Nov 11, 2007)

More information on
all workshops &
conference available
online

www.gpasc.org

President's Message

GPASC is hosting an exciting, cutting edge conference on Trauma. In preparation, let me share some of my research and work.

Some findings from trauma literature: adults who have suffered severe trauma, especially as young children, are likely to develop insecure disorganized attachment styles as manifested by 1) introversion, 2) unassertiveness, 3) feelings of exploitation, 4) self-consciousness and lack of self confidence, 5) more negative than positive feelings about themselves, 6) signs and symptoms of anxiety, depression, hostility and violence, 7) self defeating behavior and greater reporting of physical illness, and 8) fluctuations between interpersonal neediness and withdrawing. Traumatized individuals often develop PTSD with secondary trauma, have difficulty reading faces, understanding intentionality and "mentalizing." Peter Fonagy defines mentalization as the capacity to reflect on one's own affects and state of mind as well as that of others.

For someone to understand the state of another, they first need to have their own experiences validated and understood. Infants are wonderful at communicating. But, traumatized parents have difficulty interpreting their baby's communication. The parents often are feeling disregulated themselves and ignore or are not able to read the message their child is conveying with the face, gaze, types of

vocalization, body tone, hand gestures, touch, or heightened affect.

For example, working with a group of mothers, when I observe a miss-attunement to the communication that the baby is offering, or when the mother is enacting something that has nothing to do with the baby's needs, I try to find an equivalent metaphor that the mother(s) can relate to from their past experiences. It is when I give an example of a situation that the mother can identify with, and perhaps find some humor in, that she begins empathizing with her baby's state of mind.

Thus, if a mother is trying to feed the baby and the baby is gaze averting, I ask (tongue-in-cheek) something like: "Let's see how many of you have been in a situation when you went to your mother-in-law's and you were not hungry, but she insisted that you eat? How did it feel?" The response was a hearty laugh. From this point on, most of the mothers would offer food, rather than insist that the child eat. When a mother forgets and insists that a child eat, another mother might laugh and say: "Remember mother-in-law."

In a group of mothers and babies, as well as with individuals in couples or group, the clinician can help each individual begin to mentalize the other's subjective experiences. The clinician, by first empathically immersing herself in experiences that the parent or partner can imagine or may have actually experienced, can through the use of metaphor and empathy, help translate the states of mind of the other.

Editor's Notes



Evelyn Pechter, PsyD
President-Elect
Newsletter Editor
Website Liaison

In honor of our conference on Trauma, I would like to share a poem called "It's A Bumpy Ride Through Life"

A bump means trouble, and A bump means a problem, and a bump means we're traveling through life. On a smooth road, our troubles are over for a while, and we can live quietly, gently, peacefully. But life is 50/50, when it's good. There are rough times when we must hold on tight or we'll fall out, or we'll hurt ourselves, or we'll get taken away, or we'll die. During the bumpy times, I hold on by praying, and by listening to my Heartsongs. When the road is smooth, and I can sit

back and relax, and enjoy my life and play, I enjoy my life by praying, and by sharing my Heartsongs. It's a bumpy ride through life, through rough times and through smooth times. And even though the ride is bumpy and it may get sad and hard, there are lessons. The bumpy ride teaches some something, somehow, if we travel it with our Heartsongs.

--Mattie J.T. Stepanaek
November 19, 1998
Age 6

From his book:
"Reflections of a Peacemaker"
(2005)

2007 Annual Conference Update

[www. GPASC.org](http://www.GPASC.org) for more information and registration

The 54th Annual Conference of the
Group Psychotherapy Association of Southern California
*"Treating Trauma in Group Psychotherapy:
Theory and Pragmatic Experience"*



A one-day training conference designed to provide the unique opportunity to learn from a panel of distinguished Southern California experts the latest theoretical and experiential approaches to the treatment of various kinds of trauma in group therapy:

