

GROUP SPACE

Official newsletter of



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Do you have a story you'd like to tell or someone in mind to feature for the next newsletter?

Contact us.

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HGPS IS THE ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL VOICE FOR THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY TRAINED IN THE PRACTICE OF GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY. WHILE ADHERING TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE, HGPS OFFERS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL GROWTH AND FOR EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE OF THE MANY FACETS OF GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY FROM FUNDAMENTAL GROUP CONCEPTS TO ADVANCED PRACTICE SKILLS.

Save the Date!



FREE Brown Bag: Breathing Life into Starting, Sustaining and Resurrecting the Art of Group Leadership:
An Invitation to Community Discussion with Amanda Yoder, LCSW, CGP & Robert White, MD, CGP

September 14
11:30am – 1:00pm
The Council at [303 Jackson Hill](#) off Memorial

Have you ever asked yourself...

- * What gets in my way of starting a group?
- * Why did I ever stop offering groups?
- * How might I benefit from consultation?
- * How can I share the magic of group work with emerging therapists?

Please contact Constance Moore, M.Ed., LPC, CGP at 713-961-5055 or mcamtexas@yahoo.com with any questions.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Q + A

with **SANDRA LÓPEZ**

LEADING EDUCATOR TO SPEAK ON
CULTURALLY COMPETENT ETHICAL PRACTICE
AT THE 2018 HGPS INSTITUTE



Photo courtesy of UH Graduate College of Social Work

It is often said that we are living in a particularly divisive era — politically, socially and culturally. At the same time, we have never been a more culturally diverse society. In our clinical work, it can be challenging to understand how the complex cultural affiliations that each individual may adopt impacts them psychologically, and how to support them in these difficult times.

Sandra A. López, LCSW, ACSW, DCSW, the keynote speaker for the HGPS Institute in October, sees opportunity in working with diverse cultures and advises a humble approach in pursuit of understanding.

López is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker from Houston, Texas with more than thirty-eight years of experience in academia and private practice. She has received numerous awards and honors for her teaching, clinical excellence, advocacy and leadership.

She is currently in clinical and consulting practice with established expertise in the arena of trauma

and in particular traumatic grief. She is a widely recognized local, state, and national keynote presenter, trainer, and consultant on a very long list of major subject areas including trauma, trauma informed care, traumatic grief, clinical social work supervision, ethical practice, and the practice of self-care.

She took some time to answer a few questions, providing a glimpse of how she thinks about culturally sensitive practice.

Q: You have been educating clinicians about culturally sensitive practice for decades. This may be too broad of a question, but how have your concerns and areas of focus changed over the years?

A: It is actually quite fascinating to review my cultural diversity and cultural competence work over the last few decades. Things have changed

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

significantly for several reasons. There is greater diversity in who we are as people of the United States which means there are greater challenges posed to practitioners, therapists, providers across diverse practice settings. We have often thought of ourselves as representing a mosaic and that construct has even more meaning in a time when we have a nation of such phenomenal diversity. This means more attention and focus. I have noted that educational programs as well as our professional associations have emphasized and encouraged cultural awareness and cultural competence in our training and education. All of this represents positive regard and reflection of the importance of culture and cultural differences, yet there are enormous challenges we are facing in our country at present.

Q: We are living in difficult times with issues such as fears about immigration, fear of terrorism and more awareness of LGBTQ identities are developing. Has this influenced your teaching and, if so, how?

A: From time to time, I will hear someone (colleague or friend) that "racism no longer exists." I have to wonder, where do they live??? At times, it appears that depending on where you live and who you are, that the appreciation of cultural diversity may vary among communities in our country. On one hand, some live in communities where diversity is appreciated, honored, and respected. Yet, in other areas of our country, some communities continue to maintain cultural and racial biases and encourage hate and violence against those they see as different. Current conversations around immigration,

terrorism and LGBTQ communities often reveal where some persons stand in their mindsets about appreciation versus hate. Quite frankly, my current perspective is that we are living in a time when it appears to be perfectly okay to hate, to bash others, and to act upon the hatred in violent ways. Sadly, this powerfully influences my teaching in acknowledging that not everyone is celebrating diversity in our country.

As clinicians, this is important to acknowledge as there may be occasions where one is working with individuals, families, or groups, where a myriad of values, beliefs, and practices may surface such as love, peace, harmony, or even hate, prejudice, discrimination.

Since we are human first before becoming professionals, we too may have these conflicts in our values that stem from our upbringing that may be connected to hate, intolerance, and even racism. Many of us have clients who are living with threats because they are Latino, Muslim, or Gay, for example. Finding clinicians who can promote safety and

security around these painful conversations is a priority for our practices.

Equally, important, creating safe places where people can come together to explore these cultural values is important for us as professionals, and I have made this an important process of my cultural work.

*I hope that my colleagues
will see that cultural
competence is an ongoing and
valuable process for us to
undertake as clinicians, as it
serves as a way of bridging
with diverse cultures.*

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HGPS IN THE COMMUNITY

Photos courtesy of Ariela Alpert



HGPS Members Gathered to Celebrate a Successful Houston AGPA Conference

AGPA sponsored the event to thank Houston members for hosting the conference with celebration champagne and cake.

Pictured: Brittany Burch, Toby Newman, Audrey Ryman, Linda Chase, Helen Chong, Denise O'Doherty, new member Barbie Atkinson, Carol Vaughn, Leticia Fallick, Elyssa Fink Gottheim.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS



REGISTRATION NOW OPEN
FOR HGPS CONFERENCE



“Diversity Within Diversity: The Intersection of Identities Within Groups” Presented by Sandra López, LCSW, ACSW, DSCW

This one-day conference will be held on October 19, 2018 from 8:30am–5:30pm at the Council on Recovery located at 303 Jackson Hill. Early Bird Registration is open until September 19. Scholarship applications are available.

Please go to www.hgps.org for registration and scholarship links.

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Q: As citizens and clinicians, how do you hope to see us make a difference?

I have many hopes for the conference day. First, I hope each and every clinician in the room will be open to exploring new perspectives about cultural diversity in our country, not in an invasive, attacking way but in the form of a respectful dialogue. I hope colleagues will be willing to examine their current perspectives with the intention of identifying blind spots and obstacles to their clinical practice with diverse cultures. I also hope that my colleagues will see that cultural competence is an ongoing and valuable process for us to undertake as clinicians as it serves as a way of bridging with diverse cultures. Above all else, I am wanting to create an experience that is a valuable and connecting experience on a professional as well as personal level. I also expect that colleagues will carry this experience forward so that it can be practically applied in the realm of group practice.

Q: You have given literally hundreds of talks about culturally competent practice. What keeps you interested?

Although I am made up of many, many cultural layers, living as someone who is a person of color has profoundly shaped my personal and professional life. In an ongoing fashion as a Mexican-American female, I live with the recognition that my beautiful brown skin has made me uniquely different as I have travelled throughout my life from childhood to adulthood. I know what it means to be loved, celebrated, acknowledged, tolerated, belittled, discriminated against, and even hated. These experiences, although at times painful and difficult, are what have fueled my passion and commitment to these important cultural conversations with my clinician and practitioner colleagues. I am excited about the opportunity to see and work with my colleagues from HGPS again and I truly look forward to this presentation and experience! It promises to be engaging, interactive, meaningful, and useful to our clinical practice. ■