

## **LETTERS OF APPRECIATION RECEIVED FROM RECIPIENTS OF SCHOLARSHIPS TO ATTEND AGPA CONNECT 2019**

I was honored to receive the Bukatman Scholarship this year, and was able to attend all six days of the conference! I am very grateful for this opportunity!

Attending AGPA Connect 2019 gave me such a wide scope of how group therapy is used for such diverse treatment purposes and in such varied methods. For example, learning to use the systems-centered method of group member interactions in 309: Neuroscience of Systems-Centered's Functional Subgrouping was delightful! This introduction inspired me to seek further training in this method, because I believe it will add value to my current group therapy work in prisons and and my future work with military veterans and their families.

My experience in the two-day Institute was phenomenal! I participated in Elaine Cooper's XXIII-1: Using Group and Personal Process to Explore Generational Trauma was incredible! Being in a small group for two days, discussing how generational trauma, especially as experienced through immigration, gave me new insights into how experiences of others can be traumatic to them, even though the events seem commonplace to me. This is important, because the Virginia Department of Corrections is demonstrating an increase in immigrant offenses.

AGPA Connect was unlike other national or international conference I've attended. I was surprised at the openness and friendliness I encountered by almost every person! This conference pointed me in the direction of new books to read (Allan Shore's is at the top of the list), new training to obtain (SCT is first), and grounded me firmly in the desire to continue working as a group therapist. Again, I am so grateful for this scholarship and opportunity to attend the entire week of AGPA Connect, and I look forward to seeing everyone in New York!

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Thank you so much for providing me with a scholarship that covered part of my registration fees for AGPA Connect in Los Angeles. This funding helped defray a portion of the expenses. AGPA Connect, as always, was bittersweet because the 5-year anniversary of my son's death fell on Tuesday, February 26, the first day of the institute I attended. Ethan may have been living in Los Angeles, attending college, had he lived. Thankfully, connecting with AGPA friends is always comforting. I'm so thankful AGPA is my professional home. I value the connections made, and was excited to see so many new faces as well as reunite with people I've known for years. While I didn't attend as many presentations as I'd have liked (there's never enough time, darn it!), I thoroughly enjoy how I spend my time through my involvement at AGPA. I cherish whatever contribution I can make to our association because it's a joy to work with such warm, dedicated professionals. I felt very welcomed as a new member of the Open Sessions Committee and well-prepared to observe & objectively provide feedback to the presenters. I value the SIG Task Force meeting and feel fortunate to be part of such a dynamic group of leaders. Being a faculty member of the principles course is a role I absolutely love, and am thankful to be part of this seminal stage of development in group facilitators. The number of offerings addressing diversity and multiculturalism at Connect demonstrates AGPA's commitment to promoting diversity awareness and multicultural sensitivity within our organization. This is a great source of pride for me. Again, thank you so much for this financial assistance. I am deeply touched and likely would not have been able to attend without it.

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I am honored to have been the recipient of the Barbara and Albert Dazzo Scholarship through The Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health. Thanks to your generous support I was able to attend my first AGPA Connect Institute and the three-day conference.

Growing up in a less privileged community has not only offered financial and academic challenges but has also helped me realize the value and importance of diversity and representation in the field of psychotherapy. Working as an early career professional at a not-for-profit community medical clinic, I enjoy helping people learn about psychotherapy, particularly for those who would not otherwise have access to individual and group therapy services. My professional pursuits would not be possible without generous support from scholarship sponsors like yourself. Thank you for enabling this opportunity!

The funds awarded gave me the opportunity to earn skills that will assist in my work with underserved communities, such as Spanish-speaking individuals and those of low socioeconomic status. Thank you personally for your generosity: Without scholarship patrons willing to support training in group psychotherapy, individuals such as myself would be unable to pursue continued education in this pertinent area.

I sincerely want to thank you for the vote of confidence during our interactions at the Group Foundation Donor Reception and the Conference Luncheon. It was a pleasure meeting you and I look forward to future connection. Thank you for your continued generosity with the Dazzo Scholarship.

I want to begin by stating that AGPA Connect 2019 was truly an incredible experience. I was able to attend my first Institute and three-day conference with the generosity of the Barbara and Albert Dazzo Endowed Scholarship. Beginning with the institute, the personal and professional growth I experienced was much more than I had anticipated. I was able to meet passionate professionals in a safe space that allowed for deep engagement in challenging conversations centered around racism and discrimination. I truly feel that the experiences I had at the Institute have continued to benefit me beyond the physical conference space and into my work with the patients I serve. I was able to witness how experienced leaders navigate difficult but necessary conversations while promoting reflection and growth.

The training I received at AGPA Connect 2019 provided invaluable skills and insights that can assist me in further improving the groups I currently provide. As the Behavioral Health Program Manager at a not-for-profit community clinic, I must be innovative in my approach to providing mental health services to our patients. I currently lead a grief and loss group and supervise master's level students who co-facilitate a variety of groups, including psychoeducational groups for stress management and a coping with chronic illness group. Through the various workshops and open sessions I attended, I have been able to begin to introduce new skills to my group facilitation and supervision. This includes introducing process interventions into psychoeducational groups and improving training of group supervision.

My hope of expanding the groups program in order to better serve the patients at my agency comes with challenges, but through the support and training of AGPA Connect, I feel better equipped to introduce helpful interventions

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I am writing this letter to express my immense gratitude for the opportunity to attend AGPA connect. It was an honor to attend as a Jensen scholarship recipient. I found the experience to be enriching and learned many invaluable lessons about group process.

As it was my first time attending, I was not quite sure what to expect. I began my experience with the two day institute, a mixed level group, which surpassed my expectations. At first, I felt tentative sharing and opening up. However, once I observed the vulnerability and commitment of others to share their life experiences, as well as our group leader's talent in navigating and protecting our emotions, I felt more safe and enjoyed being able to express myself freely. Through this experience, I had the rare opportunity of sharing many emotions that had built up in a warm and supportive environment. I also learned from the group leader through observing her skills; as well as the other group members who were practicing their own techniques and taking on inevitable roles that are part of the beauty of group process. By the

end of the two days, I felt a release, as I had experienced and expressed many emotions and I had also learned a great deal about myself through the process.

I also attended many excellent workshops during AGPA connect. The workshops were led by experienced and thoughtful leaders. My favorite part of the workshops was the fishbowl experience. I loved watching the group process unfold and then hearing the observations and feedback of the group leaders and other participants. It was fascinating to watch each group unfold in a different way, and watch the different topics that came up being addressed with endless and unique techniques. Before experiencing these workshops, I had thought I understood what group process was. While experiencing it in person and in the company of talented professionals, I realized my understanding had been very limited and the opportunity to expand it by watching others process real experiences was the best possible way to learn.

In addition to these educational opportunities, I was struck by the welcoming and friendly environment of AGPA connect. In my free time, I connected with many individuals I would have never met otherwise. I felt inspired by these connections as I discussed therapy techniques I had never heard of and met professionals from all over world who are passionate about group therapy. Just being exposed to all these professionals and their viewpoints was valuable in itself.

In conclusion, I am incredibly grateful that I was awarded this scholarship, as I would have not been able to experience AGPA connect otherwise. I am honored to be a part of the AGPA community, and I have expanded my range of techniques thanks to AGPA connect. I have already implemented my new skills in my current groups that are a part of my psychiatric training. Giving me the opportunity to improve myself as a group therapist has indirectly helped many patients who will benefit from group therapy. I also feel inspired to create more outpatient groups as this is an excellent way to provide therapy to my patient population, as many of my patients can't afford individual therapy. I hope to continue learning and growing as a group therapist and relying on AGPA for my learning. I plan on attending AGPA connect in the years to come and continuing my education.

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I wanted to thank you for bestowing on me the opportunity to participate in AGPA Connect 2019. An experience that would have been difficult for me to financially afford, but an experience that has caused an internal awakening in myself that I will have a debt of gratitude to the committee and the leaders of the conference.

I will admit that when I signed up for the conference I had minimal thoughts about what it would entail; I had heard from others that it was a "life changing" experience. Personally, I had a great interest in learning more about group therapy and its process as I will be venturing on my own as a new practitioner in the coming months.

Being trained in child and adolescent psychiatry I have gained vast knowledge in the treatment of psychopathologies from a medication perspective, with some tools therapeutically. However, as I was seeing in the local community the number of individual therapists is a finite and the number of children needing support was exponential. I had been introduced to the bare bones of group therapy through a mentor, Cindy Aron; who also provided the catalyst to learn more about the AGPA Conference. Thus, my internal goals that I would come away from the conference with more foundation in how one can start some group therapy.

However, the conference went above just providing me with clinical knowledge and basic foundations to build upon. The conference helped to explore within myself aspects that I had hid away; aspects that I had not consciously been aware that had some negative effect in how I live and practice. In addition, the conference provided me with friendships and connections that extend beyond this country.

I am grateful that I was a recipient of the scholarship for this year. I hope to continue with AGPA conference for year to come.

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Thank you for the support that allowed me to attend my first AGPA conference. Two weeks later, I am still digesting all that happened at the conference. What an incredible experience! In the institute and conference sessions, I was

challenged, inspired, and encouraged. Throughout the week, I met so many wonderful people who took time to introduce themselves, ask about my experience at the conference and make me feel very welcome. This was such a treat, as I have few opportunities in my area to interact with other professionals who enjoy and value group work as I do. I especially enjoyed talking with people who are in other disciplines and/or whose work environment is so different from my own. It reinforced for me the universality of group work; it is not just about mental health!

My expectations for this conference were exceeded! I was counting on having a valuable educational and professional development experience. I did not, however, anticipate that it would be such a rich opportunity for personal growth. I've caught the AGPA bug and am looking forward to continued participating in this organization and attending the next conference.

Attending this conference would not have been possible without your financial support.

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Thank you so much for the scholarship that enabled me to attend AGPA Connect 2019. I can now fully appreciate why so many colleagues whom I respect attend this conference annually.

Prior to this training my only experience with groups was my participation in a consultation group over the past year. How rewarding, challenging, and educational to participate in a two day Special Institute! Attending the additional workshops through Saturday provided yet another perspective on groups. I also had an opportunity to meet so many amazing people with the hopes of continuing our relations for years to come!

