



International Association for Social Work with Groups

SPARC Program

November 2017 IASWG SPARC Report, Recommendations and IASWG Board Actions
SPARC Committee: *Carol S. Cohen, Barbara Muskat, Zaneta Smith and Brian Kelly*

Overview

2017 is SPARC's 5th year of operation. In the first five years we have had 10 funding cycles and we endorsed 33 projects, 21 of them with funding totaling \$15,445.00. Information about SPARC is distributed widely, including at conferences, EBlasts and IASWG Group News – We are interested in expanding our outreach. The SPARC webpage has been revised and expanded, and includes videos of SPARC Awardees speaking about their project and the application process. The Fourth Annual SPARC Workshop was held at the International Symposium in NYC in 2017 – we plan to continue this forum in South Africa in 2018. We look forward to expanding activities -- Ideas are welcome!

The purpose of the IASWG SPARC Program is to "spark" IASWG members' innovative group work practice, education, training and research projects through endorsement and/or small grants to advance the IASWG [mission](#). The program was developed by the IASWG Board and IASWG Commission on Group Work in Social Work Education from 2011-2012, and inaugurated in 2013. Only IASWG members can apply for SPARC endorsement and funding – funds are used to support projects, often in partnership with other organizations. The SPARC Committee is charged with reviewing SPARC protocols, outreach, ongoing updating and follow up. The IASWG Board reviews and votes on the Committee's recommendations, twice a year, corresponding with bi-annual Board Meetings in June and November. The SPARC Committee has continued to update, expand and circulate Project documents through multiple strategies and venues. IASWG SPARC Project Awardees have continued to submit interim and final reports, or are in the process of doing so as required. Updates and final reports, and many other resources will continue to be posted at: <http://www.iaswg.org/sparc>

Working in collaboration with the IASWG Marketing Committee and other IASWG members, SPARC Project has had an expanded presence at Chapter events, the US CSWE Conference, International conferences, and many other venues. Emily Wilk has been essential to all these activities. IASWG SPARC is promoted as a Member Benefit, and an opportunity to advance the IASWG mission and innovations in group work practice, training, research and education. With our rich history, we are considering further dissemination, publication and utilization of material generated by SPARC Projects.

History of Endorsement and Funding (33 Projects Endorsed, 21 with Funding, Total expended = \$15,445)

2013

June 2013/Cycle One: 4 Projects were Endorsed, 3 with Funding (\$2500.00 expended).

November 2013/Cycle Two: 5 Projects were Endorsed, 2 with Funding (\$700 expended)

Total 2013: \$3250.00 (9 Endorsed, 5 with Funding)

2014

June 2014/Cycle Three: 2 Projects were Endorsed, 1 with Funding (\$695.00 expended).

November 2014/Cycle Four: 3 Projects were Endorsed, 2 with Funding (\$2160.00 expended)

Total 2014: \$1695 (5 Endorsed, 3 with Funding)

2015

June 2015/Cycle Five: 2 Projects were Endorsed, 1 with Funding (\$1250.00 expended).

November 2015/Cycle Six: 8 Projects Endorsed, 5 with Funding \$3675.00 expended)

Total 2015: \$4925.00 (10 Projects Endorsed, 6 with Funding).

2016

June 2016/Cycle Seven: 4 Projects were Endorsed, 2 with Funding (\$1500.00 expended).

November 2016/Cycle Eight: 1 Project was Endorsement and Funding (\$1000.00 expended).

Total 2016: \$2500.00 (5 Projects Endorsed, 3 with Funding)

2017

June 2017/Cycle Nine: 1 Project was Endorsed with Funding (\$1000.00 expended)

November 2017/Cycle Ten: 3 Projects recommended for Endorsement and funding (\$2075 expended)

Total 2017: \$3075.00 (4 Projects were Endorsed, 4 with Funding)

The following IASWG SPARC Projects were approved by the IASWG Board for Endorsement and Funding:

Nancy Murakami: *Psychosocial Support Group in Refugee Transit Camps Project, Endorsement and Funding (\$865.00).*

Summary: The **Psychosocial Support Group in Refugee Transit Camps Project** is a response to growing recognition of the need to promote psychosocial wellbeing for refugees during their forced flight, in accordance with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) recommendations to integrate mental health and psychosocial approaches into its protection activities. The proposed project includes (1) development of a 6-session manualized trauma-informed, psycho-educational and support group model for refugee transit camps, (2) training and implementation support for Ugandan social workers from organizations in Nyakabande Transit Camp along the Uganda-DRC border, and (3) evaluation of the group model and recommendations for replication in other transit camps. The model aims to enhance refugees' awareness of psychosocial well-being, to build on resilience by expanding distress management skills, and to promote community-building in order to reduce isolation. Group clients will be adult refugees who have recently experienced war, violence, threats, and other human rights abuses.

