

Houston Group Psychotherapy Society By-Laws

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of the organization shall be the Houston Group Psychotherapy Society. Hereinafter it shall be referred to in this document as the Society. The Society is a Local Affiliate Society of the American Group Psychotherapy Association.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of the organization shall be:

1. To promote interest and knowledge about group psychotherapy among its members and in the community,
2. To provide a forum for the exchange of information, ideas, and experiences about group psychotherapy,
3. To promote training and high standards in the qualifications and practices of group psychotherapy,
4. To encourage and to promote research in group psychotherapy,
5. To promote social interaction, connection, and communication among group psychotherapists,
6. To engage in all activities necessary, useful and expedient, through operative measures, to promote and to further the interests of group psychotherapy,
7. To engage and promote diversity in its membership and programs and to support members in serving clients and patients from diverse backgrounds, heritages, identities, and experiences.

ARTICLE III – GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES

Boundaries of the Society shall include the metropolitan Houston sphere of influence, roughly defined to be a radius of 100 miles. Qualified professionals living outside of the

area will not be excluded, but the Society does not purport to be a representative of other areas.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership Categories

A. Clinical Members

1. Rights and privileges: Clinical members in good standing may participate fully in the affairs of the Society by such activities as voting, serving on committees as member or chair, and holding office.
2. Qualifications: Clinical membership in the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA).

B. Affiliate Members

1. Rights and privileges: Affiliate members in good standing may participate fully in the affairs of the Society, may vote, serve as member or chair of a committee, and hold office with the exception of President and First Vice President.
2. Qualifications: At least Master's level clinical professional in a mental health field or licensed or certified by the State of Texas in a mental health field who, although not a member of AGPA, are interested in the practice and development of group psychotherapy.

C. Student and New Career Professional Members

1. Rights and privileges: Student members in good standing may participate fully in the affairs of the Society, including such activities as serving on committees, but may not vote, hold office, or serve as chair of a committee.
2. Rights and privileges: New Career Professional members in good standing may participate fully in the affairs of the Society, including such activities as

serving on committees, voting, holding office, and serving as chair of a committee.

3. Qualifications: Individual matriculated in recognized graduate degree programs or in residency programs in the mental health professions that will satisfy the educational qualifications for Clinical or Affiliate, or education corresponding to Friend memberships in the Society, may, as long as they remain in those programs or residencies, including a leave of absence of not more than one (1) year, qualify as Student and New Career Professional Members. This membership requires substantiation of student status on request. New career professionals may remain in the Student and New Career Professionals category after graduation or completion of residency for no more than 2 years. New career professionals must have, or be pursuing, licensure or certification in their field.

D. Honorary Members

1. Rights and privileges: No rights or privileges.
2. Qualifications: This membership category is reserved for the Society executive committee to honor individuals who have made a significant contribution to the field of group psychotherapy.

E. Friends

1. Rights and privileges: Friends in good standing may participate in the Society by serving on committees as a member, but may neither serve as committee chair, not vote nor hold office.
2. Qualification: Licensed or certified in a non-mental health profession, who use group techniques or who work regularly with groups in the pursuit of their profession.

Section 2. Termination and Reinstatement of Membership

A. Membership will automatically terminate when dues are in arrears for six (6) months, at the request of the Executive Committee for cause, or as defined in this section. Cause is

hereby defined as the Society receiving notice that a member's license or certification has been revoked or suspended.

B. Members terminated for failure to pay their annual dues may contact the Administrator, make payment, and become reinstated at the appropriate membership level.

C. Automatic suspension/termination of membership:

1. When the Society has received notice that a member's license or certification to practice has been revoked; or upon notice that a member has been convicted of a felony, membership will automatically terminate.
2. When the Society has received notice that a member's license or certification has been suspended, membership in the Society will automatically be suspended for the same period.
3. No appeal exists for suspension/termination under this section.