I think my biggest take away from the experience was no matter what setting I found myself to be in, there was never in "expert" in the room. All leaders were open to feedback and valued input from the participants. I had never before experienced that in a professional training and it made quite an impression on me.

Without scholarship assistance I don't know that I would have attempted to attend AGPA Connect and I definitely wouldn't have been able to enjoy five days there. Thank you to all those who donate to the scholarship fund and thank you to everyone who helps AGPA Connect happen every year. It is an experience I will never forget!

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To say that this conference was life changing is an understatement. What began as a curious journey into the underbelly and importance of group therapy and leadership turned into an experience that was rich in support, learning, friendship, networking and inspiration. I received the Kathy and Kent Rider Scholarship and had the privilege of meeting with Kathy Rider at the scholarship happy hour on Wednesday the 27th. Our discussion was rich and I felt that her interest in my clinical future as a group therapist was authentic. Further, I was grateful that I had the chance to personally thank her for the opportunity to participate at the conference.

While there were many takeaways from the week-long conference I feel there are three experiences that significantly altered my perspective and course as a clinician. The first being the workshop I participated in: "*Coping with Aging in Ourselves and Our Clients*" led by George Saiger and Ken Schwartz. When I initially signed up for the workshop I expected a diverse group of participants; however, upon entering I realized that I was the youngest participant by 30 years!!! My immediate reaction was "this is not the place for me"; however, I told myself to stay and I am so happy I did. The discussion with the other participants was nourishing as it allowed me to explore the similarities of feelings of loss and grief between chronic illness as a young adult and the aging population. I expressed how working with the aging population had been limited and that my encounters with the participants and leaders of the workshop provided a transformative shift in my future plans as a group leader. So much so that upon returning to my clinic I began taking referrals and planning to start a group on Aging and Illness and plan to begin the group at the end of April 2019.

The second experience that shifted my outlook and left a strong mark on my clinical path was the 2-day process group experience with Barbara Finn, PhD. I had limited experience with process groups prior to coming to AGPA and was looking forward to the group the day I signed up for the training. Navigating and exploring my way through the process group was incredibly satisfying and at times intimidating. About half of my group had prior experience with leading process groups so I found it helpful when I received their input and found myself inspired by their openness and level vulnerability. I found the brief exposure to process groups during those 2 days made me hungry for more experience. Further, talking with veteran participants about their process group experience at AGPA made me excited for the next AGPA conference, as I felt that the exposure and knowledge gained from participating in multiple process groups would strengthen my insight and provide a solid platform to help me as I navigated my way as a group leader in a process group. There was one group participant that made an impact on me during the 2-day experience and I made an effort to keep the relationship going after the process group ended. We made the conference richer by meeting every night for dinner to discuss other workshops we attended and process our feelings and thoughts about what we were learning. We developed quite a strong bond in our brief time together and at the end of AGPA felt like I was saying goodbye to a best friend at summer camp. We made plans to stay in touch despite living on opposite sides of the country and are planning on taking a trip together later in the year and hopefully reuniting at the AGPA conference next year!

The final experience at AGPA that imprinted itself on my heart and mind was the Scholarship Luncheon and interview with Dr. Irvin Yalom. During the luncheon I sat next to Elizabeth Knight, LCSW and had a vibrant discussion about how her experience with the AGPA community has enriched her clinical career and how her dedication to provide effective and authentic group therapy was strengthened by her personal exposure to the AGPA conferences over the years. I was also shocked to find out that I was also sitting next to Barbara Ilfeld, MD, a fellow Lake Tahoe, CA resident. Before coming to the AGPA conference I had the perspective that there was no one in my community that knew about AGPA or had a strong background in group psychotherapy. Talking with Mrs. Ilfeld shifted that perspective immediately and made me eager to learn more about her and her group clinical experience once I returned home. The final portion of the luncheon with Dr. Yalom was such an honor and lovely way to end the week-long conference. Prior to the interview, my exposure to Dr. Yalom was through his writing, as I have always been infatuated by his art of words. His relatability is humbling and unintimidating and I left the luncheon believing I could accomplish his successes too, which I believe is a trait of his intelligence. Having the chance to hear Dr. Yalom speak and reflect on his career was such a unique experience and one that I will carry with me forever.

The experiences and connections I encountered at the AGPA Conference are difficult to describe to my peers. My only suggestion is to encourage them to attend in 2020. I feel incredibly lucky to have had the opportunity to receive a scholarship and meet such amazing and talented professionals. Working in rural mental health often creates a hopeless feeling; however, attending the AGPA Conference is a reminder of how important it is to attend trainings and conferences that are outside of my clinical experience. The power of group therapy was solidified at the conference and my exposure to the workshops helped to provide a platform to stand on when beginning my own therapy groups. I am eager to attend the conference next year in New York and look forward to connecting with familiar and new faces, attending workshops and process groups that encourage a new level of vulnerability that I often am not aware of as a clinician, and gaining experience and knowledge about the latest research and benefits of group therapy. I am forever grateful for the opportunity I had and know that the takeaways from the conference will resonate throughout my life personally and professionally.

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The opportunity to attend the AGPA meetup was so special, thank you to everyone who helped make it possible. The experience as a whole was beyond anything I could have imagined. It was such a joy to be surrounded by and learning

with so many intelligent, creative, experienced and deep thinking professionals. I look forward to continuing to learn, grow, share and connect with this community, thank you so much for welcoming me in to this amazing group of people.

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I find myself struggling to find words that do justice in expressing the enormous gratitude I have for being awarded the Durkin-Glatzer scholarship. Without this scholarship I would not have been able to attend AGPA Connect, a conference that was so needed for me personally and professionally at this stage of my life.

On a person level, the institute and all the "fish bowls" I participated in gave me a deeper understanding of my barriers to connection and how others experience me than any individual or group therapy I've done before. Albeit painful and difficult, these experience helped me come away from the week with so much to work on and learn from in one of the most fundamental areas of my life ---- human connection and intimacy. I took advantage of every single opportunity I could to be a "member" of the demonstration groups in each session I attended, and found myself continuing to learn new things about myself in each experience that get in the way of me having the kind of close and fulfilling relationships with others that I long for. I now have more "grist for the mill" to work on in my group and individual therapy back home.

In the workshops, I also found myself intrigued and also inspired to learn more about the different theories or perspectives the leader was bringing. The experience gave me a perfect entrée to different models that I can pursue and gain training in when I have the financial resources. I also took advantage of an opportunity to get "supervision" from a master therapist and other attendees for a group I'm leading for college students. This was invaluable and I've already put into practice what I took away from this experience. My group members have since commented that group has been more powerful since I returned from the conference. I am very new to leading groups and have felt hungry to learn and be more effective for the students I serve who are primarily first generation low SES LatinX students. Being able to attend this conference allowed me to gain exposure to models, theories, and master therapists that I've been able to utilize in being more effective in the interpersonal process groups I lead.

In addition, I took initiative at AGPA to get much contact information from leaders I admired. I have since emailed many of them to set up discussions about my professional development and training, and I may even now have a consultation group in the works. Without attending the conference I would not have made these connections, had my mind introduced to theories I want to now learn, nor would I have gained the deep interpersonal learning about myself to the extent I did. I also found that being around so many therapists who all are passionate about group therapy helped remove the isolation I feel so often day to day at my job. Feeling held by that professional community, even if just for a week, was moving and supportive.

Thank you deeply for the Durkin-Glatzer scholarship that allowed me the ability to attend and have the powerful experience I did.

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Thank you for your generosity in giving me the opportunity to attend 2018's Connect. The agency I work for is unable to offer us much financial assistance for continuing education and your generosity played a huge role in me being able to come without taking on a significant personal financial burden. This was my fourth Annual Meeting and AGPA has become not only my professional home, but also an asset to the services I offer our agency in my role as a group coleader, Groups Coordinator, and in my role for training about group in our APA accredited pre-doctoral internship.

This year's Connect gave me the opportunity to further my professional skills and knowledge as I delved more deeply into learning about Modern Analytic Group Therapy. My Institute and one of the all-day workshops I attended were both specifically focused on Modern Analytic theory and techniques. I learned a lot of new techniques and have already begun sharing those with my colleagues and the trainees I work with. Further, I have been using my Spring Break (happening now) to further deepen my knowledge by reading Modern Analytic articles.

This year was the first time to attend Monday's Special Institute. I was excited to learn more about Attachment Theory and how to use it in group. This has prompted me to want to read more of Cheri Marmarosh's work and I have her resources on my reading list – so much good stuff to read and so little time to do it! I previously attended a Focused Brief Group Therapy session, so Martyn Whittingham's part of the day was a great refresher for me and has me again thinking about ways to incorporate interpersonal theory and his brief approach at my center.

I returned from the conference with renewed energy for my role as Group Coordinator. I have been wanting to grow the group program, but systemic barriers and an avoidance of conflict have resulted in me being quite restrained. After this conference, the rejuvenation I experienced in the Institute, and a lot of self-reflection, I am ready to face the barriers that previously held me back with creative and thoughtful ideas. I think I am ready to offer new ideas and recommendations without fear of rejection, instead knowing some ideas will be rejected or won't work out, but that I can handle that. The possibility that some changes will be implemented, even if others aren't feels worth the risk, because change certainly won't come if I don't propose new ideas.

Thank you SO much for supporting my attendance at AGPA Connect. I know that our agency, students, trainees, and myself are better off, because of my attendance.

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As a scholarship recipient, I learned so much and I'm so grateful for the opportunity to participate in this year's AGPA Connect.

The culminating highlight was watching Irv Yalom speak to us about working with his own unconscious in allowing whatever surfaces to be of service to his patients and trusting his feelings from a seasonal perspective. I also learned a lot of techniques both in the CBT workshop as well as some wonderful family oriented techniques for my trauma groups. Another highlight also was the Modern Analytic day long training I did on Friday. Although I did not participate in an Institute, I would like to try to do this next year, even though it might be cost prohibitive to take that much time off work.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to participate for the first time in AGPA. I appreciate your generous support of all of the scholarship recipients this year.

