



International Association for Social Work with Groups

IASWG SPARC Program

November 2020 IASWG SPARC Committee Report and Recommendations

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IASWG SPARC Program Overview and Recent Activities

The IASWG SPARC Program is completing eighth 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.* Since 2013, we have had 16 full funding cycles and we endorsed **50** projects, 32 of them with funding totaling \$25,112.00. In November 2020, we are recommending 4 proposals for endorsement and 3 of those with funding, totaling \$2,060.00. If approved, our 2020 expenditures would be \$3,060.

The IASWG 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 IASWG SPARC Committee is charged with reviewing SPARC protocols, outreach, review and follow up. We continue to review all of our documents, and welcome feedback. 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 is 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. IASWG SPARC information continues to be distributed widely, including through conferences, EBlasts and IASWG Group News. We welcome suggestions for expanding our outreach.

Each year for the past eight years, we have presented an IASWG SPARC Workshop at the annual International Symposium. This year's session was held on June 20, 2020 via Zoom, and was recorded. We hope to make this video available on our webpage (www.iaswg.org/sparc). Members of the SPARC Committee and SPARC Awardees presented, answered questions and encouraged application.

We are very happy to share the progress on the *Special Issue of Social Work with Groups* focusing on the IASWG SPARC Program and the Awardees' outstanding projects. Following invitations to SPARC awardees, papers have been received and are being edited. The Special Issue's Editorial Team is Brian Kelly (leader), Carol Cohen, Maria Gurrola, Helene Onserud, Barb Muskat and Greg Tully. A terrific group of additional reviewers were recruited, and there were multiple teams reviewing the submissions. Publication will be in 2021.

Participation in IASWG SPARC is promoted as an IASWG Member Benefit, as an opportunity to advance the IASWG mission and innovations in group work practice, training, research and education. Given the rich history, we continue to explore avenues for further dissemination, publication and utilization of material generated by SPARC endorsed projects.

History of IASWG SPARC Endorsement and Funding

2013: June 2013/Cycle 1: 4 Projects were Endorsed, 3 with Funding (\$2500.00 expended).

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

Total 2013: \$3200.00 (9 Endorsed, 5 with Funding)

2014: June 2014/Cycle 3: 2 Projects were Endorsed, 1 with Funding (\$695.00 expended).

November 2014/Cycle 4: 3 Projects were Endorsed, 2 with Funding (\$2160.00 expended)

Total 2014: \$2855 (5 Endorsed, 3 with Funding)

2015: June 2015/Cycle 5: 2 Projects were Endorsed, 1 with Funding (\$1250.00 expended).

November 2015/Cycle 6: 8 Projects Endorsed, 5 with Funding \$3675.00 expended)

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

2016: June 2016/Cycle 7: 4 Projects were Endorsed, 2 with Funding (\$1500.00 expended).

November 2016/Cycle 8: 1 Project was Endorsement and Funding (\$1000.00 expended).

Total 2016: \$2500 (5 Projects Endorsed, 3 with Funding)

2017: June 2017/Cycle 9: 1 Project was Endorsed with Funding (\$1000.00 expended)

November 2017/Cycle 10: 3 Projects were Endorsed with Funding (\$2075 expended)

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

2018: June 2018/Cycle 11: 5 Project were Endorsed, 4 with Funding (\$2530.00 expended)

November 2018/Cycle 12: 4 Projects were Endorsed, 3 Proposals with Funding (\$1480.00 expended)

Total 2018: \$4010.00 (9 Projects for Endorsement, 7 with Funding)

2019: June 2019/Cycle 13: 4 Projects were Endorsed, 3 with Funding (\$2100.00)

November 2019/Cycle 14: 3 Projects were Endorsed, 2 with Funding (\$1,447.00 committed, \$900 expended)

Total 2019: \$3,000.00 (7 Projects for Endorsement, 5 with Funding)*

*Note: Total is adjusted --Due to the COVID19 pandemic, a project endorsed and funded in November 2019, *Assessing Student Achievement: A Mixed Methods Evaluation of Three Educational Support Groups*, was not able to be implemented, and the grant of \$547.00 was not sent to them.