D. Each member shall adhere to:

1. The Society's by-laws
2. The ethics of their respective professional organization.

Section 3. Procedure for Admission

A. New members will complete an informational form and provide payment of dues to the Administrator.

Section 4. Membership dues

Membership dues for the membership categories shall be established by the Executive Committee with concurrence of the Board of Directors. Dues are payable July 1 of each year. Dues will be prorated for new members who join less than a year before July 1.

Section 5. Retirement

A. Rights and privileges: Retired members of all categories shall have the rights and privileges of their category.

B. Qualifications: To be determined by the Executive Committee.

C. Dues: May be excused from paying dues by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS

Section 1. The Officers of the Society shall be:

A. President. The President shall preside at meetings, be the executive office of the Society and of the Board of Directors, provide leadership and perform all duties usually pertaining to the office.

B. First Vice President: The First Vice President shall fulfill the duties of the President in the absence of the President and shall supervise the following committees: Special Interest Group Committee, Racial, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, and the Leadership Committee. The First Vice President shall assume the office of the President at the end of the President's tenure.

C. Second Vice President. The Second Vice President shall be responsible for the supervision of the following committees: Membership, Nominating, Training and Education, and Institute. The Second Vice President shall fulfill the duties of the office of President in the absence of the President and First Vice President.

D. Third Vice President. Third Vice President. The Third Vice President shall be responsible for the supervision of the following committees: Community Outreach, Development, Marketing, and the ad hoc committee as designated by the Executive Committee. The Third Vice President shall fulfill the duties of the office of President in the absence of the President, First and Second Vice Presidents.

E. Secretary. The Secretary shall keep the records of the Society including minutes of meetings, correspondence of the Society and records of meetings and reports to the membership, and shall be responsible for the dissemination of information to members.

F. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have custody of all funds of the Society and shall maintain a bank account in the Society's name. The names of the Treasurer, the President and the Administrator shall be maintained on the account. The Treasurer shall oversee the collection of dues from the membership, funds from Institutes, workshops, etc. The Treasurer shall have custody of all property of the Society subject to the authority of the President. The Treasurer is responsible for the oversight of, or shall keep records of finances, make financial reports to the membership and is the fiscal officer of the Society.

G. Parliamentarian. The Parliamentarian shall:

1. Rule on points of parliamentary procedure,
2. Be the historian of the Society and keep records of the Society of historical information to the Society,
3. Be the custodian of the Bylaws, study proposed modifications of the Bylaws, recommend bylaw changes to the Society and Board of Directors when needed and periodically review the Bylaws for recommended changes,
4. Be the keeper of the Codes of Ethics of the various professional societies and licensure groups of the members.

H. Past President. The Past President shall be the most recently retired President. The role of the Past President is to ensure continuity during governance transitions and organizational change, to help ensure the appropriate succession of Officers and Directors, and to support the President.

I. Delegation of functions. The Executive Committee may delegate such duties of officers as may be deemed necessary to an administrator in the employ of the Society.

J. Requirements for officers. Candidates for the office of President or First Vice President shall be clinical members of the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA).

Section 2. Election of Officers

A. The Nominating Committee shall form a slate of nominees for each office for presentation to the membership. Nominations shall be received from the membership, either from the floor when elections are held in a business meeting or by post or electronic mail when elections are held by mail ballot.

B. Election of officers shall be held every other year at the business meeting held at the time of the Annual Institute or by post or electronic mail ballot during the same month. The membership must be notified of meetings where officers are to be elected at least 30 days in advance. When an election is held by post or electronic mail ballot it shall be conducted by the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall solicit nominations from the membership by mail to be included on the post or electronic mail ballot.

C. Officers shall be elected by (1) a majority of the members voting providing a quorum (Article VI, Section 3) is present, or (2) a majority vote of returned post or electronic mail ballots. In the event that no one has received a majority, there shall be a run-off election between the two leading candidates.