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In Jazz, we create solos, duets, collective harmonies, and sometimes just sit in silence. At other moments, we dance with the bass, fight for the limelight with the trumpet, and ignore the tuba as it belches. Later, we listen as the guitar riffs on C Major while the 12-string hits dissonance, and tears roll for this once beautiful, now sad song. Group is Jazz and there ain't no way around it. This is where my Los Angeles AGPA week started: between the sound of music and the diaspora of the unconscious.

Examining the relationship between form and spontaneity, modern analytic and relational group psychotherapy, and using jazz as the backdrop, this year's two-day institute was no easy tune. Confronted with the limitations of theory, I struggled to make sense of leadership and identity with Francis Kaklauskas and Elizabeth Olson (a husband and wife power duo). Quickly, I recognized the tension of wanting to participate fully but also learn what interventions worked, group as a whole processes, and how to achieve the right balance of "here and now," and "then and there." Wait a second...oh no...here it comes...not now...shit! It definitely just happened. The parental piano song of my mommy-daddy issues just soloed and I am now regressed, young, and raw. Didn't I already have these ghosts under control?! Why aren't you taking care of me the way that I want?! Leave it to group to show us our flab and as we unfold in collective song, we learn our own more deeply.

Transitioning out of Jazz, but not fully out of process, I explored the ways that therapists can use their own attachment style, and those of their members, to help focus group interventions. Cheri Marmarosh and Martyn Whittingham ran a

demo group, displayed a video of a group in action, and attempted to demystify the complicated “interpersonal circumflex.” I also took a workshop on techniques to incorporate spirituality in group process with Fred Hiatt, and discovered various ways that bodies speak through movement with Suzanne Cohen.

During the penultimate day of the conference I waded deep into the Modern Analytic waters with Dennis Foley, who focused on “Attuning the Leader’s Voice.” Key issues such as the importance of the therapeutic frame, the leader containing/withstanding group anger, and members speaking to various forms of group resistance, were packed, unpacked, and repacked again. At several moments, I found myself at the heart of racial and gender tension. Like a growing drumbeat, the group explored the pull of skin color, gender, and age, as these identities related to, clashed, intersected, and overlapped. Not only did I explore the seen and unseen, known and unknown parts of myself, but I also experienced the laser intensity of societal transference. I could not speak for all white males nor hold the entire burden of this oppressive history, and yet at moments I found myself doing just that. It’s a paradox and a burden to load any one member with the voice of a collective. While an unmistakable aspect of my identity, I viscerally experienced the collapse of my being into but a few words. In this region, I struggled to individuate and hold my own, while still trying to connect across intergenerational trauma. Rupture and repair in a world swamped with living pain is muddled and difficult. And yet, what other choice do we have?

On the last day of the conference I explored a mysterious topic. There is a hidden gem in the group world that is not known by all, and is only spoken about in the periphery. It’s not group in a traditional sense, but its most definitely group work. With the walk of a shaman and the skill of a seasoned elder, Shelly Firestone revealed the power of psychodrama chair by chair. Bypassing defenses and manifesting the inner world with color, movement, and dimensionality, the group worked through layers of trauma, emotional ambivalence, and historical violence. For those who have not been a part of a psychodrama, it something not to be missed.

As I conclude my reflection on this year’s AGPA annual conference, the experience would not be complete without also acknowledging the MANY special moments with colleagues who have now turned into friends and family. These connections, which take place in between workshops, while sharing a meal, walking in the hallways, or processing the day in the lobby, are just as important as all the learning. As humans, we need deep and authentic community and AGPA has nurtured and created this space. Words can do no justice for the depth of love that I have for this organization, its members, and the kind souls who have made this experience possible with their generous scholarships. Thank you AGPA for making this journey possible and rest assured, that I will be passing this learning and connection to the communities with which I work.

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The conference was overall exceptional. I attended the special institute on Monday about polarization in romantic relationships and in communities across the country, related to differences in political leanings. The special institute was a great opportunity to talk about a difficult topic that is not often discussed in training. I believe it will be of high utility in my practice going forward, as the framework discussed can be used in individual therapy with patients who are either ambivalent about continuing a relationship or are struggling to interact in a meaningful way with others who share a different polarizing view. Discernment counseling is also a useful skill discussed at the special institute that I would consider adding to my practice in the future, but have difficulty seeing where it might fit in my practice at the present.

The two-day institute I attended was very activating for me. The topic of the two-day institute was intergenerational trauma. The most interesting aspects of the two-day institute were the discussions about epigenetic changes from historical trauma being passed on to offspring and memory transmission from ancestors to their progeny, possibly multiple generations down the line. I discovered many unresolved issues related to my family’s historical traumas and my own personal traumas. I noticed a variety very strong, almost overpowering, emotions at the end of the two-day institute. I plan to add some questions about historical trauma to my intake template for new patients, and also will pay more attention to how issues in the psychotherapy group I co-lead may be related to historical trauma.

During the main conference, I attended multiple different workshops on a variety of topics. The workshop about co-leading groups emphasized the need for collaboration between co-leaders, while also discussing the need for a balance of healthy narcissism. The workshop for queer and transgender professional development really focused on how to better connect with LGBTQ+ patients due to the marginalization of that segment of society; there were a variety of different ideas to help with connecting. There was a CME talk about how to run medication groups, and I now feel confident about my ability to implement medication groups based on this model. The session focused on using Buddhist principles in support groups was interesting; introducing the concept of the four sufferings in Buddhism at the beginning of the demonstration group seemed to really move things along to talking about difficult topics such as death, dying, illness, aging, and infirmity. I plan to try adding some Buddhist concepts to groups when appropriate after seeing the impact. The session that discussed using acupuncture in conjunction with psychodynamic psychotherapy groups was intriguing. The presenter noticed intense emotional reactions during her own acupuncture and when she attended her own psychotherapy group after attending acupuncture on the same day, she noticed that she was more assertive in group and made more movement. She decided to create a group model repeating her process of having acupuncture within 24 hours of group psychotherapy, and the trial of this model has so far led to subjective improvements in the groups where it has been implemented; I would like to try adding this type of group to my practice, however, I'm not sure of the feasibility in my area to collaborate with an acupuncturist.

My last session at the conference was the luncheon. Irv Yalom was the main presenter at the luncheon, and it was amazing to hear him speak. He was so candid and genuine; it was touching. He talked about his experiences during his career, including aging and the possibility of retiring. It was surprising, but made sense, that he emphasized the importance of self disclosure by group leaders. It was also helpful that he recommended every therapist have their own therapy, and that especially group therapists have their own group therapy. He was much warmer and humble than I would have expected. I plan to continue to have my own therapy in the future as part of my practice and will make a point of trying to continue in group therapy throughout my practice.

Although it was quite emotionally charged and exhausting at times, I thoroughly enjoyed the conference. I plan to attend the conference in the future to take advantage of the invaluable opportunities for learning.

I am writing to express my gratitude and thanks for the tuition scholarship I received to attend this year's AGPA Connect

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I'd like to start this summary of my experience at AGPA Connect 2019 with the following quote shared by a workshop facilitator:

Tell me, and I will forget. Teach me, and I may remember.  
Involve me, and I will understand.  
-Confucius

I heard these words towards the end of my experience at AGPA Connect 2019, and when I did they so resonated with what I had just lived in the days leading up to that workshop. I've been telling colleagues and friends alike that unlike any professional development opportunity so far, this conference involved me fully. I was engaged intellectually, professionally, and, most significantly, socially, spiritually, and emotionally.

As a first-time attendee and new member to AGPA, I was not prepared for what I was to encounter. Perhaps that was for the best. I had little expectations beyond having a good time and being open to the experience. AGPA Connect's (amazing) reputation precedes itself, so I went in knowing the organization's annual conference was a microcosm of passionate clinicians committed to a practice area organized around the principles of human connection. And yet, what I encountered at AGPA Connect 2019 rises above professional zeal and theory. What I experienced, firsthand, was the profoundly moving impact of deeply engaging with individuals who are committed, above all else, to personal and collective intimacy, growth, and healing.

Through participating in the Institute and various plenaries, workshops, and open sessions, I have returned to Miami a qualitatively different person and clinician. I worked with and through others, I saw and was seen, I was involved and I learned. I walked away with greater self- and other-attunement, with ideas and interventions I am eager to put into practice, with various professional connections, and unexpectedly, with new friends.

These experiences have altogether energized me, personally and clinically speaking. As I am currently co-facilitating a process group at Florida International University's Counseling & Psychological Services, I am eager to share lessons learned at AGPA Connect 2019 with my co-facilitator so we may deepen our work in group even further. For example, I am excited about utilizing what I learned about affective engagement in the here-and-now to catalyze group cohesion and overall group process. Having also been exposed to Agazarian's work for the first time, the manner in which I'm understanding group process at FIU CAPS has already shifted for the better.

As I write these words I also find myself brainstorming future potential conference proposals for clinical areas and populations dear to my heart, including the use of Spanish for affective attunement and Latino healing practices and their application to groups, amongst others. These ideas are inspired both by the affirming and welcoming environment I encountered at AGPA Connect 2019 and my desire to contribute to the theory and practice of group psychotherapy via the inclusion of ideas and approaches reflective of diverse human experiences.

To say that I was transformed by AGPA Connect 2019 may seem hyperbolic, but I say it with the utmost sincerity. To the AGPA Joint Board, Group Foundation, and primary contributors to the Josephine M. Cunningham Tervalon Memorial scholarship I give my greatest thanks. Thank you all for creating opportunities for first-generation, queer clinicians of color like myself to have access to a professional home in AGPA. Thank you for seeing me.

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I would like to first and foremost thank all benefactors, as well as everyone involved in organizing AGPA Connect, for giving me the ability to attend and grow as a clinician and research. My main interest in attending AGPA Connect was for the opportunity to further my unique learning experiences in group psychotherapy. I am a doctoral student with aspirations in group psychotherapy as a mainstay in my clinical career; as such, the chance to be around like-minded current and aspiring clinicians interested in group therapy was invaluable. In the coming years I plan to focus my doctoral dissertation, graduate coursework, and practica on developing skills related to leading psychotherapy groups.

At AGPA Connect I had the opportunity to take part in various process groups. The experiential learning I gained from being a group member will help me, both as a group leader and in empathy for group members, in the coming years as I continue to develop group protocols and tools for clinicians who lead treatment groups. Aside from the experiential portion, being exposed to a format of group therapy I had never been exposed to helped widen my knowledge of the field and options for my future training as a clinician.

