President’s Message
Niloufer Merchant

“Root and Rise”
It’s funny how the universe aligns itself when your thoughts and actions are focused on a particular subject. For me it is all about “change” in every aspect of my life, including ASGW. So it was no surprise yesterday when my yoga teacher picked “change” as the theme of our practice. “Root and rise”, she said, “make transitions with grace”, “step through the door of opportunities”, “root down and blossom like a lotus rising above the murky waters”. As the words flowed out of her mouth, I felt she was speaking directly to my recent experience at the ASGW board meeting. Serendipitously, we just spent three days laying down a new framework of board governance, clarifying our vision mission and goals, and refining the difference between management and governance - in order to sustain our strong foundation and provide a space for governing that will allow ASGW to exceed it’s potential.

More specifically, we spent one of the days during our board retreat, led by Stacy Sjogren of Out of the Woods Consulting (http://www.outofthewoodsconsulting.com/), being challenged to think about three basic questions for ASGW governance. We explored, “What good?” “For whom?” and at “What cost?” As we wrestled with these simple but profound questions, we were reminded about the role the board plays in linking members’ desires to organizational administration and the importance of creating an accountability loop. Most importantly we learned about clarifying the role between management functions and the duties of an executive director from the governance duties of an executive board. As a result of these beginning steps, the board will be transitioning from dealing with the “nuts and bolts” of running the organization to a more big-picture role of understanding and being accountable to the needs and service of our owners - that is YOU the members, opening up exciting possibilities for creativity and growth.

We anticipate that much of our emphasis this year will be to define the role of the executive board, hire a permanent executive director, and make a concerted effort to listen to you – the members. We are truly interested in learning from you why you have joined this organization, and what helps (or would help) you stay a member. We are launching a strategic planning process which will include surveys, focus groups, and a series of town hall meetings. We want to hear from each and every member in every corner of ASGW, no matter what role you play, or how long you have been a member. Your voice is important so let it be heard! In consultation with veterans Bree and Richard Hayes, a strategic planning meeting for all the conference attendees at the ASGW conference in Albuquerque will be held. Additionally, a town hall meeting will be held at ACA in San Francisco, so watch for announcements for this and several other events on our website and list-serve.

The work of the organization carries on with the help of our Interim Executive Director, Janice DeLucia-Waack and the many committee chairs and members who volunteer endless amounts of time and effort for the good of the organization. Several important initiatives deserve mention. Thanks to the Diversity committee and the writing team, a draft of the revisions of the Principles for Diversity-Competent Group Work, now referred to as Multicultural and Social Justice Competence Principles for Group Workers is available on the website for you to review and provide feedback. Next, the International Council is...
Winter Greetings!
I am looking forward to our ASGW Conference in Albuquerque and the ACA Convention in San Francisco because it will give us the opportunity to share our endeavors in group work. Additionally, our time together provides opportunity for thoughtful and purposeful dialog about our Association — ASGW.

Planning for my term as President, and work as President-Elect are guided by the goals that I shared as a candidate for office. My goals were and continue to be to enhance our professional development activities and explore the use of technology in professional training, and, to develop a strategic plan, that includes short and long term goals for the next decade.

Here is a brief update on how these goals are being acted upon. For technology, committee work is underway exploring how social media can facilitate professional development opportunities to enhance our work as group workers. Do you find it fascinating that until recently “blogs, podcasts, twitters, Facebook, and webinars” were unfounded, and more apt to be heard during a sci-fi movie? Today though, these technological tools are part of the fiber of how society functions. For ASGW, this raises the question of how, as an organization, may we ethically apply these tools for the greater good of the Association’s purpose and mission.

The Fall Board meeting in Minneapolis was extremely productive. I am so impressed with the effectiveness, efficiency, and accomplishments of our Board. Niloufer Merchant was masterful in guiding us and the Board equally diligent and focused on our agenda and objectives. Furthermore, ASGW would not be productive without the work of our Committee Chairs and Members. Our committees truly are the foundation for the organization’s accomplishments.

