

THE GROUP SCOOP

What's Going On With IASWG?
Summer & Fall 2024 Edition

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Presidents Pen

Symposium 2024

IASWG
Announcements

Member Highlight

Chapter Updates

Member
Announcements

In Memoriam

Member
Contributions

A MESSAGE FROM OUR OUTGOING PRESIDENT

BARBARA MUSKAT

Welcome to the Group Scoop. This is an excellent vehicle to share information, celebratory events and all other social group work related notes. I want to send my appreciation to the Membership Committee for their diligence and fortitude in ensuring this newsletter's completion.

We are living in very emotionally laden times. There seems to be endless armed conflict, political unrest, systematic oppression, and economic and climate crisis. The instant availability of news from everywhere seems to add to our collective stress. While awareness of what is happening around the world is important, there are times when logging off devices feels essential for self-care and to prevent compassion fatigue.

We have lost three of our inspirational IASWG friends this year---Charles Garvin, Alex Gitterman and Andy Malekoff. I learned so much from each of them. They were all passionate champions of social group work. I am certain that they would all want to know that IASWG is still vibrant and working to continue to celebrate and promote the importance of social group work.

Enjoy this issue of the Group Scoop and I look forward to our work together to create meaningful connections through group work.

Barb Muskat, PhD, RSW
Immediate Past President, IASWG

IASWG 2024 INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Breaking Barriers: Groupwork and Social Justice

Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Campus de Somosaguas

2024 SYMPOSIUM THEME: GROUPWORK AND SOCIAL JUSTICE UPDATE

June 12-14, 2024



On behalf of the IASWG Executive Committee, our members and most importantly the local planning committee, we thank you for helping to make the 2024 Symposium another successful and memorable symposium. There were 240 attendees representing 29 countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Greece, Haiti, India, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Moldova, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Peru, Puerto Rico, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom, and the United States), serving as students, educators, practitioners, administrators, family and friends of IASWG.

There were 110 engaging presentations (several were hybrid) that were offered in Spanish, French, German and/or English, student meet up opportunities, membership meetings, research poster presentations, social gatherings near Moncloa, and on the campus of Somosaguas, plenary presentations, an optional walking history tour of Madrid, and a memorable closing ceremony.

As the conference closed, we said our goodbyes and well wishes for safe travels. We made commitments to ourselves and others to stay connected to each other, and to IASWG. Have you honored those commitments?

Attending an in-person symposium was a welcomed breath of fresh air for many in comparison to attending in the virtual world, however after the symposium is where the work continues. Please consider getting involved by joining one of IASWG committees to lend your talents, experience and expertise. Committees: Budget & Finance, Chapter Development, Commission on Group Work in Social Work Education, International Committee, Language Access, Marketing, Membership, Nominations & Elections, Practice and Symposium Planning. To learn more about these committees, please visit the IASWG website.

Take care,

Sam Benbow, Georgianna Dolan-Reilly, *Co-Chairs Membership Committee*



[Click here to view or upload photos of the symposium!](#)



The Madrid IASWG Membership Lounge: A Space for Reflection and Unity

The IASWG Membership Lounge, hosted by the Membership Committee offered a sanctuary for reflection, a hub for unity, and a haven for relaxation throughout the symposium. Members took part in our collective mural, to share messages of gratitude, connection, and encouragement with our group work family in these challenging times, or simply take a break. The lounge also offered activities for rejuvenation and play, such as art supplies and meditative materials.

General Membership Meetings

The Membership Committee conducted two general membership meetings on Friday, June 14th from 1:00 – 1:50 pm and again from 2:00 thru 2:50 pm in person and on zoom. Our activity invited participants the ‘step in’ and share their stories regarding a variety of personal and professional prompts such as “Please step forward or raise your hand if you’re on screen if this is your first time attending an IASWG Symposium” and “Please step forward or raise your hand if you’ve ever driven a car over 100MPH/62KM”. We also shared updates on the organization and opportunities to become involved. We hope you enjoyed this opportunity to connect!