Aside from experiential learning, I had numerous opportunities to attend those workshops mentioned above and see what clinicians are doing in the field related to research, specific problem areas, and more fine-tuned and well-known psychotherapy protocols. Seeing masters at work, especially related to protocols and techniques I plan to practice in the future, helped me develop both grounded and specific skills as well as awareness of therapy techniques of which I had never heard. Attending so many workshops helped me immensely and connected me to many working professionals who can aid in my development in the future, both as friends and colleagues.

Finally, the chance to present my own research efforts to other individuals focused on researching group psychotherapy was instrumental in my studies and overall career. I want to thank the benefactors involved in my scholarship for giving me this opportunity as I otherwise would not have been able to present the results of research I have put much effort into.

In summary, attending AGPA Connect was vital to my very near and more prolonged future as a psychologist. Connecting with other working professionals, being a group member in an intensive psychotherapy group, and attending workshops on clinical work will help me develop as a group psychologist immensely. The experience was

overwhelmingly positive, and I plan to attend in the coming years if at all possible. Thank you to the scholarship benefactors and everyone at AGPA for making my experience possible.

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I am extremely grateful that I received a scholarship to attend the 2019 AGPA Connect conference! I attended my first two day institute and consider it to be an impactful experience on me both personally and professionally. I walked away learning more about myself and as a clinician. I will cherish what I have learned from my institute leader and group members. It has already shaped my work. I again want to thank all of the AGPA members that donated to the scholarship fund which has allowed me to begin participation in an excellence organization of people. I hope to see you all next year in New York!

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I wanted to sincerely thank the scholarship committee and donors for providing me with the opportunity to attend AGPA Connect this year. Without their support I would not have had the wonderful experience that I did. The institute was one of the most memorable experiences I have had in all of my training as a physician and therapist, and something that will stay with me in my future work as a psychiatrist. Even in the few weeks since the conference I have found myself frequently recalling moments and feelings from my experiential group as a way to more fully connect with my patients, peers, and supervisors. As a senior resident in my program, I have shared what I learned and felt during the institute with many of my colleagues since I have returned, sparking conversation that I hope highlights the importance of group psychotherapy within psychiatry training, something that unfortunately can be pushed aside. Overall it was an amazing experience and I hope to return next year!

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I had a fantastic time at AGPA this year, and am so grateful for the scholarship support, which made attending more financially feasible as a psychiatry resident. It was definitely a growth experience for me, and it expanded my mind about the possibility of group as an agent for personal growth and change for my clients and myself. I am hoping to get more involved in groups in the future (I currently have stuck my toe in the water by starting to cofacilitate a teen DBT group, but I hope to expand further as my residency schedule allows) and I hope I can continue to come to AGPA! Thank you so much for the support -- I so appreciate it.

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I participated the 6-day package of conference in AGPA 2019 Connect and was lucky enough to get the Anne Alonso Scholarship. It is my third conference since 2016, I learned a lot every time and the most for this time. I would like to report my learning following the time line around knowledge, skill and method, and self-growth. I chose the Clinical Applications of Attachment and Interpersonal Theories to Group Psychotherapy: Two Sides of the Same Coin. On Feb 25 from 9am-5pm. Cheri Marmarosh and Martyn Whittingham chaired this special institute. I read lots of paper written by Dr. Marmarosh, and I know Dr. Whittingham when he began his training in Beijing, China. I also participated their presentation during 2017. It will be very interesting to combine the attachment and interpersonal theory, to some degree, that means to combine here and now and there and then. Both Cheri and Martyn have done lots of excellent work separately already and they began to combine. I learn a lot from their presentation, and I begin to think my group Psychotherapy in the future when I go back China.

I participated the Mixed level of Process Group Experience by Helen Chong from Feb 26-27. During those two days, I gained a lot. Just as I said in group, it is the first time that I was a member in a group, not co-leader and not a commentator, it might because that there were four Asians among the 12 members, which made it easier for me to be heard and seen. The most important is Helen's power and insistent, she would interrupt me and help me to reflect my resistant, confront me, accompany me and gave me space to be with myself. And spent lots of time helping me to connect with other members, to form the group. She is good at dealing with the issue of insecurity and processing the trauma. She is sharp, confident, insistent, powerful. And she accepted all the members and also herself. She acknowledged that she is a very good therapist with the characteristics of sometimes messy, forgot things, don't know the time, etc. I learned a lot from Helen.

I participated the “Alcohol, Drugs, Gambling, Lusting, Intrigue, Eating, Rage, and More: A Cutting-Edge Model of Addiction Treatment” on Feb.28, from 10am-5pm. Barney Straus, Marcia Nickow and Shelly Firestone together led this course. Shelly did the didactic part, Barney and Shelly did the activity part, and Barney and Marcia led the demo group. I knew more about addicts and became more interested using activities in group especially the role play part, it was amazing that I suddenly became aware of my desire and anxiety and other’s through these activities. The demo group helped me the most during this day. I participated the demo group as a member, so I had two sessions which really helped me. It just like the continuous process group based on the past two days. I processed my anxiety about being liked or not, self-worthiness. Self-right, etc. the most important part is about my different and changing relationship with male and female authority figure.

Then I participated the “Introduction to Modern Group Process” on March 1, from 10am-5pm led by Alice Brown and Christopher Dolin. Alice did the didactic part and Chris led the demo group with different members for morning and afternoon. Alice acted like a teacher and supervisor. The demo group looked more like to work on the forming phase since the two sessions had different membership. From my opinion, I think for a whole-day-workshop, it is better to have the same membership. It is really diff researchers and practitioners icult for the director to date with one person in the morning and another one in the afternoon. I knew this because it was a little difficult for me to begin my new membership in this 4 group shortly after my yesterday’s group, just like I could not forget my last boyfriend and could not concentrate on the new dating. I still got a lot from this, it led me begin to think about my intimate relationship. And, I got the supervision from Alice and all the other members about my difficulty dealing with a supervisee in a supervision group. We discussed the topic around the authority of supervisor and whether there are some qualification requirements for a person being certified to be a group psychotherapist.

On March 2, I participated the “Who, What, When, Where, Why, and I: The Group Leader Role and Running Process Groups for Training Experiences.” directed by Karen Eberwein. This workshop looked more like a training model. 6 persons acted as co-therapists in turn, each pair led for 25 minutes and after 5 minutes discussion, turn into another pairs. When one pair do their co-leading, the other two pairs were members together with the other 4 members. I was the first pair of co-therapists and was member for the second and third sessions. When I was the leader, I got the opportunity to practice my skills as a group therapist, especially at the phase of forming a group, pay attention to the silent person, the emotions of members, to test my hypothesis and my concerns, etc. When I was the members, I really got a lot especially around the issue of my intimate relationships.

What an amazing experience in LA! The six days just like a continuous process group for me to deal with my issues of authority and relationships. I also participated different plenary sessions and colloquy, and Yoga, which made my conference experience more diversity and attractive. I love group work and I believe that group can help us to understand ourselves and others more clearly so to communicate more easily, to live more happily and to work more efficiently. I do appreciate AGPA for organizing this rich and meaningful conference every year, it really takes lots of time, energy and mind-work to look for the hotel, to negotiate the budget, to invite excellent researchers and practitioners from all over the world, to find the potential excellent researchers and practitioners, to manage different kind of administration work and keep different boundaries and delegate different tasks to hotels and volunteers. I am very willing to be helpful for AGPA. And hope in the future there are more official connections between America and China.

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I cannot describe how meaningful and rich my experience at AGPA was in Los Angeles this past February. My gratitude for the scholarship aid I received to make my attendance possible is beyond words and I cannot thank you enough for your support in making it happen. AGPA is an incredible community and I feel so lucky to be a part of it now! I knew it would be a powerful moment in my development as a group therapist but I did not realize how much of an impact it would make on me both personally and professionally. The training I received was invaluable. The two day institute was such a rich way to learn and understand the application of group principals as well as to benefit from the beauty and magic of group. I will hold the people I met dear and know I have developed some new relationships with colleagues

that will be lasting in my life. I look so forward to taking what I learned out into the community and into the work I do. Thank you for a wonderful unforgettable experience.

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I write this letter to express my sincere gratitude to you all for providing an International Scholarship that helped me attend AGPA Connect this year in Los Angeles. The confidence, connection and knowledge that I continue to experience since attending APGA is much more than I had expected. I was amazed by the quality of choices throughout the conference week and found many workshops that were directly applicable to my current groups.

The first two days of the conference I was a part of a special interest group on Gestalt Group Psychotherapy, led by Peter Cole and Daisy Reese. The experience was incredible, and the leaders introduced me to the experience of Gestalt techniques and general awareness principles, leaving me with practical tools and strategies that I was able to use in the groups I run in the clinic where I work right away.

Over the three-day conference, I continue to be amazed with how much I learn at workshops and trainings and the depth of professional and personal relationships I cultivate at the conference. I've never experienced anything like it in any other professional setting.

The workshop «Using Adventure-Based Counseling Methods with Interpersonal Therapy Groups» that Barney Straus held, I was very impressed. I bought the book «Healing in Action. Adventure-Based Counseling with Therapy Groups» of Barney Straus. I began to use psychotherapy methods that Barney Straus describes in his book. I want to conduct a study on the effectiveness of this method and publish the results in the journal International Journal of Group Psychotherapy. The conference continues to inspire and nourish me and fuels my passion for group therapy. AGPA and the conference really has changed my life, as a person and as a clinician. It's with the deepest gratitude and appreciation that I give my thanks for AGPA to allow me to attend the conference through the scholarship fund. I have found a community that's become my home. It leaves me with such a strong sense of gratitude. Thank for you always for allowing me to be a part of your group.

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Returning home from my first ever AGPA conference, I feel as if I have gained a new Family and professional home. A place where I feel : welcome, belonging, seen, heard, and nurtured.

I returned to work invigorated for the week ahead- I started my first group the week I came back to work from the conference. I feel more awake and enlivened with thoughts and plans for the future after returning from the conference. These plans include getting certified as a Group Psychotherapist, creating more groups at the community mental health clinic that I work at, and following Irvin Yalom's advice and getting into my own group therapy. These are all outcomes from the incredible week I spent with you at AGPA Connect.