- **General Life Trauma:** William Flaxman, Ph.D., MFT
GPASC Chair: Research, Education, Training
- **Trauma from Natural and Unnatural Disasters:**
Elinor Dunn Grayer, Ph.D., LCSW, CGP
LAGPS Co-Chair: Training & Education
- **Sexual & Physical Trauma with Possible Disassociation & Addictions:**
Judith McLaughlin-Ryan, MFT
- **Bereavement Trauma:** Marilyn Stolzman, Ph.D., MFT
Executive-Director, H.O.P.E. Unit Grief Support Groups

• **AND... a VERY SPECIAL Keynote Address**
by: Allan N. Schore, Ph.D.
"Understanding Affect Dysregulation and Disorders of the Self – Facilitating Affect Regulation and Repair of the Self"

As part of The Mastering Group Therapy Series, a 3 hour
GPASC Continuing Education Program. . .

Sunday, November 11, 2007 • 1 - 4 PM

UCLA – SEMEL INSTITUTE
760 Westwood Plaza, Conference Room C8-885

“Anger Management and Beyond: Tools for Quick Relief; Awareness for Lasting Change”

Presenter:

SHEILA HATCHER, M.A., MFT

Certified Anger Management Facilitator, experienced in child, adult, family, individual, and group counseling. Specializations include: Anger Management, Depression, Corporate Burnout, and Child Play Therapy.

Ms. Hatcher is in private practice in the South Bay area. During 2004-2005 with Coast Counseling in Redondo Beach, she added the focus of anger management and depression to the Center's existing focus on panic and anxiety disorders by creating a 21-session Women's Anger Management Group.

She is experienced with court-referred clients (for anger management, substance abuse, and DCFS cases) as well as with self-referring clients with a variety of needs.

In this workshop, Ms. Hatcher will define methods to help clients express their anger in appropriate ways and to uncover underlying causes of their anger for long-term relief.

She will provide tools to help clients:

- ✓ Recognize the feelings and needs underneath their anger;
- ✓ Take responsibility for their anger and for having their needs met;
- ✓ Learn to use their anger energy to make positive changes in their lives.

In Addition, attendance at the Mastering Group Therapy Workshops qualify towards the credits required for certification in AGPA as a Certified Group Psychotherapist

The Group Psychotherapy Association of Southern California (GPASC) is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for Psychologists. GPASC maintains responsibility for the program and its content. GPASC is approved by the Board of Behavioral Sciences (PCE 528) as a provider of Continuing Education Credits for MFTs and LCSWs. Certificates for APA or BBS CE credit will be issued upon completion of the 3 hour program.



To reserve a seat at any of our workshops:

e-mail Donna Sexsmith, PhD, LCSW, CGP
optimactr@men.com

or call Hindy Nobler, PhD, LCSW, CGP
(310) 824-5922

or www.gpasc.org to register online

The cost is \$25 for GPASC members and \$50 for non-members;

(1/2 price for students)

Fee includes certificate for 3 CE Credits.



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GPASC shines the spotlight on...

Meghan Moody, Psy.D.

As a clinical psychologist I am dedicated to helping children, teens, and adults develop healthy and meaningful relationships with themselves and others. I have a private practice in Calabasas and am a supervising associate at the Family Resource Counseling Center (FRCC), a private group practice in West L.A. offering comprehensive services to families and individuals. What's exciting and unique about our counseling center is that a family, couple, or individual can receive the services they need all under one roof.

Children can engage in play therapy in one room while the parents get help down the hall. We offer multiple support and process groups for teens and children. Our clinicians have various specialties such as adoption issues, substance abuse, eating disorders, and couples therapy. Plus, we have interns and clinicians who offer a substantially reduced fee for those who need it.