Plans are underway for strategic planning activities. At the ASGW Conference in February and at the ACA Convention, you will find activities related to strategic planning in the programs. I am excited to begin this process that will shape our Association for the next few years. I am also excited to connect with our participants and hear your thoughts about what is important to you in group work and how ASGW can build on our rich traditions and history. Your collective voices will craft how and what ASGW is in coming years. We are fortunate that Albuquerque and San Francisco, both inspiring places, are the sites for us to reconnect in friendship, and have thoughtful conversations about groups and our professional work.

In closing, if I may impose on you for a handful of minutes in your hurried day to ponder these two questions: What is ASGW doing that meets my needs? What do I wish ASGW would do or do more of?
Nominate Your State Branch for the ASGW State Branch Award for 2011

Tell the ASGW members about the important things that have been accomplished in your state branch the last year. We want to hear about your workshops, publications, membership services and all your special activities.

WHAT: Tell us what your branch has been doing this past year. Feel free to submit supporting material. ASGW wants to recognize your branch for your contributions.


WHERE: The branch award is given at the ASGW luncheon at the ACA Convention in San Francisco.

WHO: Please include in your nomination materials the name and contact information of the person who will accept the award at the ASGW luncheon.

HOW: M. Carolyn Thomas, Co-Chair, ASGW Branch Committee.

SUBMIT MATERIALS TO: M. Carolyn Thomas, 9360 Vaughn Road, Pike Road, AL 36064, mthomas@aum.edu, 334/244-3437

News from the JSGW

The Journal for Specialists in Group Work welcomes submissions in any of the following article categories: Practice, Research, Training, Theory, Reflection, and Commentary. Commentary manuscripts are responses to recent articles in the journal. Instructions for submission can be found on the journal’s website, http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/journal.asp?issn=0193-3922&linktype=44. All submissions are handled through an online manuscript management system, which has reduced the time manuscripts spend in review.

Proposals for Special Issues are also welcome. Contact the editor, Chris McCarthy (chris.mccarthy@mail.utexas.edu), if you have an idea for a special issue.

Applications to join the Editorial Board are accepted on an ongoing basis, and are reviewed annually so that new members begin in January of the next calendar year. Interested persons should send a letter of interest and a current CV to the editor.
Nominations Sought for Group Work Practice Award

The ASGW Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the Group Work Practice Award. The purpose of this award is to recognize an outstanding practitioner in group work. Recognition may be for any area of group work covered by the ASGW Professional Standards and nominees must be members of ASGW.

A nomination letter and two supporting letters should address the following points:

1. Scope of practice of nominee to include:
   a. Type of group work
   b. Client population served
   c. Practice setting

2. Innovations in group work practice by the nominee.

3. How nominee has disseminated group work skills through workshops, conference presentations, supervision, and/or training.

4. Evidence of nominee’s significant contribution to group work practice.

Electronic submissions are preferred and may be submitted via email (attachment) to: lguth@iup.edu.

Submissions via regular mail should be sent to
Lorraine J. Guth, Ph.D.,
Indiana University of Pennsylvania,
Department of Counseling,
206 Stouffer Hall,
Indiana, PA 15705.

Applications (nomination letter and two supporting letters) must be received by January 31, 2012. The award recipient will be announced at the ASGW Luncheon at the ACA Conference in San Francisco, California.

Call for Nominees:
Eminent Career Award and Professional Advancement Award

The ASGW Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the Eminent Career Award and for the Professional Advancement Award. Nominations in either category should address the nominee’s outstanding activities and contributions to the field of group work. Additional letters speaking to the nomination would be welcome. Letters should identify which award is being sought.

Eminent Career Award: This highest award is intended to recognize major contributions made to the field of group work by an ASGW/ACA member. Credentials and letters of recommendation for the nominee should convey the national and/or international influence the individual has had on group work over a period of time.

Professional Advancement Award: This award is made to recognize the outstanding activities of an individual who has helped advance the field of group work through any one of the following: research, development of a new technique or theory, public relations, legislative activities, or group work practice.

Electronic submissions are preferred and may be submitted via email (attachment) to: lguth@iup.edu.

Submissions via regular mail should be sent to
Lorraine J. Guth, Ph.D.,
Indiana University of Pennsylvania,
Department of Counseling,
206 Stouffer Hall,
Indiana, PA 15705.

Applications (nomination letter and supporting letters) must be received by January 31, 2012. The award recipient will be announced at the ASGW Luncheon at the ACA Conference in San Francisco, California.