As a therapist new to the profession I sometimes feel overwhelmed and confused by all the directions and possibilities that exist in this field, attending the conference helped me see more clearly what I get joy from in this work and helped me create connections with people who inspire me.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to grow and learn. Thank you for helping me feel part of the AGPA family.

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The first AGPA conference was an amazing experience.

First of all I met very interesting experienced professionals, who were open, generous and welcoming.

Then the content in the workshops, presentations and panels was both innovative and understandable. It added a lot to my every day practicalities.

And last: the organization. It was amazing to see the whole very complicated net of activities taking place simustanly , so efficiently.

All the hospitality events were much appreciate as well!

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I am writing to thank you for extending me the opportunity to attend AGPA Connect 2019 through the provision of a Group Foundation scholarship. This was my first experience at AGPA Connect, something I had been looking forward to for several years. Throughout my graduate training I had always heard group therapists talk about AGPA and the experiences they would have at the yearly Connect meeting. As I graduated and took a postdoctoral fellowship specializing in group psychotherapy at the University of Nevada Las Vegas's interdisciplinary community mental health training clinic, The PRACTICE, one of the things I most looked forward to was finally being able to attend AGPA Connect. Unfortunately, like many recent graduates, my current circumstances meant that I would not be able to attend without financial assistance.

Because of the Group Foundation scholarship, I was able to attend and participate fully in all six days of AGPA Connect. I did my best to squeeze every possible moment of meaning out of that week! I truly experienced significant personal and professional growth through my involvement at AGPA Connect. Through both the institute and conference experiences, I deepened my insight into how and why group works. I came away from the experience with greater confidence in myself and my profession, and a strong desire to continue my journey in the world of group psychotherapy. I was able to reconnect with many beloved group psychotherapy mentors as well as make connections with new friends for which I am already very grateful.

I genuinely feel inadequate to express the depth of my gratitude for the opportunity that this scholarship provided me to attend and partake in AGPA Connect 2019. My experiences there will continue to impact me deeply, and I am hopeful and excited about the idea of continuing to become more active and involved in the AGPA professional community.

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I whole-heartedly appreciate the generosity of this scholarship. The AGPA Annual Conference is my favorite week of the year! It really really is. Not only have I made lifelong friends at this conference, I continue to come in contact with parts of myself that I seem to forget about throughout the rest of the year. There is a warmth and openness at the conference - from all generations of group therapists - that allow me to find my confidence and my voice. I reunite with friends, colleagues and mentors. Together, we remain in process. We share what we learn about ourselves and the ways in which certain themes carry over from one conference to the next. From the plenary speakers to owning and finding comfort in my aggression, the annual meeting is an eye-opening, humbling and thrilling experience. The conference never ends on that given Saturday. There are many things that I continue to process with my AGPA friends and many things that I continue to bring in to both my individual and group therapies. Each year gets me more excited about the possibilities of leading my own workshop, and one day, institute.

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Thank you for providing me such a meaningful learning experience in 2019 APGA Connect Conference in LA, and I had a wonderful time learning from the 2-day institute, workshop, open sessions, and networking with mentors and peers. This conference was a very interesting setting where gathering all the group psychotherapists, scholars and researchers, which was a place that people could connect and work with each other so easily. This was my first AGPA conference and I got to meet new people, friends and colleagues who are all passionate about the group work that just feel like a home to me. As a new member of this big AGPA family, I felt welcomed, warm, and sense of belonging. Specially, I wanted to thank the scholarship committee that provided the funding to make possible for me to this unique the opportunity and to expand my learning experiences beyond my imagination and expectation. After the conference, I got really excited about it and has shared my experiences with colleagues and peers about this great opportunity in the coming years. I hope that I will have another chance to be in this conference in the future. I would say this was a part of life changing experience. Thank you.

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I had the privilege of attending AGPA Connect this year. Specifically, I attended the two-day-institute, in which I was part of a process group led by Barbara Illfeld. She led the process group with such a subtle, strategic posture. Re-

experiencing of family of origin dynamics, “play”, and attraction were all used in the healing process of becoming a group. Perhaps I experienced this as more of a personal healing than anything- which will assuredly guide my professional development! I am a neo-clinician, desiring to facilitate psychodynamic groups for adolescence, so the impact of AGPA on both personal and professional levels could not have been better timed.

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The 2019 conference exceeded my expectations. I am so thankful for the opportunity to have join such a community full of caring, welcoming, genuine and brilliant minds. The scholarship opportunity for new providers is a missed opportunity for those who do not partake. I thought the sharing of hotel rooms with another member is an excellent part of the planning. I also liked that I was placed with someone who I didn't know. I enjoyed my roommate, her wisdom, culture experiences and continued friendship. The energy of the conference provided a natural buzz for me and I am still floating from all of the experience I received.

I cannot stop talking about my institute experience. The two-day session I attended was with Shoshana Ben-Noam, Psy.D.; Mother and Daughters focus. I came to get more group experience fed, and she did exactly that. She provided an excellent and rich experience with her skills and instincts of group process. I admired her challenging questions of the group and appreciated her effort in helping me gain more awareness into my “here and now” skills and saw the benefit perfectly clear.

I truly believe without this conference, group therapy will lose what is was designed for. If I could tell all group therapists to attend, I would.

Today, in supervision, with Charlie Pohl, LCSW I sought his advice regarding a group I facilitated. After explaining and processing; I let him know that the education I received at AGPA provided me an opportunity to use the “here and now” in group last week. His response was that he felt I was able to provide a space for group members to have “ego strength.” Without this education of AGPA, I am not sure I could have managed this group that could have turned volatile.

Thank you very much for all of the support of the “newbies” the dinner, information, providing information on who to turn to if we felt unsafe in anyway. I will continue my membership and attendance at these conferences. Thank you so much for the scholarship. I am truly grateful.

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Thank you sincerely for the gift of scholarship which allowed me to attend this year's two-day experiential institute at AGPA. I had been encouraged to attend by mentors and colleagues who assured me that this event would become an important turning point in my training. They were right. It reinvigorated my passion for group therapy, instilled in me new and practical knowledge, and -- as a pleasant bonus -- connected me with other, like-minded friends in the field.

I look forward to many more years of growth through AGPA.

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I wanted to thank you from my heart for making me one of the recipients of your scholarship program. As a result, I was able to attend the 2019 AGPA Connect Annual Conference in Los Angeles. If it had not been for that, I would have had to pass on this wonderful opportunity, with its transformative experiences and indelible memories. Instead, I was able to benefit from the enriching experience of participating in a two-day process group led by a master therapist during the Institute portion; providing me with hands-on experience that I have since done my best to emulate. I was also able to see first-hand the transformative and almost “sacred” process that took place during the psychodrama workshop, from which all of us fortunate participants learned so much.

In between, there were the opportunities to attend a dizzying number of courses and seminars of varying degrees of length and satisfaction. And last but not least, the immeasurable benefit of meeting, reconnecting, and interacting, as

well as building new bonds, with colleagues from many backgrounds and from all regions of the country as well as internationally.

I am very much looking forward to becoming a regular attendee at these conferences; and one day, hope to be in a position to be able to add my own contribution to the scholarship program for the next generation of AGPA members.

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I want to thank the AGPA for affording me the opportunity to attend the 2019 conference. I imagine that you receive hundreds of thank you letters in response to your generosity, but I hope my thank you communicates my sincere appreciation.

The impact of participating with AGPA reminds me of the classic nursery rhyme, "The House that Jack Built". In the famous tale, the house Jack builds becomes connected with several random events, characters, and objects in a very surprising way. Likewise, my personal and professional life is now interwoven with new AGPA friends, perspectives, education, and experiences. The Womens SIG introduced me to inspiring women concerned about feminism and social justice. Realizing that I needed to learn more about women's issues, I volunteered to be a co-chair. The Addictions SIG proved that online groups are effective. I attend all their quarterly calls. As a result of the online benefit, I decided to offer a few hours to online therapy. Then I learned about nearby group practice affiliates. I attended my first fishbowl at the fall IGPS conference.

In addition to the conferences, I have also accessed the AGPA e-learning. By the time I complete all my purchased courses, I will have accumulated nearly 50 CEU's. My goal is to become a certified group therapist! All I need is the supervision hours!

The house that AGPA helped me build is full of growth, professionalism, generosity, acceptance, and unity. I came into my first conference unaware of my own misunderstanding about group work. Despite years of running psychoeducational groups, I realize I can do much more. Each interaction with AGPA enhances my life and work. It's exciting that at 58, I feel so fresh and excited about my future! I've only just begun and your scholarship made all this happen.

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Every year, I look forward to AGPA Connect, not only because of the training opportunities and what I might learn, but because of the people and community I find. I attended consistently for many years while in graduate school, and have built a network of friends and colleagues that I would never have found were it not for our organization. The energy and passion for working in groups that I found among my colleagues helped convince me to make group therapy more of a centerpiece of my learning, and now as an early career professional, I make groups a central part of my work.

Presently, I work in a community mental health center serving disadvantage populations and people who would otherwise have difficulty finding care. I help direct the group program at our clinic, which includes over 20 groups for adults. Our capacity to serve clients is already stretched thin, and one of the ways we reach more people is by maintaining such a substantial group program. I feel fortunate in my role that I get to pass on the training and insight I have gained through AGPA in my teaching and supervision. I believe that AGPA's investment in me has helped me give back more to my community. Thank you again for all your continued support.

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I would like to express my gratitude for being selected as a recipient of the tuition scholarship to attend the American Group Psychotherapy Association Meeting 2019. I am currently a Child and Adolescent Psychiatry fellow and receiving this award provided me the special opportunity to travel to Los Angeles, California and to experience AGPA Connect, both for the first time.