IASWG Social Media Initiative: Follow IASWG On Social Media and Share about your Symposium Experience!

The IASWG Marketing Committee has launched a social media initiative as part of the Madrid 2024 symposium's extensive virtual symposium outreach post-pandemic. Together, we celebrate the incredible power of technology to democratize information, bridge gaps, and foster a dynamic knowledge culture that unites us all in community and belonging. We were thrilled to have you engage with the Madrid 2024 symposium on social media, making it accessible to everyone, regardless of location.

Attendees shared their experiences at the symposium using #iaswgmadrid2024, #iaswgmadrid, and #socialjustice, and your virtual participation online helped us share this experience far and wide, ensuring that every voice contributed to this global dialogue.

Follow and join our vibrant [LinkedIn Page](#), [LinkedIn Group](#), and [Facebook Page](#) . Please continue to engage with this network on social media. Join us as we explore, learn, and grow together in this exciting celebration of digital technology's role in connecting our world.



IASWG BOARD TRANSITIONS

A Thank You to Outgoing Leadership

IASWG would like to recognize this time of transition within our Board. This year we say farewell to President Barbara Muskat, and Co-Presidents Reineth Prinsloo and Ginette Berteau. It is through their leadership that we navigated the pandemic and many other hurdles and joys over the past few years. Many thanks and so much love to you all. In addition, we take this moment to thank Emily Santonocito, outgoing IASWG Operations Administrator and Symposium Coordinator, for her work over the years and wish her all the best in her future endeavors! Below, please find the newest membership of the IASWG Board and Executive Board. Welcome and congratulations to all!

New Board Members



Erin Nau

New Jersey, USA

“As a board member, I hope to share my experience teaching and facilitating groups with other members. In 2018, I won a SPARC grant to increase access to online support groups for young women with breast cancer; later writing an article about the experience. As a board member, I hope to provide the same support and comradery to other group workers I always experience from IASWG members.”

Shelita Birchett Benash

New York, USA

“With the skills I have gained from action research, Buddhist studies, digital storytelling, and marketing, I aim to raise IASWG’s social media profile as a global collective where students, academics, and frontline practitioners can access practice skills, emerging knowledge, and critical resources needed to foster dynamic virtual group work communities that can impact the profession while synergizing and integrating social work’s transdisciplinary identities.”



Karla V Herrera

New York, USA

“My experience and perspective brings a level of diversity that I believe will add value to the IASWG Board. My goal is to continue uplifting & diversifying group work within the social work profession. As an immigrant, I feel a responsibility to use my power and privilege to effect change in spaces where there are not many people who look or sound like me.”



IASWG ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Board Members



Anthony De Jesús

Connecticut, USA

“My leadership experience with the Puerto Rican Studies Association and American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education enable me to support IASWG’s engagement with the Global/US Latinx and diasporic communities. Serving in the roles of treasurer (PRSA) and as a governance committee member (AAHHE), I have worked with board leaders to develop infrastructure, policies and programs responsive to mission and membership. I look forward to offering this experience and skills to advance IASWG’s impact.”

Sunday Ofili Ibobor

Benin City, Nigeria

“I became a student member of the Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Group on 21 July 2011. I have been working with various groups since 2010. At the Peoples Global Summit in 2022, I made a presentation titled “Umuebu Neighbourhood House and Togetherness in Umuebu” which showcased my work with different groups in Umuebu community. As a Board Member of IASWG, I am committed to continuing to strengthen social group work and raise awareness of its importance in Nigeria.”



Mieko Yoshihama

Michigan, USA

“My work has been grounded in and informed by group work practices in various global contexts, most intensively in the USA and Japan, as well as in Brazil, Spain, and Portugal. I have increasingly been incorporating arts in group work, such as Theatre of the Oppressed, Photo Voice, and movements. In the face of divisive and violent world affairs, social group work is more important than ever. I hope to serve as a driving force to promote socially just, inclusive group work through IASWG and beyond.”