Part-time Executive Director Wanted

ASGW is searching for a part-time Executive Director to begin July 1st 2012. Duties would include management of day to day operations, products, and assisting the Executive Board.

Go to www.asgw.org for more details
Invitation for Applicants: ASGW Peg Carroll Scholarship

The ASGW Awards Committee invites applicants for the $2,000 scholarship given annually to honor Marguerite “Peg” Carroll, former ASGW President and pioneer in group work. The purpose of the award is to support the study of group work and further the understanding of group dynamics. Any student interested in the field of group work is eligible for consideration by the ASGW Awards Committee.

Applicants are requested to respond to the following questions:

1. There are many types of group experiences such as: therapeutic and/or counseling, decision making, task oriented, psychoanalysis, quality circles, classroom meetings, etc. What area interests you the most and why?

2. Where would you obtain training in your area of interest? Be specific in respect to trainers, institutions, workshop sponsors, etc. In addition, describe your intended degree program, if it applies.

3. In what setting(s) and with what population do you hope to use your expertise?

4. How do you plan to assess if you and your groups are making progress? Have you had any experience with these evaluation tools? Explain fully.

5. List the types of groups in which you have participated. Describe their duration and the positive and negative aspects of each experience and your role (participant, leader, intern, etc.).

6. Describe your participation in professional organizations related to group work.

The application should have a cover sheet with name, address, home and work phone numbers, e-mail address, and the names and contact information of those writing letters of recommendation.

Letters of recommendation should be solicited from THREE professionals in the field who are familiar with the applicant’s work. These letters may be from supervisors, mentors, major professors, or other individuals who are knowledgeable about the applicant’s work with groups. These letters should be forwarded directly from the recommendation source to the address listed below and must be received by January 31, 2012.

Recommendation letters should address topics such as group counseling skills of the applicant, evidence of ethical behavior, and evidence of professional commitment and potential.

Electronic submissions are preferred and may be submitted via email (attachment) to: kelly.mcdonnell@wmich.edu

Submissions via regular mail should include three (3) typed and double spaced copies of the application to:

Kelly McDonnell, Ph.D.,
Western Michigan University,
CECP-5226, 1903 W Michigan Avenue,
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Applications must be received by January 31, 2012.

The scholarship recipient will be announced at the ASGW Luncheon at the ACA Conference in San Francisco, CA. Recipients must be (or become) members of ASGW. Recipients will be asked to provide a social security number to receive scholarship payment.

Barbara Gazda Scholarship Applicants Sought

Two $200 scholarships are available to support students and/or new professionals to attend the Association for Specialist in Group Work (ASGW) National Conference, which will be held February 9-12, 2012 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Applicants must submit a 300-500 word written statement that:
1. Confirms ASGW membership;
2. Identifies the university and degree program in which the applicant is currently enrolled or from which the applicant recently graduated;
3. Includes a statement of the applicant’s interest and experience in group work, including ways in which the applicant is likely to benefit professionally from attending the conference.

Applicants should also provide the following information: name, mailing address, e-mail address, and contact number(s).

Electronic submissions are preferred and may be submitted via e-mail (attachment) to: kelly.mcdonnell@wmich.edu.

Submissions via regular mail should include three (3) typed and double spaced copies of the application to:

Kelly McDonnell, Ph.D.,
Western Michigan University,
CECP–5226, 1903 W. Michigan Avenue,
Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

Applications must be received by November 15, 2011.

Scholarship recipients will be asked to provide a social security number to receive scholarship payment.

Questions may be directed to Kelly McDonnell at kelly.mcdonnell@wmich.edu or 269-387-5107. Information about the scholarships and conference can be found on the Association for Specialists in Group Work website at http://www.asgw.org/
ASGW Group Work Practice Award Recipients

Submitted by Lorraine J. Guth and Kelly A. McDonnell, Awards Committee Co-Chairs

This year the Awards Committee received some excellent nominations for the Group Work Practice Award. The Group Work Practice Award is intended to recognize an outstanding practitioner in group work. Dr. Anneliese A. Singh and Dr. Carmen Salazar were the recipients of this award that was presented at the ASGW luncheon at the ACA conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. These recipients co-edited a double special issue of the Journal for Specialists in Group Work on group work and social justice. In this issue, they created a space where practitioners and researchers in group work described group interventions that are multicultural and address social justice issues. Additional achievements of these recipients are discussed below.

