

## EDITORIAL - Continued

Finally, a word to our readership. The past three issues of the HGPS Journal have been made possible through the contributions made by our members. In many instances, these contributors have ventured into print for the first time, and in so doing, demonstrated the wealth of knowledge that exists in the HGPS. In addition to the more formal call for papers found in this volume, let me make a special appeal to those of you who continue to actively conduct groups. There is much we can learn from you and the gratification you will get from researching, conceptualizing, writing and then seeing your work in print cannot be underestimated. We encourage your submissions.

## A HISTORY OF THE HOUSTON GROUP

## PSYCHOTHERAPY SOCIETY

Irvin A. Kraft, M.D.  
 David Mendell, M.D.  
 Clarence K. Miller, Ph.D.  
 H. Barry Molish, Ph.D.  
 Jody Vick, M.S.W.  
 Marian B. Yeager, Ph.D.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The Houston Group Psychotherapy Society has finally documented and recorded its political and social development. The "Committee on History" has done a fine job researching as evidenced by this interesting tale to follow. Those who have participated in or followed the growth of the organization for the past 20 years would most certainly agree that its teaching program and fiscal excellence is rooted in the solid, but innovative pattern of growth begun in 1956.

The committee on history believes the following represents a fairly accurate accounting of HGPS's history. The earliest years of organized group psychotherapy in this area began with Dave Mendell, Robert MacGregor and Irvin Kraft as its begetters. About 1956, one anlage of the Southwest Group Psychotherapy Society appeared with the first organized "institute" in the spring of 1958 when Al Wolf spoke to a large assemblage in the main auditorium of Baylor College of Medicine. This initiated assembling those interested in doing group as well as letting various existing organizations know its values.

As this theme of having presentations by major persons continued with Harris Peck and others, the Southwest Group Psychotherapy Society formed itself as a definite entity. By 1967 there were sufficient numbers of group leaders to establish the Houston Group Psychotherapy Society. Pat Pearce, M.D. was the first president.

The first year schedule (1967-1968) included Carl Whitaker, M.D. a film by R. Abel, "The Road to Reality," Luis Feder, Ph.D., and Murray Bowen, M.D. The initial program (December 13-14) of 1968-69 had Max Sugar, M.D. as the speaker.

Since the membership showed signs of dissension and difficulties, steps were taken to rectify these problems. The minutes are detailed as follows:

1. "The birth of the Houston Group Therapy Association was not without labor pains. Coming in the shadow of the Southwest Group Therapy Society, which is making a name for itself regionally and nationally, it inherited some of its leaders from the Houston area but also some of its unresolved problems. As the number of eligible group therapists increased beyond the original 15-20 which encompassed the retreats enjoyed by the Southwest members, the question of expansion or splitting up into two groups was never resolved. The upsurge of group therapy activities in Houston at that time took place from several sources: (1) Dr. Irvin Kraft, child psychiatry training program at Baylor and outside as well; (2) Dr. Marian Yeager shepherding a group of oncoming therapists working with her and (3) Dr. David Mendell's group therapy seminar for residents at Baylor which he then set up as his own organization, the Baylor Postgraduate Group Therapy Program. The plan was to share with the community the program for the residents which entailed some of the other leaders in the family and group therapy movements... outside of Baylor." (Annotation to original minutes of the Houston Group Psychotherapy Society, 1978)

2. "These efforts came together after previous, unsuccessful starts of the Houston group in a joint program of outstanding presentations which were well attended and created an enthusiasm and drive for organization as evidenced by the subsequent report and announcement dated September 21, 1967, by Paul Ledbetter and Patricia Pierce of the core group. Once firmed up, an internal ferment began: it manifested itself by rebellion against this core group which had its own leadership. This replicated the unsolved problems of the parent, Southwestern Group; how to integrate the incoming, larger number of group therapists and maintain the small group climate they had enjoyed and profited from previously." (Annotation, 1978)
3. "At the Saturday, December 14, 1968 meeting, current problems of the Houston Group Psychotherapy Society were discussed with Dr. Sugar as consultant. It was brought out that many frustrations exist among the membership and that this was illustrated by the lack of interaction at the meeting; few present knew one another either by name or by background. Frustrations included a lack of cohesion, chronic problems of goals and membership, an inability of the Society to meet the needs of the membership, a perceived core group which excludes many members, confusion (in the) leadership, too little concern with local problems, etc. (Minutes of the December 13-14, 1968 meeting of the Houston Group Psychotherapy Society)
4. "A factor in the resolution was the lack of participation of

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Baylor residents the first years, whose added duties, due to the retrenchment period, made it difficult to attend outside activities. The Baylor group therapy program, therefore, was discontinued. In course of a very satisfactory, though turbulent, group process, the "young Turks" took over. It will be noted in the minutes of the following year, December, 1968, the leaders were: Clarence Miller and Marty Megdal, President and Secretary respectively. Clarence Miller, it is to be noted was a member of another group of participants from the Houston VA which for some years had included some very outstanding group dynamists." (Annotation, 1978)

5. "Concerns about the leadership and its ability to be responsive to the membership soon came into focus as a major obstacle to the membership's active involvement in the Society. It was believed that much confusion had arisen with the recent past from the interlacing of the Baylor Postgraduate Group Psychotherapy Program and the Houston Group Psychotherapy Society." (Minutes, December 13-14, 1968)
6. "David Mendell gave a history of the Baylor Postgraduate Group Psychotherapy Program and indicated that it was essentially nonfunctional at the present time. It was decided, therefore, to completely separate the two organizations. The Houston Group Psychotherapy Society would become an independent organization without any joint connection with the Baylor program." (Minutes, December 13,-14, 1968)

