



25 East 21st Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10010

(877) 668-AGPA (2472)

www.agpa.org

Media Contact:

Diane C. Feirman, CAE

(877) 668-AGPA (2472)

dfeirman@agpa.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION RECOGNIZES CERTIFIED GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPIST (CGP) CREDENTIAL AS A SPECIAL ADVANCEMENT FOR ACHIEVEMENT (SAA) CERTIFICATION FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

New York, June 9, 2009 –The Social Work Certification Committee of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has included the Certified Group Psychotherapist (CGP) credential on the approved Tier One National Professional Organization Certification list of approved certifications eligible for Special Advancement for Achievement (SAA) for VHA Social Workers. This means that a social worker holding this certification can be eligible for an increase in pay with additional documentation of enhancement of job performance.

“Since its inception in 1993, the Registry has served to elevate professional standards and provide recognition for specialists in group psychotherapy.” said Sherrie Smith, CSW-R, CGP, FAGPA, Chairwoman of the Registry. “In a competitive and demanding practice environment, certification is an important way for group therapists to distinguish themselves from other clinicians, which is exactly what it does on this list of approved certifications for VHA Social Workers.”

To earn the CGP credential, candidates must satisfy clinical experience and education requirements in group psychotherapy as well as hold an active state licensure and/or active clinical membership/certification status with designated professional organizations and current professional liability insurance. Once earned, the certification must be renewed every two years by participating in 18 hours of continuing education in group psychotherapy, insuring ongoing professional development.

In addition to serving as a means for agencies, hospitals, accrediting bodies and other mental health providers to identify qualified group therapists, the Registry also provides the public with an online searchable directory of CGPs at www.agpa.org. The public directory is searchable by city/state, zip code and/or type of group, helping a person find a therapist(s) in their area who works with the appropriate population (multiple referrals are often available). A confidential contact can then be made by telephone or e-mail directly to the therapist(s).

The site also contains valuable information for consumers who are interested in joining a group, including what happens in a group, who can benefit, and answers to other frequently asked questions. This information is also available in a printed pamphlet “Group Works” available free of charge through the Association office.

For details on any of the above resources, how to apply for the CGP, or how to utilize the CGP as a qualifying credential in a practice or healthcare organization, please contact the Registry office at 877.668.2472 or visit our website at www.agpa.org.

About the National Registry of Certified Group Psychotherapists

The National Registry of Certified Group Psychotherapists is a standard setting and certifying body. This multidisciplinary credentialing body has certified over 1,500 clinicians, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, clinical mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, pastoral counselors and creative arts therapists who are recognized as group specialists through the Certified Group Psychotherapist credential.

About AGPA

The American Group Psychotherapy Association is the foremost professional association dedicated to the field of group psychotherapy, operating through a tri-partite structure: AGPA, a professional and educational organization; the Group Psychotherapy Foundation, its philanthropic arm; and the National Registry of Certified Group Psychotherapists, a standard setting and certifying body. This multidisciplinary association has over 3,000 members, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, clinical mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, pastoral counselors and creative arts therapists, many of whom have been recognized as specialists through the Certified Group Psychotherapist credential. The association has 31 local and regional societies located across the country. Its members are experienced mental health professionals who lead psychotherapy groups and various non-clinical groups. Many are organizational specialists who work with businesses, not-for-profit organizations, communities and other "natural" groups to help them improve their functioning.

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