The two-day Institute for the Process Group Experience was for me enlightening, at times moving, and even weeks later I continue to reflect upon and personally grow from having been a group member. Our leader modeled how to be calm, capable leader, and I came away having met highly intelligent, admirable colleagues. I will recommend the Process Group Experience to others interested in future meetings. Additionally, during the three-day Conference I attended different sessions with themes about child/adolescent groups and found them all instructive. In particular, I applaud

AGPA for bringing to my attention the haunting film, *The Tale*, and for inviting the director speak; she breathed the film's topic to life. Lastly, an inimitable memory I will carry with me always is that of watching Dr. Yalom being interviewed by Dr. Leszcz during the Group Foundation Luncheon; it was a privilege to bear witness to their conversation.

Thank you to the Group Foundation, the Committee, and the meeting organizers for making AGPA Connect a laudable success and for your continued support of the upcoming generation of group psychotherapists. I am honored to have participated in this program, and I will look to AGPA as a reliable, well-rounded resource for group psychotherapy training into the future.

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Thank you so much for awarding me a full scholarship to attend the 2019 Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, CA. This year's conference provided an abundance of learning opportunities, and I am so grateful to have been present. I arrived feeling depleted from my work, but left rejuvenated and with my skill set enhanced. Thank you so much for providing me with this unique learning opportunity. I am better in my clinical practice working with Veterans for it.

Please know that your generosity will continue to have a tremendous impact in both my personal and professional life as I continue to develop my professional career. Thank you again.

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This was my fourth year attending AGPA on a Group Foundation Scholarship and I cannot even begin to express my gratitude for your support over the years. My first AGPA was in San Francisco in 2014, next I took a year off and attended the second AGPA in New York in 2016, then Houston in 2018, and, finally, this year's AGPA Connect in Los Angeles, California.

Each year has been unique, challenging, and life changing. My time at AGPA has helped me personally and professionally and I often think back to each year's conference as a major marker in my life. My first AGPA was when I was in grad school trying to figure out what type of clinician I wanted to be and seeking out opportunities to gain hands on training and experience. My second year, I had started working in a community mental health agency and desperately needed meaningful professional development opportunities. My third year, I was in a rut both personally and professionally, something I barely realized until I came back from AGPA and radically changed my life, moving from Michigan to Colorado. This year I was joined by a community of professionals who I had met and formed relationships over the past four years.

Thanks to AGPA and the Group Foundation I have been able to hone my skills and developed a passion for group work. As I mentioned, I recently relocated to Denver, Colorado (my hometown) and have found that my group facilitation training is the core of my professional expertise that I can offer at my paid position and in various volunteer capacities. Since moving back, I have been able to facilitate groups for trans teens and their parents with my partner (who I met at AGPA) and I also received a contract position running groups for teen survivors of sexual assault with a local sexual assault resource center. AGPA has allowed me to give back to communities that I care about in substantial ways.

I am forever grateful for the support that the Group Foundation has offered me over the years. I truly would not be able to afford to attend AGPA Connect or have built the strong personal and professional network that I have without the scholarships to attend AGPA. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

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It is with deep gratitude that I send this letter to the AGPA Foundation reflecting on my most recent experience at AGPA Connect 2019. This is now my 3<sup>rd</sup> year of attendance at AGPA and my 3<sup>rd</sup> year of receiving a scholarship, my first two years as a student, and now in the capacity as a new professional. Without the assistance of the scholarship committee, my attendance would not have been possible.

This year, I completed my second year of a 2-year continuous PGE. The experience is one that I will continue carry with me both personally and professionally, as the insight I gained was profound. It was such an honor to be engaged as a peer with several senior members of the organization.

Unique to my past years of experience, this year I opted to join a SIG. It was comforting to find a home-within-a-home with colleagues who are experiencing similar barriers and successes to group psychotherapy in our relative settings. I have continued to collaborate with the co-chairs who are guiding me as I draft a proposal to host a colloquia for AGPA Connect 2020.

Upon my return, I have been asked to lead an in-service to my colleagues at a local psychiatric hospital to help support and mentor my peers as they facilitate daily group therapy sessions.

I am incredibly blessed, and deeply indebted to my mentor Dr. Katie Steele, who introduced me to AGPA my second year of graduate school. I am hereby accepting a challenge to make it to 50 consecutive AGPA Connect meetings, three down, and 47 remaining. Thank you for your continued support of my growth as a therapist and as a person.

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First, I want to thank you for the opportunity that you gave me to attending AGPA conference. It was fascinating, challenging and very helpful as a psychologist.

I had a chance to introduce many new methods of group psychotherapy. I also met colleagues from around the world, it was interesting to share our experience with each other, thank you for this. I hope we will meet again in New York.

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I am immensely grateful to AGPA for granting me a scholarship and making it possible for me to be a member of AGPA and attend my second AGPA Connect. I had an extraordinary Institute with the masterful Ginger Sullivan. Ginger's skill, wisdom, authenticity, and humor made for a safe, enriching space to learn and grow. I count my fellow peers in Ginger's institute as new, trusted friends and colleagues, and I am grateful to AGPA for introducing us. The conference portion of AGPA Connect was also incredible. A couple of favorites this year included "Anger in Group Therapy: Grist for the Mill vs. When Rage Kills" and "Women and Aggression: History, Healing, and Power". I am still processing and integrating everything I learned at the 2019 AGPA Connect, and again, thank you again for providing me the opportunity to attend and be a continued member of my chosen therapy home. I am grateful for the learnings, experiences, and new friendships the week in Los Angeles granted me, and I look forward to next year's AGPA Connect in New York!

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This was my first AGPA, and I was blown away that I found so like-minded persons that desired to feel and understand deep connection for themselves and their patients. I made use of the time by connecting with peers like me and exploring new perspectives. I experienced a wide range of workshops from predominantly process to didactic and am refining my preferences. I was also inspired to consider leading a workshop at AGPA, and I hope that will manifest in a few years. I'm so ready to go back and learn, feel, and grow more. I am so grateful for the scholarship provided so that I could have this experience. I'm looking forward to being more involved and present in the organization. Thank you deeply.

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I was very fortunate to be granted a scholarship for the AGPA Connect 2019 Annual Meeting in Los Angeles this year. To say thank you for this opportunity is a major understatement, but I do thank the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health greatly. The experience was both personally and professionally exactly what I had hoped for at this time in my career as a psychotherapist.

The experience validated my approach to psychotherapy and strengthened my abilities to deliver direct service to those in need at my clinic. It also allows me to share the gift of knowledge provided by the state-of-art educational offerings to therapists that are currently invested in group psychotherapy at Rochester Regional Health.

I feel focused and recharged to move forward with group psychotherapy as the premiere approach to many of the presenting challenges ahead. In meetings with other therapists the approach answers many questions and empowers us to find solutions that we had felt were out of reach at times. The connections started at AGPA 2019 Connect continue to grow today and strengthen me personally and professionally.

Again I thank you for be granted the scholarship. It has created connections that continue to benefit me and others I touch in so many wonderful ways.

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This was my second time attending AGPA thanks to the Saul Scheidlinger Scholarship. I had a wonderful time connecting with other group professionals, attending the Child and Adolescent SIG's dinner and meeting, and participating in experiential group process training, fostering both personal and professional growth. I'm very excited to engage with AGPA for years to come and would encourage other students/early career professionals to apply for scholarships and attend AGPA 2020.

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I absolutely loved my experience at AGPA. I was nervous at first about attending the special institute but it was, by far, the best part of the week for me. I loved being able to be a part of a therapy process group as a participant for the first time with colleagues. I felt so safe to explore and share underlying feelings. Doing so has already contributed greatly to me both personally and professionally. I also really enjoyed some of the workshops that I attended during the final 3 days of the conference. I specifically enjoyed the workshops involving both didactic and process components. I left AGPA feeling so inspired to lead more of my own groups, to get personally involved in an ongoing process group, and to encourage everyone I know to attend AGPA in the future.

I can't wait to attend next year in New York! Thank you so much again for the opportunity to attend this year.

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My name is Cody Kaneshiro and I am currently a second-year clinical psychology doctoral student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. As a recipient of one of the 2019 AGPA Connect scholarships, I sincerely appreciate the financial assistance offered to me to attend this year's AGPA Connect in Los Angeles, CA. Without the scholarship, I would have been unable to attend AGPA Connect and would have missed out on the innumerable training opportunities, group experiences, and the friendships made over the week of AGPA Connect.

Thank you very much for your generous support and consideration. It has truly made a significant impact on my clinical experience as a new trainee in addition to impacting my own personal development. I sincerely hope to participate in future AGPA Connect functions in the future.

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What a tremendous experience I had at AGPA in Los Angeles! It was such a welcoming environment, full of energy, ideas, enthusiasm (for the work and the organization), and depth; I feel blessed to have been able to attend on a scholarship!

Learning is such a pleasure, the moisture to my dry sponge, after so long away from a conference setting. I was able to participate in an Institute with the theme of Leadership - so perfectly fitting for my current position and place in life. Sara was brilliant as a leader, and I cannot begin to express my appreciation and affection to my fellow groupies for the courage and insights they shared and inspired. I was thrilled with my selection of workshops with creative arts elements, and with opportunities to further gather material to inform my training team, my staff, the larger clinic system for which I work; supervision, leader styles, collaboration. Most of all I am heartened by the accessibility of the organization, and "jump-in" encouragement I received. I am seeing changes in my leadership ideas coming to fruition, not just in a group therapy setting, but as I visualize team-building, inter-clinic retreat planning, and as our training team prepares for the

next formal training for therapists. I have staff encouraging me to become a CGP so that I can supervise them in their quest. I am on my way...

I heard so many people refer to the AGPA as their professional home, and I can certainly see why. I observed the obvious connections between returning members, and I was surprised and thrilled to be called out by name as I wandered the conference and downtown LA! I cannot wait for another opportunity to attend the conference - with any luck I will be able to see you all in NYC in 2020!

You all do tremendous work, and your passion for group is contagious! Keep the joy, spread the word, and we will do the same from Rochester, NY! Thank you again for an outstanding conference and the renewal of my commitment to this most important approach to serving others.

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This is an attempt to share my musings with you about my wonderful experience at AGPA

Connect in Los Angeles. I've been home for a week today. Seems like I just got home a minute ago. How do you measure time since a life altering event?

The trip across the country was rather uneventful, except that the cab arrived at my apartment at 2am. Once there, I jumped into volunteering to stuff the canvas bags containing conference material. It was the beginning of a connection to something bigger than me.