7. "David Mendell and Paul Ledbetter then expressed their observations that seemed to have a leveling effect on the organization's forward progress due to their vast experience and knowledge in Group Psychotherapy and group psychotherapy organizations. David Mendell questioned his direct involvement in the business of the Society and Paul Ledbetter suggested that both he and David withdraw from the business of the Society but retain their membership so as to be available if and when the Society could use them. The membership then voted to elevate both to the position of nonpaying honorary members of the Society and to place both in the special role of being used by the Society when it so determines." (Minutes, December 13-14, 1968)
8. The following decisions were made by the membership to guide the Society through the current year:
  - A. "The Society would be an autonomous organization, independent of any parent group, but would develop along the guidelines of the American Group Psychotherapy Association and the Southwestern Group Psychotherapy Society.
  - B. The Society would immediately begin making plans for obtaining a charter as a nonprofit organization from the State of Texas.
  - C. The Society would begin making plans for raising funds. A

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week-end institute, among other possibilities, would be seriously considered for the current year.

D. The Society will not seek additional new members this year but instead exert its energies to develop the current organization (current membership is approximately 20-25).

E. The Society would hold bi-monthly meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 8:00 P.M. beginning with the month of January, 1969. Bi-monthly meetings are to be continued until all the business of the Society is completed. The meeting place (is) to be announced as arrangements for the facilities are made. The first meeting of each month will be devoted to business and the second to the case presentations. The first meeting will be January 7, 1969.

F. Case presentations for the year are to be restricted to local talents and no outside speakers are to be invited. It was discovered that much talent existed within the Society which could be used. Several members offered to present case presentations." (A-F, Minutes, December 13-14, 1968)

"During the next 10 years, the Houston Group Therapy Association went through its own developmental process until in 1978, with Marian Yeager as President, a written constitution was put forth

and affiliation resumed with the major organization which by this time was international as well as national." (Annotation, \*1978)

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The following reflects the first recorded listing of those who have served as president of the Houston Group Psychotherapy Society since its formal creation in 1967. (The Editor assumes only limited responsibility for its accuracy as it was gathered from some informants who were not certain about the dates of their respective terms.)

1967	Pat Pearce, M.D.
1968	Clarence K. Miller, Ph.D.
1969	Juanita T. Hart, M.D.
1970	Mary Beth Holley, M.S.W.
1971-73	Clarence K. Miller, Ph.D.
1973-75	Jody Vick, M.S.W.
1975-77	H. Barry Molish, Ph.D.
1977-79	Marian B. Yeager, Ph.D.
1979-81	Gary Byrd, M.D.
1981-83	Robert L. Beck, M.A.
1983-85	Hannah Schlamowitz, M.S.W.
1985-87	Robert E. White, M.D.
1987-89	Elizabeth B. Knight, M.S.W.
1989-91	Carol Kelleher, Ph.D.

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**HIGHLIGHTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE  
HOUSTON GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY SOCIETY**

- 1958 An Institute with Alexander Wolf, M.D. is held at Baylor College of Medicine.
- 1967 The HGPS is established with Pat Pearce, M.D. as its first president.
- 1968 The first program is held with Max Sugar, M.D. as the featured speaker.
- 1969 January 7 - first monthly meeting of the HGPS
- 1971 September 17 - First workshop of the newly created Training Program is held at Texas Children's Hospital
- 1977 On February 10, the HGPS Training Program was formed.
- 1981 The AGPA Annual Institute and Meeting held in Houston at the Shamrock Hilton with co-sponsorship of HGPS.
- 1982 The Financial Advisory Committee is established.
- 1986 The Beverly Gross Scholarship Fund established. The first volume of the Houston Psychotherapy Society Journal is published.
- 1987 The Training Program completes its 10th year.
- 1988 The Twentieth Annual Institute held with Anne Alonso, Ph.D. as the featured speaker.

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**WORKING WITH RAGEFUL AND VIOLENT  
PATIENTS IN GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY**

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**ABSTRACT:** This article focuses on behavioral interventions used with rageful and violent patients to enable them to make satisfactory progress working in therapy groups. Clinical practice has shown that although these people have intense feelings of pain and grief that need to be dealt with, their overwhelming concern with anger prevents the expression of those feelings. The techniques presented in this article allow such patients to control the expression of their anger and promote an atmosphere in which psychological growth is encouraged. Discussed are the pretherapy phase, interventions to be used during therapy group sessions, and a technique for therapists to use when the patient is raging at the therapist.

In the past, most treatments dealing with anger have focused on encouraging clients to express this emotion through group or individual therapy in the belief that such "letting off steam" would promote the healthy expression of anger, rather than allowing the patient to explode in the presence of family, friends or fellow employees.

This article focuses on those patients for whom such treatment fails: the rageful or violent patient, whose entire life has focused on the expression of anger. For these patients, the continued discussion of, and focus on, the one feeling they know very well actually does great harm, enabling them to continue to escalate the intensity of their anger, blocking all contact with any other feelings they may have.

For the purpose of this article, rageful patients are those who have experienced problems with rage eruptions, leading to troubled relationships with spouses or lovers, those whose rage eruptions have affected their employment or friendships, as well as those whose problems with