D. Vacancies. The Executive Committee shall fill unexpired terms of office in the Society until the next business meeting when the office shall be filled by a duly-elected officer upon a majority vote of members present and voting. Whenever the office of President is vacant, the First Vice President shall immediately assume office. If this occurs, leaving the office for First Vice President potentially vacant for over one year, a special election will be held as early as practical by post or electronic mail ballot in accord with this section.

E. Term of office. Elected officers shall take office immediately following their election. Elected officers shall hold office for a period of two (2) years.

F. Electronic ballot. The Executive Committee may authorize an electronic ballot on such terms as it may deem necessary, provided that such ballot is not otherwise in conflict with any provision of these Bylaws.

Section 3. Removal of Directors or Officers.

Any one of the Directors or Officers may be removed for cause by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Board members present and voting at a regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors. Cause is hereby defined as the Society receiving notice that a member's license or certification has been revoked or suspended.

ARTICLE VI – BUSINESS

Section 1. The Business of the Society shall be conducted by:

A. The general membership, meeting at regular business meetings, at least one of which is to be held annually at the time and place to be designated by the Executive Committee.

B. The Executive Committee sitting in the interim between business meetings. The Executive Committee shall have the powers possessed by the Society itself, to execute policy determined by the Board of Directors to disperse the funds of the Society and to adopt such rules and regulations for the conduct of its business as shall be deemed advisable.

C. Special meetings may be called by the President or Board of Directors.

Section 2. Board of Directors

A. There shall be a Board of Directors charged with the responsibility to provide policy and planning for the Society including offering recommendations to the Executive Committee for action.

B. The Board of Directors shall meet no less than three times annually.

C. Members of the Board shall have only one vote. The composition of the Board of Directors shall be:

1. The Executive Committee which is constituted by the duly elected officers of the Society and the immediate Past President.
2. The standing committee chairpersons who are appointed by the President for terms of two (2) years.
3. The Advisory Committee which shall consist of nine (9) members for terms of three (3) years. Each year a class of two (2) shall be elected by the general membership and one (1) appointed by the President. The two elected Advisory Committee officers are elected. The President's appointment shall coincide with the election. Likewise, a class shall retire each year.

D. The Board of Directors may veto any action of the Executive Committee by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of voting members present at any regular or called meeting of the Board.

Section 3. Quorum

Twenty percent (20%) of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum at any business meeting of the entire membership. A quorum at any meeting of the Executive Committee or Board of Directors shall consist of sixty percent (60%) of the members eligible to vote.

Section 4. Resignation

Any officer, member of the Board of Directors or member may resign at any time by giving written notice to the President of the Society. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, or, if no time is specified, at the time of acceptance as determined by the President of the Society.

ARTICLE VII – COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing committees

There shall be eleven (11) standing committees. The President will appoint the chairs of all committees with the exception of the Nominating Committee and the Institute Committee. Prior to the beginning of their term as President, the First Vice President will appoint the chairs of all committees to serve during their tenure as President. Prior to the beginning of

their term the First Vice President will appoint the Nominating committee with the concurrence of the Board of Directors. The Nominating Committee members will select their own chairperson. The First Vice President will, in a timely manner, appoint the Institute Committee Chairperson who will serve during the First Vice President's tenure as President.

A. Membership Committee. The committee shall generally promote membership in the Society by strengthening connections between the Society, its members, and potential members and will work to further the Society's dedication to create and welcome a diverse membership.

B. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of nominees for the election of officers at the time of the Annual Institute of every other year. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of nominee(s) for vacancies in office when instructed to do so by the President. The committee shall conduct post or electronic mail ballots when authorized by the President and supervised by the President. It shall be the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to be active in seeking potential leadership within the Society and to ensure slates of officers who are both qualified for and enthusiastic about fulfilling the duties of office in the Society.

