



AMERICAN GROUP
PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION
GROUP FOUNDATION
FOR ADVANCING MENTAL HEALTH
INTERNATIONAL BOARD FOR
CERTIFICATION OF GROUP
PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**CORONAVIRUS AND COMMUNITY**

NEW YORK, March 24, 2020— As mental health professionals we value trust, transparency, professionalism and the ethics of first do no harm. That is why we are publicly disclosing that 44 members have tested positive for COVID 19, and hundreds more were potentially exposed to it.

We held our annual meeting, AGPA Connect 2020, in New York from March 2 to March 7 at the Sheraton Times Square in New York City. Typically, about 1,000 people attend the annual meeting and that was the case this year. At the time of our meeting, we were guided by public health statements with regard to the capacity to continue to meet, mindful of the importance of proper hygiene and social distancing. During the meeting we also had contact with New York State Public Health and the CDC. At no point did we receive direction that we should not meet. Rather we were advised to exercise caution and abide by their guidance. And we did.

The meeting concluded on Saturday, March 7 and on the evening of Wednesday, March 11 we learned one international member who attended the conference tested positive for COVID19. Since that day an additional 43 members tested positive for COVID19. We have used our listserv and emails to support our membership in every way in the wake of those diagnosed, those with symptoms and now all of us who are impacted.

We made the best choices with the information that we had at the time. If we had the foresight to see ahead even 10 days, then we would have made a different decision about holding the meeting. Unfortunately, that's not the case. While it is impossible to go back and undo the past, we have thrown our full resources into supporting our community with care and compassion as well as respect for the courageous self-disclosures by those who have tested positive for COVID19.

Furthermore, and most importantly, during these challenging times we are committed to helping not only our members but to provide their services online to care for their patients. Our members have quickly transitioned delivering care in this manner and it is heartening to see how many people continue to be helped. We are also offering information on coping with anxiety and how to help others cope with the anxiety COVID19 will generate. We recognize the enormous impact in society of physical illness, social isolation, fear of illness, and the economic upheaval this generates. We are committed to providing care to all who need it as this pandemic challenges us all in unprecedented ways.

There is nothing more important to us than our members, our clients and your trust. AGPA remains committed to being a community of professionals who operate at the highest levels of professionalism and the highest standards of practice. We will work hard to maintain the trust of our members and help them maintain the trust of their clients and the communities in which they work and live.

About AGPA

The American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) 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. AGPA represents over 2,000 mental health professional members including psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers, as well as mental health, family, and pastoral counselors, many of whom have been recognized as specialists through the Certified Group Psychotherapist credential. Its members are experienced mental health professionals who lead psychotherapy groups and various non-clinical groups. Many are organizational specialists who work with businesses, not-for-profit organizations, communities and other "natural" groups to help them improve their functioning. The association also has 21 local and regional societies located across the country.

AGPA is committed to supporting the dignity and psychological safety of every individual without discrimination regarding race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sex, age, or disability. Central to our mission is a belief in the power of groups to treat mental illness, heal the scars from traumatic events, and enhance the well-being of adults and children in their families, schools, corporate settings, and communities.

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