

**IASWG SPARC Program**

**June 2019 IASWG SPARC Committee Report and New Project Descriptions**

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

**SPARC Committee: *Carol S. Cohen, Barbara Muskat, Zaneta Smith and Brian Kelly***

**International Association for Social Work with Groups**

dc

**Overview**

**Overview**

The IASWG SPARC Program has moved into its seventh year of existance, with the purpose: *To "spark" IASWG members' innovative practice, education, training and research projects through endorsement and small grants to advance the IASWG*[***mission***](http://www.iaswg.org/mission-statement)*.* Since 2013, we have had 13 full funding cycles and we endorsed 46 projects, 31 of them with funding totaling $22.665.00. 00.

The SPARC 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. Endorsement and funds are used to support projects, often in partnership with other organizations. The SPARC Committee is charged with reviewing SPARC protocols, outreach, review 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 is posted at [www.iaswg.org/sparc](http://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 six years, we have presented an IASWG SPARC Workshop at the annual International Symposium. The 2019 Workshop took place on Thursday, June 6, 4:00-5:00 in New York.

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 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: Recommendations presented to the IASWG Board at its Annual Meeting in November

**June 2019 Approved SPARC Awardees for Endorsement and Funding**

***Restoring Moms: A Journey of Healing with Horses,* April Parker, North Carolina, US**

**Recommended for Endorsement and Funding of $800.00**

A group of women who are experiencing perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMAD) will engage in experiential activities with horses led by an equine specialist at Shepherd Youth Ranch to promote self-awareness and self-control; reduce anxiety and/or depression related symptoms; identify and reframe thinking and behavior patterns that are negatively affecting their functioning. Participants will engage in process groups facilitated by the project leader after each session with the horses.

During the process groups participants will be encouraged to reflect on thoughts, feelings and behaviors they experienced and observed in others while working with the horses and how this information can help them with issues related to PMADs. Issues common for women experiencing PMADs include feelings of detachment from their baby, anxious and/or intrusive thoughts, feelings of incompetence, hopelessness and fear associated with traumatic experiences during the perinatal period.

***PsychoSocial Support Group for Refugee Transit Camps: A Pilot Study***, **Nancy Murakami, NY, US and Friends of Kisoro, Nyakabande Refugee Transit Camp, Uganda** (follow-up to November 2018 endorsed and funded SPARC project)

**Recommended for Endorsement**

This pilot study will examine the impact and perceived usefulness of participation in a psychosocial support group for refugees residing in a refugee transit camp in southwestern Uganda. The three-session group, called the Psycho-Social Support Group (PSSG) for Refugee Transit Camps, is an emerging practice that aims to mitigate psychosocial effects of persecution and forced displacement faced by refugees living in a transit camp, by targeting effects of loss and other under-addressed psychosocial needs.

The PSSG is a 3-session manualized trauma-informed, psycho-educational and support group intervention that aims to enhance adult refugees’ awareness of psychosocial well-being, to build upon resilience by expanding distress management skills, and to promote community-building in order to reduce isolation. Group clients are all refugees who have recently experienced war, violence, threats, and other human rights abuses.

***The Skills and Motivation: Group Therapy Training for Social Workers Working with Unaccompanied Refugee Children in Turkey*, Kenan Sualp, Hatice Nuhoglu & Olga Molina, Florida, US & Hacettepe, Turkey**

**Recommended for Endorsement and Funding of $800.00**

The two Project aims are to: (1) Create an evidence-based group manual using Cognitive Behavioral Group Therapy that can apply to working with unaccompanied refugee children and can be facilitated by social workers in Turkey; and (2) Deliver training sessions to social workers based upon the manual, who are currently working with refugees so that they can facilitate group therapy effectively in their agencies.

The overarching goal of this training program is to reduce refugee children’s trauma symptoms and reach a greater number of children through increasing the effective use of group therapy among social workers. The pilot program will be implemented in Turkey with the help of a major refugee organization SGDD-ASAD that is recognized by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Following the program, summative program evaluation research will be conducted and a manuscript will be written for publication in order to disseminate the findings.

***Teenage Fathers as Partners in Parenting: A Qualitative Study of the Relationship between Young Black and Latino Men and their Child’s Birthmother*, Kyle McGee II, New York, US**

**Recommended for Endorsement and Funding of $500.00**

This qualitative study explores how Black and Latino men who fathered a child during their adolescent years, experience relationship with their child’s birthmother from pregnancy to the first two years after their child’s birth. Using a phenomenological focus group approach this study seeks to build understanding of the lived experience of these men, particularly around how they negotiate the relationship with their child’s mother in parenting responsibilities. The knowledge gained through this inquiry will seek to enhance advocacy for the needs of young fathers of color and to contribute knowledge to help inform practitioners in places that support them.

The use of focus groups in this research project will provide a unique opportunity to inform group work as the participants will have opportunity to hear and learn of each other’s stories about becoming a father and navigating the relationships with their partners, family members, and other social systems that impact their wellbeing. This approach will also provide opportunity for further learning about how focus group methods can generate knowledge that is unique in the research process and helps to invoke concepts and themes that might not otherwise surface. Lastly, this research project centers racial equity in its process as strategies are built in to help ensure that any power imbalances within the methodology can be identified and responsibly addressed.