I have specialized training in child psychology and psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Areas of expertise include childhood trauma, ADHD, parenting, complex personalities, addiction, disordered eating, anxiety, grief, and depression. Some of my past clinical experience includes two years of in-depth training in various psychoanalytic perspectives at the Wright Institute Los Angeles, the Family and Play Therapy Program at the Julia Ann Singer Center, and the Homebound Program at the San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health Center serving homebound older adults and the chronically mentally ill. I am a graduate of CSPP at Alliant International University.

I combine my experience and passion for working with teens by offering a process group for adolescent girls. The group addresses current issues girls face today, such as body image, eating disorders, cutting, dating, sexuality, friends, school, and family pressures. The group focuses on helping girls grow their self-esteem, understand their emotions, handle stress, and learn problem solving and communication skills.

Finally, I volunteer as Editor of the Los Angeles County Psychological Association's bi-monthly periodical and have been supporting Evelyn Pechter in her role as GPASC Newsletter Editor. I look forward to getting more involved with GPASC and local group therapists. Above all I am a mother. I am raising a child with ADHD, and, therefore working with ADHD boys is close to my heart.



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Melissa Johnson, Ph.D., PSY13102

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Presents...
MASTERING GROUP THERAPY 2008

January 13, 2008

Jane van Loon, MFT, SEP, and Vivian Gold, Ph.D.
"The Group, the Body & the Mind:
Somatic Experience in Group Psychotherapy"
(Location: Encino Hospital)

March 9, 2008

Susan Webster, Ph.D., MFT
"Personal & Group Empowerment Through Working with Dreams"
(Location: UCLA – Semel Institute)

May 18, 2008

Paula Perlman-Wolf, MFT
"Group Explorations in Creative Movement"
(Location: Encino Hospital)

July 13, 2008

Ann Nesbit, Ph.D., MFT
"Working with Affect in Psychoanalytic Group Psychotherapy"
(Location: UCLA – Semel Institute)

September 14, 2008

James DeSantis, Ph.D., CGP
"Designing, Marketing, and Starting Psychotherapy
Groups in Your Practice"
(Location: Encino Hospital)

November 9, 2008

Karen Cohen, MFT
"Multi-cultural Multi-family Group Treatment"
(Location: UCLA – Semel Institute)

Save \$\$\$ by purchasing the entire series of 6 workshops: \$125 for GPASC members;
\$250 for non-members; and \$62.50 for student members.

www.gpasc.org

- Please check our website for updates and complete workshop information as locations are subject to change.

Each of these courses is approved for 3.0 CE hours for Psychologists, MFTs and LCSWs. The Group Psychotherapy Association of Southern California (GPASC) is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. GPASC maintains responsibility for the program and its contents. GPASC is approved by the Board of Behavioral Sciences (#PCE 528) as a provider of Continuing Education Credits for MFTs and LCSWs. Certificates for BBS or APA EC credit will be issued upon completion of each course. **IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Those who attend the workshop & complete the evaluation will receive continuing education credits. Note that APA CE Rules require that we only give credit to those who attend the entire workshop. Those who arrive more than 15 minutes after the scheduled start time or leave before the workshop is complete will not receive CE credits.

Panel Presenting Theoretical & Experiential Approaches to the Treatment of Trauma in Group Therapy:

• **Ellnor Dunn Grayer, Ph.D., LCSW, CGP**, is in private practice in Encino, California. She is on faculty of the Sanville Institute and has consulted with various social agencies in the greater Los Angeles area. She has taught extensively in the U.S. and abroad in the areas of group psychotherapy, trauma, counter-transference, and the therapeutic use of improvisational acting. As a member of the International Society for the Study of Traumatic Stress, she debriefed mental health staff in Turkey following the 1999 earthquake and taught at Hacettepe University in Ankara. After "9-11" she consulted to and debriefed therapists who were running post-trauma groups in NY; after the L.A. earthquake in '94 she debriefed staff, faculty, and students at Santa Monica College. She is a former Board member of the American Group Psychotherapy Association and is a Board member and Co-Chair of Education and Training for the Los Angeles Group Psychotherapy Society.