Joyce Roberson-Steele (One Year Term)

New York, USA

“I am a licensed social worker who has been a member of IASWG since 2021 when I presented at the annual symposium about the supportive nature of peer groups for PhD students. For the 2024 symposium in Spain, I presented with the environmental crisis support group on environmental justice using a problem-solving process. I am also an active member of the IASWG Red Apple chapter. As a board member I bring a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, I bring a unique perspective associated with the aging population and older African Americans.”



IASWG ANNOUNCEMENTS

New President



Será Godfrey-Kaplan

Massachusetts, USA

“IASWG has been a significant part of my life since my first symposium in Germany in 2008. I have always felt welcomed, encouraged and accepted by the wonderful people in this organization. I feel like I have found a home here.

Working with my fantastic colleagues in the Massachusetts Chapter, and spending more time with members across the world, has

inspired me and solidified a sense of responsibility to our local and global communities. In my role as chair of the MA Chapter since 2013, two of the most important lessons I have learned is that the process is just as important as the outcome, and good work happens in the context of good relationships. In addition to my work in IASWG (Co-chair of Chapter Development Committee, Member of ad-hoc committee for Online Standards Revisions), I also have been teaching group work at Boston University and Wheelock College, engaged in clinical work and educational trainings in the greater Boston area, and developed an agency with 23 clinicians who support clients through individual, family, couples and group therapy.

Working with a leadership team, I hope to support our “group” into the future, keeping us all connected while advancing the important work of our mission. Our shared experiences of camaraderie and connection at IASWG inspire each of us to remain committed and work together toward our common goals year after year. I hope to tap into these experiences, relationships and values to help them flourish. I hope to join with all of you in ushering in new generations of group workers who will see the magic of this organization and ultimately continue our fight to promote group work around the world.”

IASWG ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Co-Vice President



Namoonga Chilwalo

Windhoek, Namibia

“It is an honor to have the opportunity to serve as part of the executive leadership of the International Association for Social Work with Groups (IASWG). With over five years of active involvement, including four years as a Board Member at Large (2019–2023), I have a profound commitment to IASWG's mission of advancing group work through advocacy, education, and social justice. My background in social work education, combined with my

dedication to addressing systemic inequalities, aligns with IASWG's core values and its role as an essential resource for group workers and educators worldwide.

As part of the leadership, I am committed to fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation. I believe that the IASWG three leadership model, where the President and Co-Vice Presidents work together, ensures diverse perspectives and balanced decision-making. This teamwork would enhance responsiveness and creativity, and I will prioritize maintaining an inclusive and shared leadership approach to support IASWG's continued global influence. Moreover, I envisage to extend IASWG's international reach through collaborative efforts with international organizations, with the goal of promoting group work as an instrument for social transformation. This approach may enable IASWG to exert a more significant influence and make a more profound impact on a global scale.

In addition, through my role as an educator, I will work to expand access to IASWG's educational offerings, including online training, mutual aid groups, local chapter events, and international symposia. My focus will be on ensuring equitable access to professional development for all members, advocating for underrepresented communities, and fostering diverse leadership opportunities. I will also prioritize transparent communication, shared decision-making, and collective problem-solving to address members' needs and challenges in our evolving profession.”

IASWG ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Co-Vice President



Kristina Lind

North Carolina, USA

“I first became involved in IASWG in 2006 when some longstanding IASWG members brought me into what has now become my professional “home”. I am indebted to them for having recruited me. Through this organization, which is smaller than some, and more inclusive than most, I have found a group made up of practitioners, academics, students, and even some without any group work background, who are committed to group work practice, teaching, learning, and conducting

research. These are the people who tirelessly advocate for increased recognition for a modality whose status within academia is at times marginalized, and who network, join, and participate with global colleagues to explore how group work is practiced around the world. I am proud to be part of this community.

