



International Association for Social Work with Groups

IASWG SPARC Program

June 2021 IASWG SPARC Committee Report and New Awards

Carol S. Cohen, Brian Kelly, Maria Gurrola & Helene Onserud

The IASWG SPARC Program enters its 9th year this June:

- Since 2013, we have had 17 review cycles, with the IASWG endorsing 59 SPARC projects, 39 of them with funding totaling \$29,912.00. Projects focus on group work in Practice, Education and Research.
- In our 17th review cycle this June, the IASWG Board voted to approve the SPARC Committee recommendation of 6 projects for IASWG Endorsement, with 5 projects funded for a total of \$2800.00.

The Next IASWG SPARC Deadline for Applications is: October 20, 2021 (more at www.iaswg.org/sparc)

IASWG SPARC Projects Approved by the IASWG Board in June 2021:

1. Skill Building Workshop for Immigrant Women: Harnessing the Power of Group Work.

Erum Agha, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Approved for Endorsement and Grant

Abstract: This project proposes to provide a skill building workshop to immigrant women with low education and employment skills. This virtual six-session workshop will deliver interventions for developing life skills, communication skills, health and mental health literacy and self-care. Each session will be 1.5 hours long. The virtual platform will also provide opportunities for peer support and networking to the participants whose social mobility and connectedness is severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The workshop will likely improve the bio-psycho-social outcomes for the participants and their families. Sessions will be facilitated by a team of highly trained project leader and co-facilitator. Workshop manual and resource materials will be developed exclusively for the project and provided to the participants. Participants will receive a small stipend and a certificate upon attending all sessions. Results will be disseminated at IASGW and other social work conferences.

2. Lift Every Voice and Sing!

Egag Egag, Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada. Approved for Endorsement.

Abstract: "Lift Every Voice and Sing" is a 5-week psychoeducation group that aims to promote the well-being of Black-identified University students by helping participants enhance their knowledge and understanding of oppression, physical, sexual, and mental health, and community resources through psychoeducation and arts-based activities. The intention is to run 3 cycles of these 5-week groups that will target specific segments of the Black-identified student population at Ryerson University. The program also aims to bring Black students individuals together to address racial microaggressions and racial trauma, which is a common issue affecting their mental health. During the 5-weeks, we will be exploring and sharing our identities and experiences through the use of art-based activities, such as photovoice. Photovoice is an accessible approach, which does not require an extensive arts background, and allows for flexibility in how participants may want to discuss their identity.

3. Origins of Social Group Work: Local Stories from Around the World.

Lorrie Greenhouse Gardella, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, Connecticut, Klaus-Martin Ellerbrock, IASWG German Chapter, Reineth (CE) Prinsloo, IASWG South African Chapter, Stephen Monroe Tomczak, New Haven Connecticut. Approved for Endorsement and Grant

Abstract: This international history project will explore the origins of social group work in local communities, regions, agencies, and universities around the world. We will seek case studies – including those drawn from personal narratives, oral history interviews, and personal documents research – that recall the introduction of group work in such places and times as North America during the Great Depression of the 1930s; Germany and formerly Nazi-occupied countries during the 1950s and 1960s; post-Soviet Eastern Europe in the 1990s and beyond; post-Colonial African, South Asian, and indigenous nations; migrant communities; and communities

responding to war, disaster, or Covid-19. The project will document the experiences and accomplishments of local group workers; examine the relationship between group work education and practice; analyze the IASWG *Practice Standards* as applied to group work in different historical, cultural, and geopolitical contexts; and consider implications for the future development of social work with groups.