On Monday and Tuesday, the Institute took place. A 2-day long group therapy. If you have never been through an experience like this, I highly recommend it. The group I picked was almost random, except that all the members were in the 0-4 years of group practice. The group leader, Jeff Price, was simply outstanding. There were 5 men, 6 women, and an empty chair. Despite being professionals, we couldn't help but re-enact our own patterns. Monday morning, we laughed nervously. By Tuesday morning we laughed knowingly. By Tuesday afternoon no one moved when it was time to leave. There was a bond that was surprisingly strong. We knew each other for two days, but we knew each other from the inside out. I feel grateful to have met them. I'm hopeful they will all come out to New York next year to continue the process. One, a New York local, invited me to lunch with a lovely colleague from White Plains. And what was the life altering part? This! This two day institute helped me know myself in a way no other method has been able to achieve. The power of the group showed me something about how others perceive me. Connecting on such an intense level is empowering. And healing. I expect this new information will inform my practice as a group therapist, but it also changes how I perceive myself and more importantly, how I behave. More to be revealed.

Wednesday night WGPS met for a nice dinner in LA. It was fun to see = people outside of their typical environs.

Thursday I learned about large group process through sitting in on the principles course.

Friday consisted of interesting workshops and one of my favorite parts of any conference, the bookstore.

The last day was a real treat for me. I participated in a large group with our own Leo Leiderman. It was such a treat to see what could have been an unwieldy amount of people but wasn't. The music of group therapy played a beautiful song. It was wonderful to witness.

Finally, the last highlight was a luncheon with a live interview with Irwin Yalom. (So many highlights!) He struck me as a truly brilliant and warm person. A mensch. His message was one of love. Live each day as if you would live it the same way over again

Again I would like to thank all the members who provided the scholarship which allowed me to attend and participate in such an outstanding event. I hope to see many of you throughout the year at WGPS events and particularly for more exceptional connection and learning at AGPA next year in NYC!

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Thank you so much to the AGPA for giving me the opportunity to attend the full meeting this year through a full tuition scholarship. I was able to participate in the two-day Institutes this year and found them to be extremely valuable both personally and professionally. This was the first time it really made sense to me what it means that doing “emotional work” is necessary to be a good clinician in our field. I came back feeling even more excited about spreading knowledge and skills around group therapy to the psychiatry residents at my program. It felt great to get training at the AGPA meeting because I have high regard for the standards AGPA holds for its courses and teachers. I look forward to deepening my involvement with groups and AGPA in the future. I am extremely grateful for the financial support I received this year.

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I just wanted to thank you again for the generous support and scholarship that allowed me to attend this year's AGPA conference. I sincerely enjoyed the conference and appreciated meeting friendly therapists who likewise value group therapy. I learned a lot from the workshops and seminars, and from the audience members that attended the Secret Agent Society workshop.

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Thank you for the scholarship that allowed me to attend the AGPA conference. Without this scholarship, I would not have been able to attend and meet all the wonderful people and have all the growthful experiences I had.

The conference as a whole helped me develop both personally and professionally. One of my working edges is learning how to locate and express my aggression directly. The conference is filled with amazing and mature psychologists that encouraged a direct expression of emotions and a process to support these expressions throughout the entire conference. This catalyzing holding container stimulated my growth in the areas that I needed to work on. During the two-day institute (which was my favorite part), I had the experience of being able to verbalize my anger and be seen and responded to in a way that helped me grow. I now have the internalized felt experience of these group therapeutic interventions that I received, and will now be able to apply this to my work. This experiential learning created a dual process which allowed me to examine the therapist's interventions from the role of the client. This is so helpful to my therapeutic work and is my favorite part of the conference.

I also met some wonderful people, including a roommate who I am still in touch with. I loved the Special Interest Group dinners, people were so inviting, warm, and friendly. I found so many friends and mentor-type people at this conference, I can't wait to go back next year! The AGPA conference is an experience I treasure; thank you for allowing me the opportunity to attend through your generous scholarship.

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Thank you AGPA for my scholarship to attend the 2019 Connect conference. I am filled with gratitude to have had the opportunity to be a part of this meaningful event. Like in years prior, the memories and lessons learned from this conference wash over me in waves. I realize as I write my thanks that I am still digesting the gifts I have received.

Participating in the Institute is the most powerful opener to a group therapy conference. This year, I was profoundly moved by the depth of the work I personally experienced while I simultaneously expanded my connection to my clients, my work and my love for group therapy. It is no wonder that two days of Institute is both energizing and exhausting!

As I moved through the conference I was continually impressed with the level of excellence of the speakers. One session that has always been impressive, far exceeded expectations this year. The Current Trends in the Application of Modern Analytic Group Theory chaired by Elliot Zeisel, PhD, LCSW, CGP, DFAGPA presented three extraordinary clinicians sharing beautiful, vulnerable narratives of their career and personal journeys. I was in complete, tearful, awe from beginning to end. I walked away truly inspired.

The Challenges in Group Psychotherapy Supervision and Training was another stand out session for me. Here I benefited not only from the skillful speakers but also the rich discussions among attendees. Being in the beginning stages as a group therapy supervisor, I was provided much needed support and validation at this stage in my career.

Without the scholarship, I know I would not have been able to attend this conference. I thank you all whole heartedly, for the assistance you gave me, that awarded me such a meaningful experience. I look forward to when I can contribute to the scholarship fund and return the generosity that was once bestowed to me.

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I'm writing in great thanks to all the donors who provided to allow me to attend AGPA 2019 conference in Los Angeles and to the foundation for granting me a partial scholarship to attend. My experience was enriching and I bring back a great deal to my workplace to share on the profound power and benefits of group psychotherapy. I was already a believer but my passion for group psychotherapy is renewed by attending this conference.

I live and work in a rural and underserved community in northern CA with few training options available and none focused on group. The chance the foundation and scholarship provided me to attend the AGPA Connect is unparalleled to anything I would be other able to access.

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I just wanted to send a quick and belated thank you to all of you for your assistance in my attendance of the conference on partial scholarship. As a second-year Naropa student in the Transpersonal Counseling Masters program, this was a wonderful first professional conference experience for me! I found myself absolutely delighted to see some of the concepts that I'm learning in school (as well as completely new concepts and models!) put to use in creative ways both experientially as well as shared and discussed in workshops and panels. I deeply appreciated my Special Institute with Ginger Sullivan, where I was able to see modern psychoanalysis in action as an intervention, and I thereby came to better understand how I want to operate as a future group therapist and possible future analyst. I also appreciated how Ginger integrated Relational Life Therapy as theory into the group, as it was a completely new model for me, and I found it exceedingly helpful in understanding how group members were relating to one another. I also recall that the open session (213-5) on working with microaggressions in groups was exceedingly relevant and helpful, and had enormous clarity. I also recall that seeing Yalom on the big screen reminded me of why I wanted to become a therapist in the first place, and I felt highly motivated. There is a lot more I'd like to add, but I just wanted to express my appreciation in all you've done to make this conference more accessible to students like me. AGPA has made a big impression on my personal growth and professional studies, and I look forward to attending the conference again in the future.

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Thank you sincerely for the scholarship to attend AGPA this year! Given the expense of flight and stay to LA, I would not otherwise have been able to attend the conference. The financial support was also a great blessing toward completing my CEUs, particularly as an Early Career Psychologist.

I was blown away by the degree of experiential learning which occurred at AGPA. I expected this from the institute, but I had not anticipated how thoroughly experiential the rest of the conference would remain. This facilitated both personal and professional learning and refreshment. This learning is already impacting my clinical work and I'm sure will continue to do so.

One of the main things I will carry away from the conference was the ability to connect with many other group coordinators at UCCs. Having recently stepped into this role, building this network was invaluable. It was normalizing and encouraging to hear similar concerns, helpful strategies, and common goals among us. I have already implemented some of the tools and strategies with the staff at Cleveland State University's Counseling Center and am confident the impact will be broad-reaching. I am very grateful for the way the scholarship facilitated this opportunity!

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I am writing to express my sincerest gratitude to the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health for granting me a full scholarship to attend AGPA Connect 2019. I had heard from previous attendees that this was a one-of-a-kind conference, and I was not disappointed. Words cannot do my experience justice. My heart and my mind were fuller than ever by the end of the conference. I believe I came out of it a better therapist and, somehow, a more evolved person. As a student, my financial capabilities are limited, so this scholarship is what made it possible for me to have this extraordinary experience. And, after attending for the very first time, I can confidently say that I am already hooked. I look forward to remaining part of the AGPA family for many, many years to come.

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I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude for having granted me a tuition scholarship for the recent AGPA 2019. This is my first AGPA, as well as my first trip to the USA. The scholarship gave me a wonderful opportunity to network with international and local participants and to be part of a unique community of individuals who embrace learning beyond textbooks. The investment taken to continue with lifelong learning and to pay it forward by providing these scholarship opportunities for International attendees is truly admirable. If not for the scholarship, I would have hesitated to consider attending this conference. The experience that I have gained and the connections that I have made, are priceless. This was truly the experiential training I had hoped for, maybe even more. This conference is by far, one of the best conferences I have attended.

I am humbled by this experience, and I hope the committee would continue to fund the endeavors of International participants who are interested in attending these conferences. These scholarships are especially important for those who are passionate about setting up process groups in their respective countries yet face struggles to get local funding. Words cannot express how crucial this conference has been for my professional and personal development. Thank you for this opportunity and for inviting me to be a part of this community with open arms. I am truly grateful. I do look forward to attending more of AGPA conferences in the near future.

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I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to express my gratitude for receiving a student scholarship to attend the AGPA 2019 CONNECT conference in Los Angeles.

The opportunity to attend AGPA CONNECT was immensely gratifying and enriching. This year I had the good fortune to attend the two-day process group institute with Dr. Claudia Arlo. This experience was fantastic and I learned so much from the group facilitator as well as my fellow group members.

One of the highlights of the conference for me was the full day workshop with John Schlapobersky. His clinical vignettes were inspiring and poetic. I also was humbled by his presence as the “group conductor” and I gleaned so much about British group analysis.

I am confident that the entire conference experience will help me grow as a group therapist and will be immensely valuable to my future work with group patients. I look forward to attending the AGPA CONNECT next year in NYC! Thank you again for granting me this opportunity.

