



25 East 21<sup>st</sup> Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10010

(877) 668-AGPA (2472)

[www.agpa.org](http://www.agpa.org)

Media Contact:

Diane C. Feirman, CAE

(877) 668-AGPA (2472)

[dfeirman@agpa.org](mailto:dfeirman@agpa.org)

---

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### AMERICAN GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RELIEF EFFORTS

**NEW YORK, Sept. 16, 2009** – The American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) continues to support its international colleagues through collaborative training efforts for Chinese and Italian Mental Health Professionals providing ongoing services to those affected by the devastating earthquakes in their countries.

AGPA has been providing virtual training via Skype to colleagues at the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. This past August, participants came together for an in-person training in Chengdu conducted by Jeffrey Kleinberg, Ph.D., CGP, FAGPA, President-Elect of AGPA. In addition to four days of didactic and experiential group training, Dr. Kleinberg traveled to the earthquake zone where he met with survivors who have benefitted from the group support they have received.

“This trip was a moving and inspiring experience,” said Dr. Kleinberg. “I feel privileged to have been able to work with my colleagues in China and the survivors who continue to benefit from their caring group skills.”

“We talked about the development of group therapy in China and the cooperation between AGPA and Chinese professionals,” said Jiang Qi Zhuang, University lecturer and the key coordinator of the training. “We welcome the friendship, the exchange and the wonderful experience.”

In Italy, in conjunction with the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Process in Rome, less than 100 miles from the earthquake site, a group of AGPA members including Richard Beck, M.S.W., CGP, FAGPA, Priscilla Kauff, Ph.D., CGP, DFAGPA, Jeffrey Kleinberg, Ph.D., CGP, FAGPA, Suzanne Phillips, Psy.D., ABPP, CGP, FAGPA and Kathleen Ulman, Ph.D., CGP, FAGPA, presented a three course program on Group Interventions in the Aftermath of Trauma and Disaster.

The program provided a forum for those working with survivors of the earthquake in Italy to collaborate with colleagues working with trauma internationally, from natural disasters to terrorist events to refugee work.

“The benefits of sharing, making meaning, connecting and feeling the support of a group of other caregivers regardless of the language spoken was palpable,” said Dr. Suzanne Phillips, AGPA Community Outreach Task

Force Co-Chair and a presenter and coordinator of the program. “We are all colleagues in a global community of concern and care.”

These programs are supported in part by the Group Psychotherapy Foundation, which is working to continue the valuable community outreach work being carried out by AGPA members nationally and internationally to a variety of communities in need. To support this work and to find out more about AGPA programs and services, please visit our website at [www.agpa.org](http://www.agpa.org) or contact Diane Feirman at the association office at 877-668-AGPA (2472).

---

### ***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 approximately 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.

The Group Psychotherapy Foundation is a philanthropic organization that is committed to the fact that “Groups Change Lives” and believes in the power of group interventions to improve people’s quality of life. The Foundation supports group psychotherapy education, research, training, community outreach programs and information dissemination for the benefit of the public and professional communities. Among the Foundation’s most vital roles is the recognition of excellence, promise, and vision by honoring those individuals and groups who have demonstrated these qualities with awards and scholarships.

# # #