Thinking about participating on its leadership team is not something I take lightly. It is impressive how our organization has been able to successfully weather the challenging circumstances of the recent years, marked by physical separations, too many losses, and an emphasis on so much that is virtually delivered. Indeed, the symposium in Madrid allowed for a different kind of energy, enthusiasm, and need for connection. I view this as an opportunity to become part of the IASWG collaborative process, which has always worked to identify and implement innovative ways to push the organization in our continuing mission of group work advocacy, teaching, exposing, and recruiting.”

Committees Seeking Participants

IASWG is a member-driven international organization consisting of several standing and ad hoc committees. Members are encouraged to get involved, lend their experience and skills by serving on one or more of the various committees. To learn more about the committees, please visit the IASWG website: <https://www.iaswg.org/> and select the "Committees" tab.

The list of committees seeking new members and the contact information of the co-chairs are as follows:

- Budget and Finance Committee: Donna McLaughlin
- Chapter Development: Shirley Simon
- Commission on Group Work in Social Work Education Development: Carol Cohen and Mark Macgowan
- International Issues: Linda Ducca and Lorrie Gardella
- Language Access: Ginette Berteau
- Marketing Committee: Padriac Stanley and Shelita Birchett Benash
- Membership: Georgianna Dolan-Reilly and Samuel R. Benbow
- Nominations and Elections: Kyle McGee and Alexis Howard
- Practice: Emily Santonocito
- Symposium Planning: Emily Santonocito

If you are interested in learning more about or joining a committee, please email: membership@iaswg.org.

Spring 2024 Group Work CE Series

Loyola University Chicago's School of Social Work hosted a Spring 2024 Group Work Continuing Education Series. The series began on Friday, February 16th, and ran through April 13th, 2024. Most sessions were offered via Zoom and were facilitated by interactive and engaging, national and international experts in group work. Many of the facilitators are well-known IASWG members. This series was offered to anyone working with committees, boards, teams, supervision groups, task groups, educational groups, therapeutic groups, support groups, psycho-educational groups, social-skills or self-help groups and provided practical knowledge and skills through participation in these workshops.

A note from the newsletter committee

Please note that submissions may have been edited for clarity and length

If you have an announcement, event, or update you would like to include in the next newsletter, please contact

iaswg.newsletter@gmail.com

Connect with IASWG



MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Name and Credentials:

Alice K. Butterfield, MSW, PhD

Country:

United States of America

IASWG Chapter Affiliation:

Chicago

Place of Employment and Job Title:

Professor, Jane Addams College of Social Work,
University of Illinois Chicago

**Why did you become involved in IASWG?**

Early on in my career, I was influenced by the work of Judith A.B. Lee with women who were homeless. She documented her group-based practice in *The Empowerment Approach to Social Work Practice*. More recently, I met and worked with Carol Cohen on the Global Commission of the Council on Social Work Education. Her commitment and leadership in group work led me to join IASWG.

Describe one of your most influential group work experiences:

One of my most influential group work experiences was bringing 10 doctoral students and the Dean of the School of Social Work at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, to the United States for 30 days. The project was to expose students without a background in social work to our service systems and provide mentors for their dissertation research. When the project nearly failed, I really learned about group development (1).

Provide any relevant website (personal, LinkedIn, etc.) or contact details:

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/alice-k-johnson-butterfield-9575699](https://www.linkedin.com/in/alice-k-johnson-butterfield-9575699)

Websites:

- <http://aboutsweep.org> (Ethiopia Partnership)
- <https://socialwork.uic.edu/> (Jane Addams College of Social Work, UIC)

(1) Scherrer, J. L., Olcoń, K., Butterfield, A. K., & Kebede, W. (2015). Bringing experiential educational groups to the United States: an analysis of group development in an international travel and study program. *Social Work Education: The International Journal*, 34(8), 1-13. doi:10.1080/02615479.2015.1103725

Puerto Rico Chapter

Social Work with Groups, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus

From the Department of Social Work at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, we continue to be very active working with groups, despite the challenges we were facing during the COVID-19 pandemic. We achieved this work thanks to the support of our high school students. I have been offering this course from 2016 to the present and in this article I share part of their experiences of the projects developed post-pandemic. Below I share some of the experiences corresponding to the semester from January to May 2022.



