

THE GROUP SCOOP

What's Going On With IASWG
Fall 2021

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PRESIDENT'S PEN

BARBARA MUSKAT

Dear fellow group workers:

Greetings from IASWG and thank you for joining us in our mission to support group work practice, education and research. While the world is still struggling to tackle COVID-19, climate change, political strife, and oppression of all kinds, we group workers recognize that through communication, mutual understanding, and mutual support we can help make the world a better place.

We are very grateful that so many members put their trust in IASWG and attended our recent successful online symposium. Over 400 registrants attended our June event. The symposium comprised three inspirational plenaries, six interactive invitational sessions, four in-depth invitational sessions, and a variety of didactic and experiential workshops presented by colleagues from across the globe. We also included an interactive membership meeting and multiple opportunities for informal networking. Further, we provided interpretation for a greater number of sessions and set registration fees that reflected regional circumstances.

While some of you may have only experienced IASWG through attending a symposium, IASWG operates as a year-round organization. We have local chapters around the world that offer events both online and in-person. If you live in an area without a nearby chapter, please contact us.

(Continued on the next page)

We are always looking to develop new chapters or alternatively, we can direct you to an existing chapter. As a result of the growth of virtual communications, many chapter events are open to all members. Watch for news of events via messages from IASWG on the website and through emails.

The membership committee, whose work is devoted to member engagement and retention is looking for new participants. Please consider attending one of the monthly meetings for new members hosted by this committee.

IASWG has a well-known and well-used set of Standards for Social Work Practice with Groups, which can be found on the website (<https://www.iaswg.org/standards>). There is currently a work group focused on creating standards for virtual group work. There is information on our website about how you can contribute to this initiative.

Over the past year, IASWG hosted three mutual aid groups for group work educators teaching group work online. Based on the success of these groups we are planning to host additional groups for educators and for practitioners. Stay tuned for notifications about future offerings.

Clearly, our devotion to group work practice, education, and research continues to thrive. We are always looking for member participation in our committees. Please see the note below.

We hope you will make it a priority to join us in June, to share, learn, support, and enjoy our time together. I look forward to seeing you then.



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



SYMPOSIUM 2021 RECAP

The 2021 International Virtual Symposium was held June 9th -12th with the theme of “Group Work in a Changing World: The Power of Connection”. There were over 150 presentations from researchers, authors, practitioners, educators, students, and a combination thereof offered in several languages. Attendees represented 25 countries (*Australia, Barbados, Benin, Canada, Czech Republic, Eswatini, France, Germany, Haiti, Hong Kong, Ireland, Lithuania, Mali, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Puerto Rico, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom, and the United States*), differing practice settings, multicultural practices, group work in developing countries or underserved communities, community development, activist group work practice, as well as group work research and training.

The Symposium began with 4 experiential-based pre-symposium institutes held on June 7th & 8th with the overall purpose of further developing and understanding group work dynamics, while enhancing group work skill sets in an engaging and interactive way. The title of the four institutes were 1) *More than Ice Breakers: How to Use Activity in Group Work to Enhance Mutual Aid* 2) *Building Mutual Aid in Groups with Vulnerable and Resilient Populations* 3) *Field Instruction* and 4) *Leading Mutual Aid Support Groups: The Science and Art of Group Work Practice*. Interwoven throughout the more than 150 presentations, were 3 plenaries, 6 dynamic invitationals, and 2 poster sessions with a total of 14 research posters presented. In addition, there were countless opportunities to connect with other attendees, learn more about IASWG and contribute to the body of knowledge relating to group work across the globe. For example, events and activities such as the Annual Membership Meeting, the Member Meet and Greet Room, the Nominations and Elections Committee Sip and Chat meeting, and the Stretch & Sing-Along (*attendees were graced with the talents of students from New Zealand, Lithuania, and South Africa in dance and song on our last day of the symposium for which we had a wonderful time*) allowed for attendees to meet new members, reconnect with existing member, and experience the essence of IASWG as a global organization.