Dr. Anneliese Singh is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Counseling and Human Services at the University of Georgia. Her commitment to integrating social justice and advocacy into group work has been significant and unwavering. She has over 5 publications and 20 presentations focused on social justice and systemic change group work designed to improve the lives of historically marginalized groups. For instance, for the past five years, Dr. Singh has been running small groups in middle school settings that specifically seek to address and reduce gay-bullying. In this work, she also collaborates with group work trainees and school counselors, administrators, and other educators to utilize group formats as a way to build a school climate that is more compassionate, caring, and just.

Dr. Singh has also used her group work expertise to transform systems (e.g., schools, counseling centers) so they are LGBTQ affirmative. For example, Dr. Singh is the co-founder of the Georgia Safe Schools Coalition. In summary, it is clear that Dr. Singh uses group counseling principles and practices of belonging, universality, wellness, multiculturalism, and social justice in both her personal and professional life to create environments where historically marginalized people may thrive.

Dr. Carmen Salazar is an Associate Professor in the Department of Counseling at Texas A&M University-Commerce. In terms of group work practice, Dr. Salazar has provided individual and group counseling to victims and court-ordered perpetrators of domestic violence; counseling services to older adolescents and adults who are survivors of sexual abuse; and educational training to adults with serious developmental disabilities. Dr. Salazar provided these group work experiences while engaging in research that further guides her practice. She has published over 20 journal articles in over five nationally recognized journals. Her scholarship addresses variables much needed to consider while providing group work services to individuals who have experienced numerous layers of trauma.

In addition, Dr. Salazar has made major contributions to group work practice through scholarship that underscores the importance of understanding multicultural dynamics and social justice. She has written over 12 book chapters that address elements essential for competent group work practice. She published two books relevant to Social Justice and Diversity. She co-authored with Dr. Singh Social justice in group work: Practical interventions for change. She was also the editor of Group work experts share their favorite multicultural activities: A guide to diversity-competent choosing, planning, conducting, and processing. In summary, Dr. Salazar gives voice, in writing and her actions, to those who easily could be forgotten or overlooked. Her scholarly work provides clear frameworks which when implemented by others can create opportunities for transformation.

ASGW Professional Advancement Award Recipients

Submitted by Lorraine J. Guth and Kelly A. McDonnell, Awards Committee Co-Chairs

This year the Awards Committee received some excellent nominations for the Professional Advancement Award. This award is designed to recognize the outstanding activities of an individual who has helped advance the field of group work through any one of the following: research, development of a new technique or theory, public relations, legislative activities, or group work practice. Dr. Deryl Bailey and Dr. Sherlon P. Brown were the recipients of this award that was presented at the ASGW luncheon at the ACA conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Dr. Deryl Bailey is an Associate Professor in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Studies at the University of Georgia. He has made outstanding contributions to the Athens, Georgia community though his Empowered Youth Program. He has led a movement in the Clarke County School District to close the achievement gap in the district through personal attention and professional expertise. For example, Dr. Baily and his wife conduct an amazing Saturday Academy every week. They train graduate assistants who work with students in small groups to instill good work habits, positive attitudes, and respect for self. Students also work on their academics; prior to midterm and final exams, this corps of volunteers lock themselves in with students to provide an intense overnight study session at the high school. It takes someone who truly believes in the group process to accomplish a feat of this magnitude.
As a powerful role model, Dr. Bailey also leads after school groups for African American male middle and high school students that focus on etiquette training, leadership, and academics. In addition, he provides training for graduate students who, under his supervision, are also leading after school groups for middle and high school students. It is evident that his work is from the heart. Through Dr. Bailey’s leadership and commitment of time, students have emerged from a troubled academic experience to one of hope and success. Through his hard work, the community has seen the graduation rate change from 51% in 1989 to 70.3% in 2010. He possesses those critical attributes of integrity, moral courage, and devotion to his work that have earned him the trust and respect of school district officials, parents, and students. Dr. Bailey has also shared his experiences with the counseling profession via numerous publications and presentations detailing his group model, challenges, and successes. This work has made an impact on many and his contributions to the field of group counseling will reverberate for decades.