“Embark on the Journey”

Nicole M. Torres Rodríguez

The project we developed was “Emprende el Viaje” and had the overall goal of promoting the interest of its participants to achieve healthy lifestyles of students from 5th to 7th grade by May 2022. “Emprende el Viaje” was a project that involved the participation of 9 students between the ages of 9 to 13 years old, all residents of the selected community. The project was designed to be carried out in six one-hour meetings, each meeting had a theme and sub-theme aimed at developing healthy lifestyles such as: personal development, self-esteem, motivation, communication, emotion management and future goals. For each meeting, icebreaker activities and activities directed to the main topic of the meeting were organized and at the end participants were asked to complete a brief evaluation.

The demand for the Training Social Workers (TSA) was better than expected. The participants showed no dislike for the TSAs and their project. Together with the TSAs, the participants collaborated in creating coexistence agreements and their levels of participation and motivation helped to ensure that the project was not an imposed one, but that participation and acceptance was voluntary. It is important to note that, for this group of 9 participants, after Hurricanes Irma and Maria and the Covid-19 pandemic, it was the first time they participated in a TSA project.

With respect to the development of interpersonal relationships, it is clear from the analysis conducted meeting after meeting that the participants were able to strengthen group cohesion. The TSAs found that they were able to capture the attention of the participants if they gathered in chairs arranged in such a way as to form a circle. So, at the end of the meetings, participants were arranged in this way and asked to voluntarily share their emotions, feelings and/or opinions about the topics discussed and to show their work. The levels of participation were high and favorable for each participant, after sharing with the others, they congratulated each other and shared their appreciation for their work. The work was always represented by drawings, as the TSAs noted that they liked drawing very much and that it was easier for them to express themselves through drawn dialogue.



“The Journey of My Learning”

William E. Robles Torres

For this project, a general goal of the group was established, which was “To strengthen the socioemotional competencies of the group of sixth grade students, through the project ‘The Journey of My Learning’, so that it could promote positive decision making in the use of technology”. The selected population was a closed group composed of sixth grade students, with a total of 14 participants, nine (9) females and five (5) males between the ages of 11 - 12 years old.

With this group, 5 sessions were carried out, each lasting approximately one hour and thirty minutes. The topics worked on were: self-esteem, self-concept, emotion management and management of group pressure and social networks. The results were extremely positive, since the students analyzed the proper use and management of technology, thus achieving the established goal. In addition, students strengthened their peer relationships and the particular competencies of their stage of study and development. The demand from the students was very high and what they loved the most were the dynamics and personalized themes that were carried out in each session.

Experience William: “I had never been exposed to social work with groups before and at first, although it was a bit tedious, the outcome was impressive. Starting with a group in a pre-affiliation phase and being able to take it to the intimacy stage filled us with pride as social workers in training. The students recognized us as the leaders, we were able to carry out very practical dynamics and raise awareness about very important issues. The youth needs us and group projects like this one, which are promoted by Dr. Nancy Viana Vázquez and the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras, are necessary for the country. I am delighted and I will continue to be involved in social work with groups.

Experiencia Yarimar*Yarimar Ayala Ortiz*

The recognition of this group approach in social work is a practical area that I found interesting, as it leads to the creation of group cohesion. The process, despite the structure and coordination involved, managed to bear fruit in the union and satisfaction of this student group, as well as the colleagues who worked with me. I consider it a great experience to be part of these projects that impact lives and much more in these times when it is required to connect and raise awareness at an interpersonal and general level in people. The populations of this country require group projects that promote change and bear fruit to the growing generations and those of us who are promoting change. I am grateful for the opportunity and to professors who leave their mark, such as Dr. Nancy Viana Vázquez, who inspire us to insert ourselves in these spaces in general



Long Island Chapter

The Long Island Chapter of IASWG in collaboration with Stony Brook University School of Social Welfare presented a Continuing Professional Education Program on March 10, 2023 entitled:

The Power of Groupwork: Teaching Social Work Students to Integrate Theory and Practice, with Course Instructors: Drs Sari and Louise Skolnik

Approximately 40 field instructors registered for this Zoom program which integrated didactic material, experiential opportunities and excellent resources. Among the very practical handout materials, a list of TOP TEN PRINCIPLES FOR SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATORS that were applicable and adaptable to diverse settings, multiple functions and types of groups.