~IASWG 2021 HONOREE~

A few other highlights from the symposium included the honoring of Dr. Greg Tully as the IASWG 2021 Board of Directors honoree for his substantial contributions to IASWG and global group work efforts, the use of interpretation supportive resources for several presentation and events, the use of international zones as a basis for symposium and membership rates, meetings held by the Online Group Work Standards Committee (three sessions) for attendees to learn about the initiative, share their experiences in small group format as well as complete an on-line survey, and the always inspirational closing ceremony. There is no way to truly capture all that happened, however you can definitely learn more by going to the 2021 Symposium on the IASWG website by using <https://www.iaswg.org/2021symposium>.

What's Next? Symposium, 2022!!!

Discussions are underway about the 2022 Symposium with the realities of Covid-19 (delta variant) present challenges to our global communities. Several challenges include travel restrictions, vaccine protocols, and medical treatment accessibility, which differs based on country, providence and territory. IASWG will continue to consider the safest and most prudent course of action. In closing, thank you and congratulations on a job well done to all IASWG committees, presenters, and support networks for another successful symposium.

Samuel R. Benbow, Co-Chair Membership Committee



IASWG ANNOUNCEMENTS

Committee Engagement

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:

- Chapter Development: Shirley Simon (shirleysimon@gmail.com) and Sera Godfrey-Kaplan (seragklicsw@gmail.com)
- Commission on Group Work in Social Work Education Development: Carol Cohen (cohen5@adelphi.edu) and Mark Macgowan (MMacgowan@comcast.net)
- International Issues: Mark Doel (markdoelecloud.com) and Lorrie Gardella (lggardella@gmail.com)
- Membership: Georgianna Reilly (georgianna.reilly@gmail.com) and Samuel R. Benbow (Srbenb@ship.edu)
- Nominations and Elections: Klye McGee (kylem.mcgee@gmail.com) & Alexis Howard (alexishowardl@aol.com)
- Practice: Charles Garvin and(charlesge@umich.edu) and Donna McLaughlin (dmmclaug@bu.edu)
- Symposium Planning: Barbara Muskat (barbara.muskat@utoronto.ca)

Member Networking Hour

Join us for our monthly New Member Net Hour! Open to any member who joined IASWG in 2020 or 2021, this hour-long, open support group gives new members the chance to meet other members, learn more about the organization, and talk about relevant topics in group work. Meetings are held on the third Monday(8pm ET/ 5pm PT/12pm GMT+12) and Wednesday (12pm ET/ 6pm GMT+2) of every month:

January: 1/24/22 & 1/26/22

February: 2/21 & 2/23

March: 3/21 & 3/23

April: 4/18 & 4/20

May: 5/16 & 5/18

For more information and to access the zoom link, click [here!](#)

Nominations & Elections Committee

Congratulations, to our newest Board Members-At-Large: Andrew Spaumer, April Parker, Sophia Marquardt and our returning organizational leadership Barbara Muskat (president), Reineth Prinsloo (vice-president) and Ginette Berteau (vice-president).

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Name and Credentials:

Mary Frances (Mitzi) H. Beno, MSW,
LCSW, BS, MS,
PhD in Chemistry

Country:

United States

IASWG Chapter Affiliation:

Illinois

Place of Employment and Job Title:

Retired (Formerly, Stickney Public Health
District, Clinical Therapist and GD
Searle, Head, US R&D Stability)

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

In 2011, I related to IASWG through Group Work Camp. I was newly retired with a health challenge, but I stayed involved in IASWG because Group Work Camp challenged me to redefine what retirement from clinical social work would look like for me: marrying my interests, love of learning, and giving back to future generations of group workers; participation and (co)presentation at International Symposia; Group Work Camp and classroom; researching and contributing to the Social Work group work literature on non-deliberative forms of practice; and meeting spirituality needs through the use of song.

Briefly describe your group work experience and/or current group work:

My contributions to and experience with group work is full of incredible service with many different groups and communities, some of which I highlight here: Vocationally, in community mental health, I co-facilitated a group for women challenged with mental illness and worked primarily as an individual therapist, with some family therapy clients. Avocationally, I have been involved with many groups which have strong international aspects, and each has helped me in collaboration across and celebration of difference.