C. Training and Education Committee. The Training and Education Committee shall be responsible for training which includes both the training of members and educational programs offered to the larger community. The committee shall formulate and implement, with the advice of the Board of Directors, programs for the purpose of training and developing members, qualifying professional persons in the practice and teaching of group psychotherapy, and provide for other training needs of the Society. This Committee will keep the Institute Committee apprised of all training needs of the Society which may be fulfilled by an Institute meeting.

D. Institute Committee. The Institute Committee shall be responsible for planning and coordinating an experiential and educational meeting, usually held on an annual basis. Selection of Institute speakers will be made by the Executive Committee upon recommendation by the Institute Committee and advice of the Board.

E. Marketing Committee. The Marketing and Publications Committee shall be responsible for overseeing and developing representation of the Society through publications including the website, newsletter, marketing emails lists/email notices, social media, and other means. The policy of the Newsletter shall be determined by the Executive Committee with the advice of the Board.

F. Finance Committee. The Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer, shall be responsible for advising the Society in matters of both short- and long-term financial matters.

G. Development Committee. The Development Committee shall be responsible for cultivating and soliciting contributions and underwriting from Houston group members and corporate sources.

H. Leadership Development Committee. The Leadership Development Committee shall be responsible for seeking out and developing new leadership within the membership, maintaining active involvement of members, increasing involvement of senior members, and encouraging mentoring opportunities.

I. Community Outreach Committee. The Community Outreach Committee shall be responsible for promoting interest and knowledge about group psychotherapy and Houston Group Psychotherapy Society in the community.

J. Special Interest Group (SIG) Committee. The Special Interest Group (SIG) Committee shall be responsible for establishing and overseeing special interest groups (SIGs), which are groups for Society members who share a common interest in a specific area of group psychotherapy.

K. Racial, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee: The HGPS Race Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) Committee is HGPS's commitment to fostering a professional community that thrives on equality, celebrates diversity, and champions inclusivity. Comprised of passionate individuals from various backgrounds, this committee is dedicated to creating a culture where every voice is heard and everyone is valued. The REDI Committee's mission is to promote race equity within our organization. Through thoughtful discussions, awareness campaigns, and policy recommendations, we can eliminate disparities and create a level

playing field for all members. The focus is creating an environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging and has equal opportunities for growth and success. Diversity is our guiding principle. By actively promoting diversity in membership practices, fostering an inclusive atmosphere, and encouraging cross-cultural understanding, the committee ensures that our organization reflects the rich tapestry of the Houston Community. The REDI committee will ensure Inclusion is woven into every initiative undertaken by HPGS. They champion initiatives that break down barriers, challenge biases, and promote a sense of belonging for every individual. From organizing awareness campaigns to implementing inclusive policies, the committee is dedicated to ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, feels respected and valued.

Section 2. Ad Hoc Committees

The President may from time to time appoint an Ad Hoc Committee. The President shall appoint all ad hoc committee chairpersons. Each ad hoc committee chairperson shall then appoint their own committee members with the advice and consent of the President.

ARTICLE VIII – DISSOLUTION

Section 1. The Society may be dissolved by a 2/3 vote in favor by the Executive Committee. Dissolution of the Society must then be approved by a majority vote by the membership.

Section 2. Upon dissolution of the Society, the majority of the Executive Committee shall distribute the Society's assets to a charitable organization(s) promoting mental health.

ARTICLE IX – RESTRICTIONS REGARDING POLITICAL ACTIONS

Section 1. The Society shall not participate or intervene (including the publishing or distributing of statements) in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS

Section 1. The Bylaws may be amended by (1) a majority of the members voting providing a quorum is present, or (2) a majority vote of returned post or electronic mail ballots.

Section 2. Amendments of the Bylaws by either mail ballot or in a business meeting shall require that notice of proposed amendment be provided to members at least thirty (30) days but not more than sixty (60) days prior to the final amendment(s).

ARTICLE XI – PARLIAMENTARY ORDER

In all matters not specifically ordered by these Bylaws, the Society will be governed by Robert's *Rules of Order* as revised.

**Indicates phrase from AGPA model Bylaws