The Long Island Chapter of IASWG presents two programs per year as part of its mission to enhance and support Group Work Practice in the community. For more information about the Long Island Chapter or for a copy of the handout, contact: Bevfeigelman@gmail.com. This presentation was in memory of Pamela Brodlieb, devoted social worker and long time member of IASWG who passed away in late 2022.



Podcast

Social Work Khuluma Podcast

VOW FM 88.1

African Chapters Social Work Khuluma Podcast

Social Work Khuluma (which translates to Social Work Talk in isiZulu) is a podcast developed by Dr Roshini Pillay, a social work lecturer and academic at the University of Witwatersrand. The podcast, which she describes as a home grown South Africa podcast, is for students and educators in social work and it explores various facets of social work education. In each episode, Roshini and others interview guests from all walks of life, expanding on topics such as the importance of group work, social work education and indigenous knowledge systems.

Episode 1: Introduction

In this introductory episode Roshini and her guest Palesa Jenine Rama conversate on the value of podcasts, especially in the creation of indigenous knowledge. They also expand on how Social Work Khuluma was developed.

Episode 2: The Value of Podcasting

Roshini Pillay and Marona Seekane from the Voice of Wits share ideas around the value of podcasts for education and multilingualism within the South African space. The role of the Voice of Wits to assist educators to create podcasts were spoken about.

Episode 3: The Time for Group Work is Now!

Reineth is an emeritus professor from the University of Pretoria. Her research focuses on mutual aid groups, the use of activities and crafts in group work, and a recognition of indigenous group work practises. In this podcasts there is a discussion on the definition by Prof Prinsloo on a South African definition of group work. She is the current vice president of IASWG.

Episode 4: Indigenous Knowledge on Group Work

Roshini hosts Dr Zurina Abdulla from the Nelson Mandela University for a stimulating conversation on group work. In this thought provoking episode Zurina speaks about her work at Project Go in the St Albans Correctional Facility where she conducted groups with youth awaiting trial then later at Childline.

Episode 5: King Code and the Role of the Occupational Social Worker

We live in a world that is constantly changing and new concerns around ethics abound. In this interview with Jenny Dry an occupational social worker, the topic of the King Code and role of the Occupational Social Worker is a focal point of conversation.

Episode 6: Photovoice Methodology

In this delightful episode, Roshini chats with Agrippa who discusses how he turned his love for taking pictures into a research study. Agrippa shares important information about the development and execution of a Photovoice project and discusses the SHOWED method of analysing Photovoice pictures and suggests research articles that are crucial to anyone opting for Photovoice.

Episode 7: Indigenous Group Work Methods

In this interview Roshini speaks with Professor Thobeka Nkomo who is a good friend, at the University of Witwatersrand, she shares various aspects of group work as it related to a Christian Church and her role as a wife of a pastor (Umfazi womfundisi). In this role, she leads various women's groups and she give her first-hand experiences of this. The aspect of indigenous group work is elaborated.

Episode 8: Life Based Group work

Roshini speaks to Dr Nngodiseni Jimmy Budeli who is the interim Head of the Social Work Department at the University of Venda and a senior lecturer. Dr Budeli shares his passion for developing group work with origins in South Africa. In this conversation, he unpacks examples from his own life to show how groups have been formative and impactful in his development as a person such as sitting around the fire and listening to his grandmother tell real-world narratives.

