



International Association for Social Work with Groups

IASWG SPARC Program

December 2022 IASWG SPARC Committee Report

Including New SPARC Project Awards Announcement

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IASWG SPARC Program

The IASWG SPARC Program has entered its tenth year of existence, with the purpose: *To "spark" IASWG members' innovative practice, education, training and research projects through endorsement and small grants to advance the IASWG mission.* We continue to hold sessions at each Symposium highlighting awardees and recruiting new applicants. We encourage SPARC awardees to join this session, and to propose full sessions at IASWG Symposium to share their SPARC projects and their impact. (<https://www.iaswg.org/2023symposium>).

Big News: Hot off the Presses



The Special Double Issue of Social Work with Groups featuring 12 articles focused on IASWG SPARC Projects!! All articles are featured in volume 45, issues 3 & 4. As the reader will find in these articles, the IASWG SPARC Program has helped launch significant innovations in group work practice, education, and research internationally. These projects were initially proposed for SPARC awards by IASWG members in their early stages of development and demonstrate the power of group work in building human connection, developing critical competence, advancing knowledge, and promoting social justice. This special issue serves as an *IASWG SPARC Sampler* and provides selected authors the opportunity to disseminate their meaningful and rigorous group work-related articles with a wider audience. Readers will have the chance to consider a wide range of group work approaches in practice, education, and research in order to expand their view of group work in social work and related fields.

Approved Recommendations for November 2022 Cycle of IASWG SPARC Awards

The IASWG SPARC Committee brought the IASWG Board three recommendations for awards, and each was approved by the IASWG Board. All are for endorsement and funding. Two approved proposals are practice focused, one education focused, and research focused (with some overlapping areas); two awardees are from the US (Iowa and Washington State) and one is from Malaysia; two awardees are proposing projects in rural areas, and one is working with field educators; all awardees are members of IASWG and one is a former board member.

Antiracist, Digital Reflection as i.Mu.R.g. (Interprofessional Multicultural Reflective Groupwork)

IASWG Member: Khalfani Mwamba, University of Washington School of Social Work, United States.

Approved for Endorsement and Funding of \$500.00

Description from Applicant: *Because Social Workers serve in practice settings where racism can feel ubiquitous to many BIPOC—and where remote learning continues to flourish—this project asks: "How can signature pedagogues foster antiracist climates and competence online, when so few were formally schooled in doing so?" Building on their In-Person teaching and learning expertise, our profession's Field faculty (FF) and Field Instructors (FI's) must establish what ideal, Online and Hybrid practica look like, while championing Antiracism, per EPAS (2022) Competency 3; Engage with Antiracism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Fortunately, our "signature pedagogy," can be constructed as i.Mu.R.g. (pronounced: "emerge," interprofessional multicultural reflective groupwork) and trained on this teaching*

and learning challenge of practice. In this project, I invite FI's and FF to engage with i.Mu.R.g. for comparatively exploring their recent online (versus in-person) teaching and learning, while strengthening their situated antiracist competence.

Stronger Together (ST): Support Group for Single Mothers in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

IASWG Member: Azahah Abu Hassan Shaari, Social Impact Lab (Poverty Eradication), School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and Leisure, Taylor's University, Malaysia.

Approved for Endorsement and Funding of \$560.00.

Description from Applicant: *Stronger Together is a face-to-face support group for low-income single mothers to cope with challenges including balancing working and caring, educating and disciplining their children, and managing financial distress. Stronger Together is the first support group for low-income working single mothers in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia. The face-to-face 6-session meetings will provide a safe environment for members to enhance their emotional and social well-being. Each session will be 2 hours long, once a month at a community center, and will be facilitated by a trained social worker. In addition to a monthly face-to-face meeting, members will join a by-invite-only WhatsApp Group, a free application, to connect and share resources outside the meeting time. After completing the 6th session, all group members will participate in an evaluation study to gather their perspectives on the group's engagement and the benefits they derived from participating. Findings will be presented at IASWG and other social work conferences.*

Suicide Bereavement Support Group in Storm Lake, Iowa

IASWG Member: Willa J. Casstevens, member of the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Buena Vista County, Iowa, United States. Approved for Endorsement and Funding of \$470.00

Description from Applicant: *The Suicide Prevention Coalition of Buena Vista County, Iowa, USA plans to start a monthly Suicide Bereavement Support Group in Storm Lake, Iowa at St. Mark Lutheran Church ELCA. One of the coalition leaders has training as an American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Suicide Bereavement Support Group facilitator. The coalition is aware that such support groups often discontinue due to a single facilitator being unavailable and/or becoming burnt-out, and aims to train two additional coalition members as facilitators. This will allow co-facilitation as well as more flexible scheduling for group leaders. In addition, the coalition aims to develop co-facilitation by individuals with different types of group work training related to bereavement, to support resilience among group leaders and help sustain the program over the long run as an ongoing group for the county community.*

IASWG SPARC Program Application Information

Our NEXT IASWG SPARC DEADLINE WILL BE IN MAY 2023 – Please check IASWG.org and upcoming announcements.

The SPARC Program was developed by the IASWG Board and IASWG Commission on Group Work in Social Work Education from 2011-2012, and inaugurated the following year. Only IASWG members can apply for SPARC endorsement and funding to support their group work related projects, often in partnership with other organizations. The SPARC Committee is charged with reviewing SPARC applications, protocols, outreach, and follow up. The IASWG Board reviews and votes on the SPARC Committee's recommendations at their bi annual Board meetings. The two review cycles each year, correspond with these meetings, generally in June and November.

SPARC information and application review is available in English, French, German and Spanish. Information and contacts are posted at www.iaswg.org/sparc. The IASWG SPARC webpage includes information on applications, the review process, agreements, project reports and videos of SPARC Awardees speaking about their projects and the application process. We continue to present a SPARC Showcase Event at the annual IASWG Symposium, introducing potential applicants and others to the SPARC Program and application process, and most importantly, to a range of SPARC Awardees and Projects. IASWG SPARC information continues to be distributed widely, including through conferences, EBlasts and IASWG Group News. We welcome suggestions for expanding our outreach.