4. *Community Support Group for DV Survivors in Uganda*

Betsy Miles, Friends of Kisoro, Pacific University, Oregon and Kisoro, Uganda. Approved for Endorsement and Grant

Abstract: Domestic violence (DV) is a global, community issue with complex and devastating impacts. Like in many parts of the world, Uganda has seen rising levels of DV since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (John Bosco & Ggoobi, 2020). Friends of Kisoro (FROK), a community-based organization in Kisoro, Uganda that provides refugee psychosocial support services, has expanded its services to the Ugandan community in response to the rising needs associated with the current global pandemic. FROK's *Community Support Group for DV Survivors in Uganda* aims to strengthen communities and empower survivors to improve the safety and wellbeing of themselves and their families. Using a task-sharing approach, FROK social workers will collaborate with Pacific University and the Kisoro community to (1) develop and implement the group model, (2) train community leaders and members in the facilitation of the groups, and (3) provide support to community facilitators around the implementation and evaluation of the groups

5. *A Mixed Methods Examination of the Effects of the Unite and Redefine Group Therapy Intervention on Shame, Masculinity, and Hope for the Future with Adolescent Males who have Sexually Offended*

Rachael Pascoe, Research Coordinator of the AFFIRM Program, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Approved for Endorsement and Grant.

Abstract: Through specialized assessment and treatment, youth who have sexually harmed are less likely to engage in future sexually abusive behaviour. The Unite and Redefine Group is a group therapy intervention for male adolescents who have sexually offended. The group's primary delivery involves processing emotions and cognitions, with some psychoeducational content. The group content has three distinct nonconsecutive phases: Addressing shame, expanding masculinity, and becoming the man you want to be. This intervention is informed by social justice, intersectional, trauma-informed, and anti-oppressive principles, as well as invitational practice approaches. My dissertation research employs a mixed methods explanatory sequential design, with a first phase of quantitative research (pre and post surveys), followed by a qualitative stage (qualitative interviews) to assess the group's effect on client's change in reported shame, conceptualizations of masculinity, and self-compassion. Qualitative interviews will seek to determine adolescent experience of shame, group process, and accountability-taking throughout the group.

6. *Boss Mares: Group Work with Adolescent Females*

Abigail Wilson, Lone Oak Equine-Assisted Therapeutic & Educational Services, Heather Girvin, Millersville University, Sarah Primak, Lancaster County, Katie Linebarger, Lancaster County, and Brandon Kelly, Lebanon County (All in Pennsylvania, US). Approved for Endorsement and Grant

Abstract: Boss Mares is a four-day new group program for adolescent females ages 12 to 15. Studies of horses in herds have revealed that these amazing animals have much to teach us about relationships, communication, and leadership. The group is designed from the idea that the boss mare is the herd's female leader that is fierce, confident, loving, and protective (Kohanov, 2013). Boss Mares are leaders of the herd who take care of themselves so they can take care of others. Over the course of the group, the participants will learn these concepts through equine-assisted strategies, groundwork, and handwork (fiber art, wood working, etc.). Other benefits of the group include enhancing confidence and self-esteem, building resilience, introducing opportunities for new relationships, and teaching compassion and empathy. Participants will have the opportunity to utilize these leadership skills as "Mares" (i.e. junior counselors) in another camp with younger children.

Information about IASWG SPARC Program

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.** Participation in the IASWG SPARC Program is 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.

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 Board Meetings, generally held 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, we have presented an IASWG SPARC Workshop at the annual IASWG Symposium. This year's session is Friday, June 11, 2021, from 10:00-11:00 via Zoom. Members of the SPARC Committee and SPARC Awardees describe the program, present their SPARC projects, answer questions and encourage applications.

The Special Issue of the *Social Work with Groups* focusing on projects of the IASWG SPARC Program is proceeding, with expected publication of a Double Issue in 2022. Many accepted articles are already posted online. 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 joined small teams.

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, one of the projects endorsed and funded in November 2019 was not able to be implemented and \$547.00 was not expended.

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 2020: \$3,060.00 (5 Projects, 4 with Funding)

2021: June 2021/Cycle 17: 6 Projects were Endorsement, 5 with Funding (2,807.00).