Episode 9: Decolonising and Indigenizing Group Work Techniques

Dr Poppy Masinga (President of the African chapter of IASWG), Kgomotso Ntlatleng and Thando Msimango engage in a discourse on indigenous group work. They dive into a subject that's as rich and diverse as the country it emanates from. South Africa, on family therapy. They speak about the Ubuntu bowl. The diversity of South Africa which is sometimes referred to as the "rainbow nation," is foregrounded displaying diverse nationalities, races, ethnicities, languages, religions, cultures, and sexual orientation.

Episode 10: African Knowledge Production Incubators

Roshini speaks to Dr Nevashnee Perumal, who is the lead on a project called African Knowledge Production Incubators. A project that seeks to consider how a decolonised and indigenised curriculum in social work in South Africa may look like. Nevashnee shares a bit about herself and the conceptualisation of this project.

The links to this podcast can be found here: <https://iono.fm/c/7623>
and on spotify <https://open.spotify.com/show/4EdbExpJoKVgfOnt3VPPgA>

MEMBER UPDATES

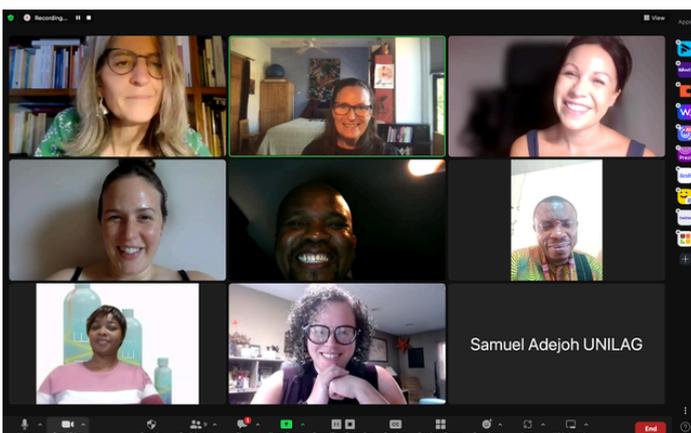
Social Work Groups on Ecological Justice

Hélène Onserud, Big Apple Chapter

As the climate and environmental crises have accelerated over the last few years, I thought that group work could be a great modality to provide a space for clients, participants and students to share thoughts and feelings and take action about something that is affecting all of us. Following a conversation with John Genke about this idea, he encouraged me to do a call for action with group workers. After a presentation on the topic at the 2022 symposium, Ann Bergart suggested that I start a mutual group for interested group workers and Georgianna Dolan-Reilly helped me recruit from her international network. The result of search was not one but two mutual aid groups, sponsored by IASWG, for social workers who are concerned about the climate and ecological justice crises. The two groups started over a year ago in January of 2023. Both groups are diverse in terms of race, age, status and location. Their areas of interest are also varied, going from social work education, to research, policy, and practice. In one of the groups, members live in Africa, Europe, and North America. The other includes social workers who live and work in different regions within the United States.

Since our profession as a whole has been slow at addressing this crisis, many of the members have shared feeling isolated, regardless of where they live, and have talked about the importance of the group in lessening that sense of isolation. Members also came to the groups wanting to figure out how to integrate this topic into their work. A reason to join the group for many members, was how to prepare this and future generations of social work students for the changing reality they will increasingly have to face. Another important focus was the desire to think and take action collectively in relation to a crisis that is truly international. In the groups the focus is both on mutual aid and social action as members are wanting to find ways to promote ecological justice at multiple levels of the profession.

Each group will be presenting about their experience at the upcoming symposium in Madrid and we hope to encourage others to use group work to provide a space for the people they work with to face this unprecedented existential crisis.



In Memoriam: A Tribute to Social Work Pioneers

We want to take a moment to acknowledge the loss of three great contributing members of the IASWG community: Dr. Alex Gitterman, Andy Malekoff and Dr. Charles Garvin. As social workers, they took on many different roles from activists to author/researcher, and educators—but the one thing these individuals had in common is their dedication and contribution to group work within the social work profession.