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I would like to thank you for the scholarship you provided me for the three-day 2019 AGPA conference in Los Angeles. Since relocating to Israel two years ago from Los Angeles, I have been looking forward to this conference. I participated in the two days institutes on the topic “Where Home Is” facilitated by Dr. Myrna Frank. It was a very timely topic, especially since upon my return to Israel I started to facilitate a short term support group for immigrants. I also attended session 301: Anger in Group Therapy. I enjoyed the session and open plenary. The quality and professionalism are superb. The scholarship enabled me to attend the conference and connect with the group community, particularly with the American Group Psychotherapy of Los Angeles, which I was involved with prior to my relocation. I would like to thank you again for your scholarship and enabling me to attend the conference. The group community is very meaningful to me and I hope to be able to attend the conference in the future.

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I am writing to express my gratitude for the generous American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) Connect 2019 Conference Building Bridges of Connection Through Group Scholarship. Thank you so much for this amazing opportunity and for an absolutely wonderful and useful AGPA Conference experience! It was fantastic to meet folks from such a diversity of experiences and to learn new theories and practices.

Attending the AGPA Connect 2019 Conference provided me with additional skills and practices that will support collaborations with my colleagues as well as expand the ways I think and do groups. The opportunity to learn from leaders in best practices was invaluable!

Allying in mental wellness groupwork alongside folks who are doing some of the most difficult parts of their lives through connection with others is dear to me. I appreciated this opportunity to gain skills and practice. Thank you for this scholarship!

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To all those who have contributed to the efforts of the Group Foundation, and thus towards the AGPA Connect scholarship opportunities, THANK YOU!

As a result of having received a scholarship this year, I was able to take full advantage of what the institute and the conference have to offer. My PGE institute allowed me to observe group dynamics in action, and to learn about group process and facilitation from the perspective of the participant. Being in a mixed experience group allowed me to interact with other professionals with a diverse range of previous experiences. And as usual, the facilitator of my group was clearly skilled, and facilitated the process group with caution and care.

During the conference, I was able to participate in sessions that introduced or reinforced skills that I will be able to directly apply to my practice with college students, children, and adults. In addition, I had the opportunity to present both a workshop and an open session, both of which related to topics of interest to me. I received overwhelmingly positive feedback directly following both of my presented sessions, and I look forward to continuing to present the material, especially that which relates to managing microaggressions and traversing challenges in work environments.

With this being my 7<sup>th</sup> year attending the conference, AGPA has been the community that has seen me through my doctoral training, internship, degree conferral, licensure, and most recently, the CGP credential. I have been honored to be a part of this organization through its many learning opportunities; and receiving a scholarship to attend AGPA Connect 2019 has furthered my interest in and passion for group psychotherapy.

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I am writing to express my deep thankfulness for the AGPA Connect 2019 Scholarship I received. Though I graduated from my MA in May, I am still taking post grad classes and am just starting up a private practice. Considering this, there was no way I could have afforded the conference on my own.

The national AGPA conference means so much to me. I started attending 3 conferences ago, and each week has been one of the most impactful of my life. In 2017 I felt such support from the AGPA community that I began using they/them/theirs publicly. Having received such validation in the past, it was very important for me to attend this year, as I was feeling somewhat a lack of community as compared to when I was in my MA program.

This year I was able to explore the attachment implications of returning to the same 2-day institute for the 3rd year. This helped shine light on my wariness of authority figures/group leaders. I was able to have a voice in large group, and expressed my anger and frustration at older generations. This was received in a healing way. I will be processing the impact of this year's large group for months to come.

Throughout the whole week I was able to connect both with friends from Colorado, and new folks I had just met and felt deeply with. Though we meet in a new place each year, it is so wonderful to see familiar faces. AGPA is more than anything becoming my extended professional family. So, once again, thank you for the opportunity to attend the reunion :)

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I am writing to express my gratitude and thanks for the tuition scholarship I received to attend this year's AGPA Connect conference.

This was my third year attending AGPA, and this time I had the pleasure of seeing AGPA come to my city, and biking to the conference most days! As I continue to attend AGPA, my feeling of connection, professional and personal growth, and commitment to group therapy keep growing. I remain so grateful to have found AGPA during my first year out of grad school. When I attend next, I will attend for the first time as a licensed clinical social worker. AGPA has been a bigger part of my growth as a group therapist and generally as a professional therapist (and networker!) than I could have anticipated. I can't wait to see where the years and conferences to come will take me.

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I express my deep gratitude to colleagues - organizers of the AGPA conference in Los Angeles. Two days of process groups were spent in the atmosphere of acceptance, security and goodwill. A one-day training seminar with Rick Tivers on the use of a clinical approach in business gave several insights and methods that can be used during psychodynamic work with companies. Very interesting were the papers about working with aggression, as well as a report about different perceptions of age and old age among different psychotherapists. These were unforgettable days. But the most important thing is still to come at the next conferences and new meetings.

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Nothing could have prepared me for the experience that was AGPA Connect. I expected workshops, small groups with experiential learning, and networking opportunities. What I found was all those, AND an incredible community of thoughtful mental health providers and resources. Most surprisingly and most importantly, I found a confidence and a sense of belonging.

When you're a student in a classroom, it's easy to see clinicians who open private practices, who become faculty, and who write books as people who you are light years behind. However, what happened at AGPA was that these people are the people who are in my interdisciplinary processing group, who are sitting next to me in a workshop, who are chatting with me about their work over dinner. In one weekend, my future became less daunting and more exciting.

And of course, when I went back to my agency, groups became even more delightful to facilitate. And as I am submitting applications for my first job out of my MSW, I am looking more and more toward opportunities to continue group work.

In particular, I want to thank the Donald T. Brown GLBT Memorial Scholarship group for the financial support, and for the brief time that I was able to spend with the GLBT SIG. Y'all are awesome.

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I am a CBT therapist, and though I had some psychodynamic training and experience leading groups, it was never my focus, nor did it become part of my practice. Participating in the conference was totally eye-opening to me, in terms of getting to see the powerful dynamics that emerged for me and others in an unstructured setting, the powerful group dynamics that developed, and how much I was able to learn about myself that I never got from individual therapy. It also helped me to understand the experience of the patients who participated in groups I ran during my training; back then I thought of it as a diluted form of treatment, whereas I now see it as a very powerful and specifically helpful form of treatment. The experience made me eager to participate in a process group as a patient, and ultimately perhaps I will start to run one, but I feel I need more training before I do that. I have also already recommended group work to patients I am seeing individually, as I think there is so much to be gained from that modality. I believe my experience at the conference will have lasting impact on me both personally and clinically, and I am eager to attend again in future years.

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I am writing this letter as a sincere thank you for allowing me this opportunity of personal and professional growth in the field of Group Psychotherapy. As an associate in the field, it was such an honor to be able to learn amongst the top professionals and enjoy the warm and welcoming energy of AGPA Connect. My experience in the Special Institute was one that I will never forget and hope to continue to experience annually at future AGPA conferences.

The scholarship provided allowed me to access this conference. During my time at AGPA Connect, I learned to better understand not only how to be an effective group leader, but also what it is like to experience group as an active participant. As a new therapist, it has been so important to me to understand what it is like to be on the other side of the couch as a client. This experience created a safe and open space to be able to explore that while learning so much about who I want to be as a future group leader.

What I was most struck by, was how friendly and open the conference felt. It can be so easy to feel like just a number at a large conference, but at AGPA Connect, I felt seen, heard, and connected to professionals in all levels of experience. This was truly an unforgettable experience that I would not have been able to access without the assistance of a scholarship.

Again, my thanks for this invaluable experience. I look forward to attending many AGPA Connect Conferences in the future!

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I am excited and grateful to be writing you this thank you letter. Experiencing AGPA Connect for the first time was unforgettable and has stimulated personal growth, exploration, and insight that I am still thinking about each day. Attending this conference was transformational both personally and professionally, and has inspired me to work to create additional groups in my rural community. While I was initially nervous to go to the AGPA conference, as it is such an experiential week, I cannot truly express the amount of growth that I experienced as a result of the conference. What I learned during AGPA Connect has translated into my work with patients as well as my own relationships outside of therapy. Had it not been for the generosity of the scholarship, I would not have been capable of attending. For this, I am extremely grateful. My skills in and out of group have grown exponentially in ways that likely could not have been captured outside of the very special way that the AGPA conference is run.

It is with much appreciation that I share my thanks for the scholarship. I am so grateful for the time I got to spend at AGPA Connect.

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I wanted to express my gratitude and thoughts of appreciation for the financial support you all provided that allowed me to attend AGPA's Annual Conference: Connect this year. Being my first year attending AGPA, I wasn't sure what to expect and could only reference to my experience at AGPS events. Overall, I was pleased with my experience at AGPA and the ability to connect deeper with this community. AGPS is a family for me and I was excited to get to know my "distance relatives". While I was pleased to be surrounded by this profound community, the first two workshops I attended on Thursday and Friday left me feeling disappointed and longing for the chance to process my experience. My disappointment was due to the structure and topics of the workshops I attended. I was expecting a didactic portion then an interpersonal process demo group, which was not the case. During Saturday's workshop I was able to process my experience the past few days which left me feeling nourished and allowing me to leave my feelings in LA. Even though the first two days at the conference were not as I expected, I still look forward to attending next year. As Programming Committee Chair Head for AGPS, I truly appreciated all the hard work and effort that goes into running an event like this. It is a huge task and my experience with the flow of the conference was a positive one. I look forward to the "family reunion" next year!

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Last week I conducted the first session of my first group in private practice. In anticipation of the session I felt anxious and a number of disquieting thoughts were passing through my mind; "What if they don't show up?", "What if I don't know what to say?", "What if they annoy each other?", etc. Alongside the anxiety however, I also felt a quiet confidence and a deep sense of knowing that this was the step I needed to take, and that I was as ready as I would ever be for it. I

went into that first session knowing that I bring with me every precious moment, experience, connection, and learning that has taken place during my AGPA experience over the past four years. I want to thank each of you wholeheartedly for making this possible for me. I have no doubt that being a member of this community forms, and will continue to form, the solid foundation from which I can spring.

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