Tee Tyler, *Interpersonal Classroom Model: Applying Group Work Teaching Methods in an MSW Social Justice & Diversity Course, Endorsement and Funding (\$225.00).*

Summary: This pilot study assesses the effectiveness of the **Interpersonal Classroom Model (ICM) as a teaching approach within an MSW Diversity and Social Justice course**. Previously, the ICM approach was tested within a year-long comparison study involving four undergraduate group practice courses (Tyler, in press). The ICM approach demonstrates preliminary effectiveness as a promising new method for preparing students for group leadership when working with diverse client populations. This project seeks to build on current ICM development by accessing whether this approach can be implemented within an MSW course. This project aims to support educators seeking to help students learn from diversity existing within the classroom. Students will complete a weekly ICM survey that requires them to access their experience during an ongoing in-class process group, and at four different times, complete a new survey titled the "group leadership assessment".

Gio Iacono, *The LGBTQ Youth Affirmative Mindfulness Group Project. Endorsement and Funding (\$950.00)/*

Summary: The **LGBTQ Youth Affirmative Mindfulness Group Project** is an exploratory constructivist grounded theory dissertation study on social group work with LGBTQ youth. This study will utilize 3 focus groups with approximately 16-20 LGBTQ youth (ages 16-18) to examine the potential utility of an adapted group affirmative mindfulness-based intervention (MBI) for LGBTQ youth. The study aims to: 1) Introduce and practice core mindfulness skills in a group setting with LGBTQ youth to understand and experience mindfulness; 2) Investigate what mindfulness and affirmative content and skills are useful for a culturally-relevant adaptation of a group MBI for LGBTQ youth; 3) Based on LGBTQ youth feedback, develop an adapted group mindfulness and affirmative manualized intervention for LGBTQ youth to enhance mental health support. As the cultivation and understanding of mindfulness involves an experiential approach, it must be practiced to be fully understood (Kabat-Zinn, 1991). Core mindfulness skills will be introduced and practiced in a group setting with LGBTQ youth, drawing from the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction for Teens (MBSR-T) intervention (Biegel, 2017; Biegel et al., 2009).



The International Association for
Social Work with Groups

SPARC Program

Two Review Cycles Each Year: NEXT DEADLINE: JUNE 15, 2018

The IASWG launched the SPARC Program to "spark" our members' innovative projects through IASWG Endorsement and small grants.

IASWG members are welcome to submit proposals to the SPARC Program, requesting endorsement with financial or non-financial support for special projects (e.g., training, research, and practice) consistent with the mission of IASWG.

SPARC Projects include:

- Initiative to expand support group work services and training with media capabilities.
- Dissertation study of factors in the commitment to group work practice.
- Project to compile case studies for group work teaching and training.
- Evaluation of youth development projects integrating music and arts organizations.
- Research to study authors' trajectories following their group work related dissertations.
- Training to expand staff expertise in providing diverse group work programs.
- Innovation to expand knowledge and competency to more effectively serve an underserved population.
- Dissertation study of school social workers' perceptions of grief counseling groups for adolescents.
- Teaching innovations using group work processes and tools for evaluation.
- Large scale research study to examine and work more effectively with diversity in group work throughout stages of development.
- Development of group work programs to better serve youth and young men of color.
- Large scale research study to examine and work more effectively with diversity in group work throughout stages of development.
- Evaluation of small group activities within online learning environments.
- Research and training in group work supervision.
- Examination of the linkage of summer camp programs and the development of social group work.
- Establishment of a think tank & action network to challenge and eradicate the oppressive social structures threatening young Black males.
- Implementation of a stigma focused group program, collaboratively developed for and with parents living with HIV.

Please visit the IASWG SPARC webpage: <http://www.iaswg.org/sparc> for more information, to read about our SPARC Projects and their progress, and for instructions about submitting a proposal.