



AMERICAN GROUP  
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GROUP FOUNDATION  
FOR ADVANCING MENTAL HEALTH  
INTERNATIONAL BOARD FOR  
CERTIFICATION OF GROUP  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### GROUP PSYCHOLOGY AND GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY RECOGNIZED AS A SPECIALTY FOR PSYCHOLOGY DOCTORAL, INTERNSHIP, POSTDOCTORAL AND POST-LICENSURE PROGRAMS

**NEW YORK, August 9, 2018-** The American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) announced today that group psychology and group psychotherapy have been officially recognized as a specialty by the American Psychological Association (APA) as recommended by the Commission for the Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies in Professional Psychology (CRSPPP).

Such recognition is granted to defined areas of psychological practice which demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills acquired through an organized sequence of education and training. This status is conferred following an in-depth petition process demonstrating core scientific foundations in psychology, a professional foundation, advanced scientific and theoretical knowledge germane to the specialty, and advanced professional applications of this knowledge to selected problems and populations in particular settings, through use of validated procedures and techniques.

The petition process confirms that the specialty has:

- education and training guidelines and standards for the doctoral, internship, post-doctoral and post-licensure program levels
- evidence based theories and practices
- substantial references to support its efficacy
- a mission to serve the public's need for mental health services
- demonstrated effectiveness for a variety of target audiences from childhood to older adults
- demonstrated efficacy for a wide variety of problems, issues and concerns

Group psychotherapy has been shown to be as effective as individual psychotherapy to treat the majority of diagnoses people typically present in mental health treatment settings. Group psychotherapy shows promise for making a meaningful impact on the public health crises facing us today, as it allows for the treatment of more people with effective, evidence-based interventions that are also cost-effective.

“This designation of group psychology and psychotherapy as a specialized area of psychology practice is an important step in recognizing group psychotherapy as a valuable and specialized treatment.” said Barry Helfmann, PsyD, ABPP, CGP, DFAGPA, AGPA President. “The substantive petition process validated the evidence supporting the scientific and professional knowledge and skills required of a group therapist.”

The petition process was spearheaded by the Group Specialty Council led by President Nina W. Brown, Ed.D., CGP, FAGPA and Secretary Eleanor Counselman, Ed.D., CGP, LFAGPA. The Council is a collaborative effort among the AGPA, the Society of Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy (APA Division 49), the International Board for Certification of Group Psychotherapists, and the American Board of Group Psychology (ABGP).

For more information on group psychotherapy contact AGPA at (212) 477-2677 or visit our website at [www.agpa.org](http://www.agpa.org).

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### ***About AGPA***

The American Group Psychotherapy Association is the foremost professional association dedicated to the field of group psychotherapy, operating through a tri-partite structure: AGPA, a professional and educational organization; the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health, its philanthropic arm; and the International Board for Certification of Group Psychotherapists, a standard setting and certifying body. This multidisciplinary association has over 2,000 members, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, clinical mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, pastoral counselors and creative arts therapists, many of whom have been recognized as specialists through the Certified Group Psychotherapist credential. The association has 21 local and regional societies located across the country. Its members are experienced mental health professionals who lead psychotherapy groups and various non-clinical groups. Many are organizational specialists who work with businesses, not-for-profit organizations, communities and other "natural" groups to help them improve their functioning.

### ***About the International Board for Certification of Group Psychotherapists***

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

### ***About the Society of Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy***

The Society of Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy was established in 1991 as Division 49 of the American Psychological Association. The purpose of the Society is to promote the development and advancement of the field of group psychology and the modality of group psychotherapy through research, teaching and education, and clinical practice.

### ***About the American Board of Group Psychology (ABGP)***

The American Board of Group Psychology (ABGP) is a member board of the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP). The ABGP is responsible for establishing criteria related to the definition, education, training, competencies, and the examination leading to certification as a specialist in Group Psychology. The ABGP is governed by members board certified in group psychology and representative of the specialty on a national basis.

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