I have been a participant-leader in the Women's Leadership Collaborative studying the emergence of women's leadership in a group of women from 1999 to the present using experiential learning and emergent design. Since 2006, I have co-facilitated Hilde Girls, an interfaith spirituality group utilizing music, song, and arts to form connections. My experience with Hilde Girls offered me the opportunity to present at past symposia, as well as get published, on use of song in social work non-deliberative practice and use of song to meet spirituality needs. I loved these opportunities for mutual support.

Previously, I co-facilitated Women of Faith for Justice, an interfaith women's group exploring social justice issues through a multi-faith perspective and am a member of the Peace and Social Justice Committees at Elizabeth Seton, Naperville, IL and Christ the Servant, Woodridge, IL. Many of these groups, and others which I have been involved in, help women and others mobilize to address issues such as homelessness, human trafficking, racial justice, and worker rights.



STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

Name and Credentials:

Celine Singh, Undergraduate Student

Country:

South Africa

IASWG Chapter Affiliation:

South Africa

School, Major/Concentration:

University of Pretoria. Senior year, majoring in Psychology and Criminology

Briefly describe your most recent internship or group work experience:

In October 2020, the social work group students had the great privilege of having a career briefing of possible careers within the Humanities faculty over Zoom with Professor Prinsloo, our group leader. During this Zoom call, we realized that this was a great idea of being able to socialize and support each other during the Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, Prof. Prinsloo came up with the ingenious idea of forming a Covid-19 support group, which came to be known as the Covid Coping Creativity and Connection group or as we like to refer to it as our CCCC group. We were all delighted to become a part of this group as it provided us with countless opportunities to form amazing friendships and bonds during a period of isolation filled with masks, sanitizers, and social distancing. We decided to join this group, which we now consider family, because there has been nothing to lose but everything to gain from this experience as we identified key values that resonate within each group member and allows us to form a safe space where trust is built and we are encouraged to express ourselves, including our thoughts and opinions on various subject matters.

What draws you to group work?

I believe that the core reason why I am so drawn to the notion of group work is the unbelievable unity that is experienced when engaged in a group. From my experience of being a group member of the CCCC group, I realized why I have such a passion for group work which boils down to two main reasons. Firstly, we were all committed to ensuring that nothing, but the best comes from this experience for each member and that we have each experienced a form of growth because of this journey. Secondly, we all share a similar passion, as we are all pursuing careers based in Humanities, where our main goal is to improve the livelihood of others. Thus, granting us the opportunity to learn from each other and share knowledge on how to achieve our goals that lie within our chosen career paths. This encapsulated one of our group's core values which is sharing, as we would share ideas of how to go about completing tasks and brainstorming how to turn an idea into a reality. This was the definite "cherry on top" moment for us all, as it really embraced the idea that we are stronger when we come together and encapsulated our all-important principle of "Ubuntu".

Why did you become involved in IASWG?

My involvement in IASWG is greatly due to Professor Reineth Prinsloo, who is also the Vice-President of IASWG. She granted us the life-changing opportunity to become members of this amazing association where we can gain experience and engage in networking with other IASWG members through IASWG's events. These prospects have been the main reason regarding my involvement in IASWG, because as a student it is imperative to put your feelers out to widen the range of open doors that await you.



IASWG Symposium, New York 2016

Mission Statement

The International Association for Social Work with Groups, Inc. (IASWG), is a not-for-profit organization of group workers, group work educators, and friends of group work who support its program of advocacy and action for professional practice, education, research, training and writing about social work with groups.

Within this group work context, we believe in the value and importance of diversity to enrich and strengthen our work and its relevance in the broad social environment. We affirm that we aspire to provide equitable opportunities for participation for all members, and that all aspects of the organization will be characterized by respect for, inclusion, and representation of people across all aspects of social identity.

Committed to social justice, IASWG gives particular attention to people systemically disadvantaged by the power differential inherent in oppressive social structures. As group workers we believe that our common ground unites us and our differences enrich us. The opportunities for collaborative learning online, at local chapter events, and at our annual international symposia make this association an invaluable resource to the global group work community.



CHAPTER UPDATES

Illinois Chapter

The Illinois Chapter is excited to be recruiting for an online mutual aid peer consultation group for our members. It will be open to group workers at all levels of experience -- students as well as practitioners. We have sent out an announcement to our members to assess interest, and in the near future, we hope to have identified enough potential members to hold an initial planning meeting!