**DR. SHERLON P. BROWN** is a Professor Emeritus in the Mental Health and School Counseling Program at Bowling Green State University. Her commitment to the field of counseling and group work clearly convey a solid path of advancing the group work practices. Perhaps one of the contributing factors to her trajectory in group work is the fact that with wisdom and compassion she has acknowledged the power of African American principles associated with the Nguzo Saba (embedded into the Kwanza ceremonies) and she has collaboratively developed group work models from an African American perspective. In addition to numerous contributions that were made by her through publications and presentations, her educational videos which depict the multicultural group work model have enhanced our ability to train students.

Dr. Brown’s talents and dedication to strengthening the fabric of group work practices have also been evident in her approach to presenting and mentoring individuals across cultures. For example, she has presented on multicultural group work practices with a focus on rituals that strive to restore and support healing and wellness. Dr. Brown models what she writes about which is the power of healing when participants are encouraged to be authentic; connected to their heart, body, and soul; and have permission to experience and share with others their desires, joys, worries, and fears. Through all of her work, Dr. Brown gives others and opportunity to feel inspired and energized through the creative multicultural fabric that she has demonstrated in the use of the African drumming as an instrument of helping group members experience a true sense of genuine collective work.

---

**Now Available from ASGW**

**School Counselors Share Their Favorite Group Activities**

Edited by Louisa L. Foss, Judy Green, Kelly Wolfe-Stiltner and Janice L. DeLucia-Waack

This book is a compilation of over 65 group activities that represent a variety of types of school counseling groups on topics including career awareness and planning, grief and loss work, school transition, diversity promotion and many others.

Groups for elementary, middle, and high school are included to provide plenty of creative ideas for conducting effective school counseling groups. Members of the Association for Specialists in Group Work have shared many of their favorite group activities in this useful volume.

For ease of use, activities are arranged by age as well as by stage. Introductory chapters highlight selection, use, and processing of activities, as well as ethical issues inherent in working with students in the schools. Each activity contains specific directions, goals, materials, and suggestions for adaptation. Suggestions for creating a supportive environment for groups are also included.

Order #: 72885, $45.00
ACA Member: $35.00

**ACA Order Services**

[www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org) 1-800-422-2648, ext. 222
Process observer Christine working diligently to note the process over the content that was being explored.

Board members present: back row Christine, Becky, Sam, Amy, front row, Carolyn, Niloufer and Janice.

Board Members at Work

Board members Carolyn, Becky, Niloufer, Amy, and Janice, striving to strategically position ASGW for the 21st century.

Dedicated past president Bogusia and treasurer Carmen participated in nontraditional ways to ensure that we had exactly what we needed.

We had lots of food to keep us energized.
Reflections on an Experience: Preparing Deaf Counselors in a Graduate Counseling Program for Hearing Students to do Group Work

Sheri Bauman, Ph.D.
Allison K. Thorbergson, M. Ed.
University of Arizona

This column describes the ways in which a graduate program in school counseling accommodated its first Deaf/HOH student in the Group Counseling course.

Reflections on an Experience: Training Deaf Counselors in a Graduate Counseling Program for Hearing Students

Although Gallaudet University, in which all instruction is delivered in American Sign Language (ASL), offers graduate programs in counseling, some Deaf/HOH students may choose to attend other institutions. At the University of Arizona, the graduate program in school counseling had not had a Deaf/HOH student prior to 2009-2010 academic year when the second author, AT, entered the program. We have since had other Deaf students enroll. In this Practice Ideas piece, we share our experience to illustrate that counseling programs can be effective in preparing counselors who are Deaf/HOH to facilitate groups in schools.

Accommodations

The didactic portion of the course required some accommodations to allow AT to participate fully in the program. Certified ASL interpreters were provided by the university’s Disabilities Resource Center (DRC) to attend class with, and interpret for her. Some class sessions were held online using Elluminate™ meeting software. The instructor narrated Powerpoint slides, and students (from their own locations) used the mechanisms in the system to participate (signals for “yes” or “no,” emoticons to show reactions, and chat using text or voice to ask/answer questions). Using the feature available in the program, the camera was focused on the interpreter and shown in one part of the screen (whose size is adjustable on individual viewers’ screens) so that AT could participate fully in these meetings.