Within IASWG, these men were founding members, current board members and a former board president. They are most known for their work to bring awareness and education at county and state levels through advocating to government leaders about the need for support within mental health organizations. As well as reconceptualizing social work practice by utilizing an ecological model. These men have been honored for their leadership in human services through awards and accolades such as the NY State Social Work Education Association Social Work Practitioner of the Year award, Lifetime Achievement Award by the Council on Social Work Education and the NASW Social Work Pioneer. We take a moment now to remember each of these individuals for the work they have contributed to enhance group work in the Social Work profession today.



ALEX GITTERMAN



ANDY MALEKOFF



CHARLES GARVIN

'When your tongue is silent, only then can you hear'

By Andrew Malakoff

Living or working with teenagers can be unsettling and disorienting, even when you think you have it all figured out. Teenagers will spare no time reminding you that, as an adult, you are not a part of their world.

I am reminded of a quip attributed to Mark Twain: "When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years."

Having worked with countless teenagers for almost 50 years and having raised two of them, I discovered early on that whatever world I occupied outside of their presence with my professional reputation and credentials, is meant little to the kids I worked with or, for that matter, to my own kids.

Decades ago I found something that one of my sons, then about 10-years-old, wrote about me in school. The heading on the page was, "My Dad." Naturally, I read on with great anticipation and a swelling sense of self-importance. Underneath the title he wrote, "My dad is 6'1", bald, wears glasses, and busts my chops. He likes dogs. My dad has brown eyes and brown hair, at least what's left of it. He's a social worker."

The kids I've worked and lived with invariably drew their conclusions about me as they got to know me. In turn, I drew my conclusions about them as I got to know them, despite what might be called their credentials, that is—the often-negative labels assigned to them. It is important to recognize the difference between the way in which young people are viewed and classified by others, and their own experiences and perceptions.

Assuming a stance of uncertainty is one way of saying how important it is for us to be open and reflective, to listen intently to the kids we see; only then can we think more deeply and see outside the box.

One of my colleagues, Camille Roman, tells a story about growing up in an economically deprived and chaotic family and how desperately she struggled as a teenager to be heard, and how no one was ever listening. During one particularly troubling and heated exchange at a holiday gathering, Roman, whose family is from Puerto Rico, recalled, "My face apparently betrayed my fear and confusion to an elderly aunt who was secretly thought to be a witch. Tia Mercedes turned to me with her soft face and wise eyes and whispered, 'when your tongue is silent, only then can you hear.'"

Roman said, "My tia was telling me that something else was going on here, and if I didn't get caught up in the noise then maybe I could understand and make sense of the chaos, and it would be less frightening and I would not feel so powerless." And so this powerful bit of homespun advice became a life lesson for her in her work as a social group worker and, I think, a powerful insight for all of us.

Andrew Malekoff was editor-in-chief of the journal Social Work with Groups and executive director / CEO emeritus of North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center in Long Island, NY



Renew Your Membership Today, or Invite New Members!

Alice K. Butterfield's Tip

Reflect and write about the things that go wrong in group work, the things that don't work. One can learn so much from these experiences and the literature should reflect a transparent learning process.



MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

| <u>Students</u> | <u>Practitioners</u> | <u>Educators</u> | <u>Organizations</u> |
|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional, international networking Opportunities for presentation and publication Mentorship opportunities Resume building Reduced membership for two years after graduation Scholarships to Group Work Camp Reduced symposium registration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection to a warm, inclusive professional community International networking Opportunities for scholarship Resources for professional growth and support, including local activities Discounted access to group work journals SPARC grants Reduced symposium registration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection to a warm, inclusive professional community Opportunities for scholarship International networking Access to syllabi and other educational resources on the IASWG website Mentoring opportunities SPARC grants Reduced symposium registration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection to an international organization with individual members from four continents Recognition in the annual symposium program distributed to all participants Information, logo, and link featured on IASWG website Reduced symposium advertising rates Reduced symposium & event registration rates for affiliated non-members (offered at the member rate) |

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A note from the newsletter committee

Please note that submissions may have been edited for clarity and length

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Samuel Benbow, Georgianna Dolan-Reilly, & Elisa Gores