2020: June 2020/Cycle 15: 1 Project was Endorsed with Funding (\$1000.00)

November 2019/Cycle 16: 4 Projects were Endorsed, 3 with Funding (\$2,060)

Total: \$3,060.00 (5 Projects, 4 with Funding)

November 2020 IASWG Board of Directors' SPARC Endorsement and Funding Decisions

Recommended for Endorsement (continuing): *Pinta tu Corazon con Amor: Proyecto de Trabajo Social y Arte*, Nancy Viana Vazquez, University of Puerto Rico.

This Social Work and Art Project aims to strengthen social-emotional learning in school-age children in Puerto Rico between the ages of 8 and 11. It includes workshops for children, training for educational leaders, and an activity guide that is available on Amazon. In the coming year, this project will be adapted to online delivery and the director will seek to have it become adopted by the larger educational system. The Book, *Pinta tu Corazon con Amor: Proyecto de Trabajo Social y Arte* is available at: <https://www.amazon.com/Pinta-corazón-amor-Proyecto-Actividades/dp/1661363865>

Recommended for Endorsement and Grant of \$780.00: *Photographs of Meaning: An Online Photovoice Group Intervention for Individuals Living with Cancer*, Jennifer Currin-McCulloch, Colorado State University School of Social Work

Photographs of Meaning: An Online Photovoice Group Intervention for Individuals Living with Cancer is an online group intervention that aims to support adults living with cancer in reducing social isolation, anxiety, and depression, while enhancing their sense of purpose and meaning. The goal of this project is to move from the pilot testing phase into the investigation of the feasibility and acceptability of the Photographs of Meaning (POM) intervention during two series of this 8-week online meaning-making group intervention. Additionally, the Project Lead will simultaneously develop a POM group intervention manual. The manual will support large-scale facilitator training and the ability to capture facilitator's skills and fidelity in carrying out the POM intervention. Ideally, POM trained facilitators will support the implementation of POM with individuals who are experiencing cancer-related psychosocial distress in communities where mental health services are limited, and especially in communities where there are no cancer specialists.

Recommended for Endorsement and Grant of \$640.00: *"Cafecito" A Spanish-language support group for breast cancer patients*, Angela Papalia, Adelphi NY Statewide Breast Cancer Hotline and Support Program.

The innovation of our proposed project is providing a Spanish-language support group to breast cancer patients via Telehealth. To date, our Cafecito Support Group is the only group of its kind, and utilizing a virtual platform to facilitate this unique group certainly speaks to our innovative method of service delivery. Providing a consistent, HIPPA-compliant ZOOM invitation to our group members (via text messaging), provides a link to crucial, psychosocial support services to our very vulnerable patients. The Adelphi Breast Cancer Program is the only organization that currently provides a virtual, professionally led support group for Spanish-speaking breast cancer patients. As immunocompromised patients face increased barriers in accessing support services in the midst of the continued COVID-19 Pandemic, the fact that our program is able to address this community's needs using telehealth is paramount. Funds will be used to support members' celebratory breakfasts during the sessions (previously contributed by staff when meetings were in person)

Recommended for Endorsement and Funding of \$640: *Field Supervisor Survey on the Current Use and Perceived Value of Group Work in Social Work Practice*, Shirley Simon and Teresa Kilbane, Loyola University Chicago.

This study aims to provide evidence of the use and perceived value of group work expertise as a modality within the social work practice arena. The applicants developed and distributed a survey to field supervisors affiliated with their home institution. The survey posed questions on the use of group work methodology; the desirability of group work expertise in selecting field work students and hiring employees; interest in continuing education training(s); and/or a certificate in group work. To date, 164 surveys have been received. The authors are in the process of assessing the results of this data. Step two of this project aims to distribute this survey via additional US schools of social work. In order to conduct this study on a broader national level, the authors seek the endorsement and financial support of IASWG to hire a graduate student to facilitate communication, coordination, and data assessment.