Group Counseling Skills

In the Group Work course, content should include training in group facilitation skills, per CACREP Standard 6, which requires that students engage in “studies that provide both theoretical and experiential understandings of group purpose, development, dynamics, counseling theories, group counseling methods and skills, and other group approaches . . .” The experiential understandings are typically conveyed in two components of the course: an experiential group of at least 10 hours in which the students participate as group members with an outside facilitator (Association for Specialists in Group Work, 2000), and practice sessions in which students have a chance to lead or co-lead a group and receive feedback about their performance.

Since the group course is offered during the second semester in the program, students were familiar with having ASL interpreters in the room, so that by the time of the experiential group, interpreters were no longer a novel experience. In the intensive 10-hour weekend experience, neither the facilitator nor the Deaf student detected any differences in the group dynamics as a result of the presence of the interpreters. As AT said, “They know that the interpreters are there to be my voice, nothing else.” However, there were some exercises used in that experience that were not deaf-friendly. For example, in one activity, group members were blindfolded and then were directed via verbal instructions to arrange themselves by height in a line from tall to short without speaking. AT notes, “The instructor had to tell me the instructions before I was blindfolded because I could not hear and also could not watch the interpreter.” The facilitator adds this example as well:
I used a name game where students gather in a circle and someone throws a bean bag to another student and says, ‘Hello, AT.’ AT would catch the bean bag and say ‘Thank you, LS’ for example. We then added more bean bags, balls, and even a rubber chicken. What I did not realize until after the activity is that AT could not hear her name being called, so bean bags were being thrown out with her getting her attention first ... My mistake!

This example illustrates the need for all instructors to review their teaching activities and strategies to ensure that they do not limit the deaf student.

**Practice in a Virtual World**

There were two opportunities for students to practice group facilitation skills. For the first event, we used a room in a Counselor Center in Second Life – a 3-D virtual world. A specialist in instructional design (Dr. Victoria Walker of Regent University) allowed the class to use the room in a counseling center she built and owns in Second Life. Each student in the class created an avatar (a graphic representation of or her or self) for the experience, and did not share their names, gender, or appearance with others in the class. The class was large enough to warrant two groups, and the original plan was to have one group use voice to communicate, and the other to use the chat feature. One group would participate as members of the group, while the other group observed and provided feedback to the leaders at the conclusion of the group. However, in the very first group in Second Life we encountered technical difficulties with the voice feature, and decided to use chat that the group could continue as planned. This meant that AT could participate in the same way as other students, without an interpreter. The other students could not tell which of the avatars belonged to AT, whom said:

_Using the Second Life feature was interesting for me because I was able to observe and participate where my being deaf did not matter. I was able to interact and be part of the group where the other students had no idea which avatar was their deaf classmate. While the Second Life program was an awesome tactic to use in a classroom, it didn’t really allow us to use silence or visual cues that we would normally use in a face-to-face setting. Being deaf has made me very observant and able to pick up on visual cues, and for that reason, I felt a little disconnected from the group. I still had my interpreter with me so that I could communicate with Dr. B [AT used a computer in a room adjacent to Dr. B’s office for this experience]. One-on-one communication is not a problem for me, I just can’t hear if Dr. B is in another room and was trying to tell me something._

This was our first experiment using Second Life, and in the future we will require students to spend more time learning to use the program before the course is offered again. There are numerous non-verbal gestures that can be accomplished in Second Life, but considerable practice is needed to become adept at using those features. See Figure 1 for a view of a small group meeting in Second Life.

![Figure 1. A small group for girls (staged) in Second Life. AT’s avatar is facing the viewer.](image)

**Practice in the Classroom**

The second opportunity to practice group facilitation skills was an in-class experience; each group session was video recorded to allow the leader to review it. When it was AT’s turn to be the group leader, the interpreter joined the group and sat within the circle, close to AT. See Figure 2 for an image of part of the group, with AT facilitating. As an instructor, I wondered how this would affect the dynamics and process of the group. AT made the following observations when viewing the recording of her session:

_One thing I noticed was that my peers had gotten used to having me with my interpreters there, because when I was signing to the group, they were looking at me, instead of at the interpreter when he was speaking. As it is customary in the hearing world to look at the person who is speaking, my classmates [group members in the group AT was leading], seemed to “toss that out of the window” and to focus on me. In addition, because ASL is a lot shorter than the English language, my peers were able to use that silence to think about their own response and be able to answer better. [This was confirmed by comments from the group members during the after-session feedback discussion.] When reviewing the video later with Dr. B., one of the things we noticed was how well my interpreter had picked up on the “counseling lingo” and actually phrase questions such as, “How did you feel about that?,” and “Can you tell me more about that?” I truly believe that my peers have accepted why the interpreter is there – to be my voice and to be “invisible,” which was very evident in the video. Something I learned from the video that I would change in the future would be to have the interpreter sit directly across from me and not next to me. The reason for this change is that when I looked at the interpreter who was signing the group members’ words, I felt like I was breaking eye contact with the group members, and that made me feel like I was missing out on important nonverbal clues I might have been able to use as a facilitator. However, during the feedback session, this did not seem to bother the group members, because I made sure to create eye contact to let them know I was “listening” before turning to the interpreter so I could know and fully understanding what the group members were saying._
Recommendations

As we reflect on our own experiences as instructor and student, we would offer the following recommendations for other instructors who may have Deaf/HOH students in a group counseling course:

1. Attempt to have the same interpreters throughout the course. This allows them to become familiar with the terminology and jargon used, and participating students develop trust that although the interpreters are not part of the group, they will maintain confidentiality and be respectful.

2. Provide some training to instructors and facilitators of the experiential group on how to work with an interpreter. For example, it is important to look at the deaf student, not the interpreter, when communicating with the student. This validates the student and your respect for him or her.

3. Take advantage of new technology to incorporate deaf-friendly elements of instruction. Encourage the Deaf/HOH student to offer ideas and suggestions to enhance their experiences.

4. Some of the new technology requires considerable practice to become proficient. Offer several practice sessions, with skilled helpers available, but require that students attend the sessions. Lack of proficiency on the part of one student can detract from the experience of all participants.

5. For a variety of reasons, DEAF/HOH students may be shy or withdrawn in class discussions. Instructors should invite, support, and encourage their participation. This benefits the class and also the student, who can then more fully engage with the material.

6. In a lecture situation, Deaf/HOH students may need more frequent breaks. Hearing students can look in numerous directions and still hear what the instructor is saying. The Deaf/HOH student is looking intently and constantly at the interpreter. This can be very tiring for the eyes.

Conclusion

The instructor, in consultation with the Deaf student, was able to devise instructional strategies and use technology, to make the training in group facilitation appropriate for Deaf/HOH students. We shared our experience in this column to help others maximize the training experience for all students. This is consistent with the multicultural emphasis of the counseling profession.

References


Association for Specialists in Group Work 2012 National Convention

Creating cultures of caring: using group work to heal ourselves, our communities, and the world

February 9-12, 2012

Sheraton Albuquerque Uptown Hotel,
Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The featured keynote address will be given by Lee Mun Wah, an internationally renowned educator, community therapist, director of the film The Color of Fear, and founder/CEO of StirFry Seminars and Consulting.

As the theme suggests, we invite you to share your practice and research related to the use of group work across topics including:

- wellness
- holistic health
- trauma
- community building
- ecological/community based interventions
- disaster and crises-related work
- multicultural and social justice issues
- prevention and conflict mediation
- peace-work
- complementary/indigenous healing practices

Certifications for Continuing Education will be available.

The conference begins on Thursday, February 9th with a series of preconference activities including and opportunities to learn about the connections with self-care and wellness along with social justice and multicultural issues through group work. Attendees will be able to immerse in the conference theme by engaging in 90 minute and 60 minute skill building sessions, panel discussions, and poster presentations throughout the conference.

The call for proposals is available now via www.asgw.org

The Group Worker
Published three times a year by the Association for Specialists in Group Work, a division of the American Counseling Association, 5999 Stevenson Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304. Subscription to The Group Worker is included with ASGW membership. To join ASGW or to process a change of address write to ACA, 5999 Stevenson Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304. All other correspondence should be directed to the Editor, Sam Steen, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, George Washington University, 2134 G. St. NW, Washington, DC 20052, sammylsteen@hotmail.com