Long Island NY Chapter

Sari Skolnik, Co-Chair of the Long Island NY Chapter recently edited a special edition of Social Work with Groups Called "The Creative Practitioner: An introduction to psychodrama, sociometry, and group psychotherapy" which highlights the synergistic relationship between social work with groups and psychodrama which was published earlier this year.

German Chapter

Virtual Method Workshop 2021 of the German Chapter:

"It's up to you, Groupwork, Groupwork" based on Frank Sinatra's world hit "Theme of New York"

When people work to divide a society, we do something about it: social learning, social encounters, social and emotional closeness. As group workers, we know those who do not define themselves are defined by others. As group workers, we know that what you make of it is up to you. The current developments - "Social Distance" are causing us to go other ways. We create "human proximity" and that with digital possibilities. As an international company, we are happy to accept this challenge. Together we will manage to connect people ... it's up to you! If I can make it here! I'll make it anywhere! It's up to you! Our method workshop connected the world and people - better?! "Be there because it's up to you, it's up to you!" Excerpts from the invitation letter from our President Thomas Jansen

After the method workshop had to be canceled in the past due to COVID-19, the time had come on February 20th, 2021, to offer the workshop virtually. We have succeeded in connecting people from all over the world, which has filled us with great joy and gratitude! 67 group workers from 9 countries and 3 continents took part in our method workshop. Thanks to committed colleagues from Germany, Sweden, Canada, and South Africa, we were able to offer 6 different workshops of 90 minutes each. There were 2 blocks so that all participants had the opportunity to take part in 2 workshops, with 4 being held in German, and 2 in English. The topics of the workshops were:

- Social groupwork goes online: Introduction to tools that enable virtual work with groups (Deutsch)
- Talking with pictures - creative and appealing: First tips and tricks to design flip charts in an appealing way (Deutsch)
- Creativity and connection: use of arts-based activities (English)
- Wireless - not helpless: Possibilities and limits of virtual work with groups and in counseling (Deutsch)
- Risks and benefits of offering online groups: Exchange on the limits and possibilities of virtual work (English)
- Group processes in virtual space - a new challenge? An exchange of experiences (Deutsch)

The workshops provided useful impulses and invited the participants to lively discussions. In addition, there were ice breakers and warm-ups at the beginning and between the workshops, so that the joy and humor were not neglected. There was an opportunity to exchange ideas with colleagues at lunchtime in different rooms. At plenary events, the English translation was put into the chat so that our non-German-speaking colleagues could also participate. During the planning of this first online method workshop, we were initially skeptical, then increasingly excited whether we could also use this medium to convey our attitude, our professional self-image, and the "relationship" in such a way that emotional closeness can also arise. The consistently positive feedback, also from the new participants, has confirmed that this is possible. In this way, we were able to convince ourselves that it is always worthwhile to use the initially perceived restriction as a resource. It would not have been so international and diverse for one day live.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of this first online method workshop! - Special thanks go to Reineth Prinsloo and her students from South Africa as well as Rachel Pascoe and Gio Iacono from Canada.

Upcoming Events Outside of IASWG

Society for Social Work and Research 26th Annual Conference:

"Social Work Science for Racial, Social and Political Justice"

January 12th-16th 2022, Washington DC

More details found here:

<https://secure.sswr.org/2022-conference-home/>

European Social Work Research Association 11th European Conference for Social Work

April 6th-8th 2022 (dates to be confirmed),

Amsterdam, Netherlands

More details found here:

https://www.eswra.org/conference_main.php

Member Announcements

Seeking Expertise for a Groupwork Textbook

Would you like to contribute your expertise in groupwork to an up-and-coming groupwork textbook? If you have an area of expertise that you would like to share as an author in the form of a chapter, resources, case examples, interventions or "voices from the field", please reach out to us. We are also interested in groupwork practice materials that showcase dealing with diversity, cultural relevance, and anti-racism.

If interested, please contact Elaine Jurkowski at etjurkow@siu.edu and Patricia Saleeby at psaleeby@fsmail.bradley.edu.