• **Judy McLaughlin-Ryan, M.A., MFT**, is in private practice in WLA-Westwood. In addition to individual clients, she leads a process group for women affected by sexual abuse and PTSD, including some who also struggle with addictive disorders. In her study and treatment of adults molested as children, she has frequently noted among trauma victims a diagnostic "trauma cluster" involving PTSD-Eating Disorders-Alcoholism-Drug Addictions presenting dysregulation of both state and affect as well as dysfunctional attachment issues ranging in nature from disorganized to insecure. She has noted and supports the increased effectiveness of individual therapy that involves both group and community (twelve-step) process. She is a California approved Continuing Education Provider (PCE 394) and since 1999 has been teaching therapists and nurses "A Course on Trauma." Judy has presented and consulted with many hospitals, institutions, and groups on Trauma and Addiction. This past summer at the 2007 European Conference on Traumatic Stress in Croatia, she presented a paper on "Traumatic Stress, Trauma, and Groups." She has studied for one and a half years with Allan Shore, Ph.D., in his Northridge CA study group; she is a published member of the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress.

• **Marilyn Stolzman, Ph.D., MFT**, is Executive Director of the H.O.P.E. Unit Foundation for Bereavement, Loss and Transition (www.hopeunit.org). For 25 years she has helped people deal with the trauma of grief, deep personal loss, and life transition. In her private practice in Woodland Hills, California, Dr. Stolzman works with individuals and couples presenting with anxiety disorders, issues of stress management, trauma, health, and bereavement. She is a National Board Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist and a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner. She co-authored (with Gloria Lintermans) two recent books (2006): *The Healing Power of Grief: The Journey Through Loss to Life and Laughter* and *The Healing Power of Love: Transcending the Loss of a Spouse to New Love*.

• **William Flaxman, Ph.D., MFT**, is in private practice in Santa Monica and Topanga, California, with a specialty in safely containing individuals, couples, and families in crisis/trauma, guiding them to "Self"-manage painful emotional experiences/moods to improve their personal relationships and quality of life. He authored "Substance Use as a Function of Mood-Related Consciousness Alteration" (1998), surveying the research of fifty-eight prominent theorists on the topic of individuals' motivation to take substances and clarifying the relationships between specific kinds or patterns of abusers' emotional and interpersonal trauma and their choice of preferred substances. Dr. Flaxman is a Past-President and current Chair of Research, Education, and Training for the Group Psychotherapy Association of Southern California. He is a Board member of the Blackfeet Buffalo Horse Coalition (www.buffalohorse.org), a Native American non-profit youth and community horse therapy and training organization on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Browning, Montana.



REGISTRATION: Register on-line by credit card; or complete this form (keep a photocopy) and mail it, along with your check, to:

- On-line registration at www.gpasc.org
- E-mail: groups@gpasc.org
- GPASC Telephone: (323) 960-5143

GPASC
P. O. Box 2631
Winnetka, CA 91396

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES (Includes Lunch: Check here () IF you prefer a vegetarian lunch.)

Full Members \$105.--
 Non-Members \$135.--
 Student Members (graduate students and interns)* \$ 55.--*
 Student Non-Members (graduate students & interns) \$ 75.--
 Late Registration: after Oct. 15, or at the door – additional. . . \$ 15.--
 (If applying for full membership, add \$120.--; if applying for newly-licensed membership, add \$60.--; or if applying for student membership, add \$30.--) \$..--

***NOTE: To get this rate, new student members / interns must first complete the membership application process.**

Please indicate TOTAL (enclosed check # _____) for \$_____.

Please indicate 2 preferred groups: ___General Life Trauma; ___Disaster Trauma; ___Sexual Trauma; ___Bereavement Trauma
 An administrative fee of \$15.00 will be charged for all refunds prior to October 15th. NO REFUNDS after October 15th.

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