Mutual Aid is on the Way

The 2021 virtual symposium demonstrated how members from many different locales and countries are using virtual methods in both educational and practitioner settings. At a time when many of us were experiencing personal challenges related to the pandemic, we were asked to develop ways of creating positive virtual group experiences in agencies, communities, and classrooms. In many of these contexts, we found our co-workers, clients, and students were experiencing similar stresses.

As several presentations at the symposium demonstrated, members have turned to each other for knowledge and support in teaching and providing virtual group work services. The mutual aid in the groups provided personal and professional support, as well as knowledge and skill acquisition. Given the positive response of many of these efforts, IASWG would like to offer mutual aid groups to facilitate ongoing virtual group work teaching and practice. If you are interested in being a member of a mutual aid group for educators or practitioners, please contact Ann Bergart at annbergart@gmail.com or Joan Letendre at jletend176@gmail.com.

New Groupwork Book Announcement

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am excited to announce the publication of my new book, *Community Building in the Online Classroom* (Cambridge Scholars, UK). I wrote this book last year to help people like me – relatively new to online teaching and interested in helping students to feel connected to one another and to the overall classroom. Many of us in academia have had to make some changes in our teaching over the last year or two, and I do believe that online teaching in one form or another is here to stay...

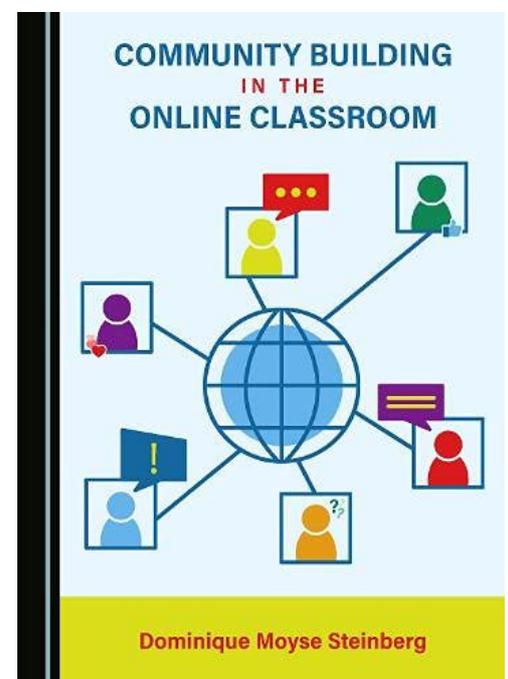
When I started this type of teaching, I was positive that I would not like it and could not create the kind of atmosphere I strove to achieve in my brick/mortar classrooms. What I discovered, however, was several tricks of the trade, if you will, that helped me to develop with my students online a good feeling of connection and camaraderie, and yes... you guessed it! Those "tricks" come out of our common heritage of group work!

So, if you are teaching at the secondary level or above and would like to check out some ideas to promote investment, commitment, and full collaboration among those present, I hope you will take a gander at the book! In particular, I talk about shared authority and co-teaching, promotion of visibility and voice, the ways in which both small and large groups can promote, enhance, and maintain connections, and the importance of the instructor taking a back seat in the classroom process.

Here's the link to Cambridge Scholars:

<https://www.cambridgescholars.com/product/978-1-5275-6929-4>. Meanwhile, I hope that you have all weathered the last two years as best as possible and are having a delicious summer.

My very best,
Dominique Moyse Steinberg





SPARC Research Project

Do you want to play a part in developing a new model of group work practice? If so, you're invited to be part of a research project by researchers at the University of Calgary. The purpose of this project is to discover how group work practitioners can utilize diversity to promote group development. This project has received ethical clearance (Certificate #REB13-0309). The title of the study is: Reconceptualizing the Role of Diversity in Group Development

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to engage in the following process:

1. Lead a treatment group of approximately 6-12 sessions as you normally would.
2. Engage with the research team in training regarding the model of working with diversity that has been developed from this project.
3. Repeat step #1, this time implementing the model and training.
4. The research team will analyze the model of diversity by comparing the group recordings and measurement tools from steps 1 and 3.

All group sessions will be audio-recorded. Group members who participate in this study will receive an honorarium of \$25 CAD (approx. \$20 USD) per session for completion of questionnaires.

If you are interested in participating or have questions, please contact:

Dr. William Pelech, Principal Investigator
peleche@ucalgary.ca

A note from the newsletter committee

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

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