

Identifying and Promoting Group Work Strategies in Actualizing the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development

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This workshop session will engage Symposium participants in looking at the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development's goals and objectives, and how group work strategies can support their accomplishment internationally.

We welcome colleagues to join this project! Groupworkers are invited to collect case study evidence in their area, and contribute to future circulation of this material and support group work advocacy efforts.



IASWG International Symposium, June 2015
Chapel Hill, North Carolina, United States



Introductions, Overview & Objectives

- Welcome to the Workshop
- Connection of Group Work and the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development
- Workshop Objectives:
 - Understand the *Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development Commitment to Action*, and its place in international social work.
 - Identify and assess the role of group work strategies across organizational levels in accomplishing organizational goals and objectives.
 - Expand the use of exemplary case studies in developing knowledge to promote group work practice internationally.



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The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development

- History, Signatories, Conceptualization and Progress
 - [Jones & Truell, 2012](#)
 - [International Association of Schools of Social Work](#)
 - [International Council on Social Welfare](#)
 - [International Federation of Social Workers](#)
- Commitment to Action to Achieve Four Objectives
 - Promoting social and economic equalities
 - Promoting the dignity and worth of peoples
 - Working towards environmental and community sustainability
 - Strengthening recognition of the importance of human relationships



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International Association for Social Work with Groups

- **IASWG Mission**

- The International Association for Social Work with Groups, Inc. (IASWG), is a not-for-profit organization of group workers, group work educators, and friends of group work who support its program of advocacy and action for professional practice, education, research, training and writing about social work with groups.
- Within this group work context, we believe in the value and importance of diversity to enrich and strengthen our work and its relevance in the broad social environment. We affirm that we aspire to provide equitable opportunities for participation for all members, and that all aspects of the organization will be characterized by respect for, inclusion, and representation of people across all aspects of social identity.
- Committed to social justice, IASWG gives particular attention to people systemically disadvantaged by the power differential inherent in oppressive social structures. As group workers we believe that our common ground unites us and our differences enrich us. The opportunities for collaborative learning online, at local chapter events, and at our annual international symposia make this association an invaluable resource to the global group work community.

- **IASWG Standards for Social Work Practice with Groups: Two Core Values**

- *Respect for persons and their autonomy:* In view of the equality of persons, people are to be treated with respect and dignity. In group deliberations no one person should be more privileged in a group than another, not a worker, a group member or the 3 agency director. In a group this occurs when a worker helps each member to appreciate the contributions of the other members so that everyone's ideas are heard and considered. This principle is stated while recognizing that the worker, by virtue of his or her position in the agency and his or her expertise, is likely to have a great deal of influence. This requires the worker to use his or her influence prudently. A major implication of this principle is a respect for and a high value placed on diversity in all of its dimensions such as culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental abilities and age.
- *The creation of a socially just society:* The group offers an opportunity to live and practice the democratic principles of equality and autonomy and the worker should use his/her knowledge and skills to further this. The worker should be mindful of the quest for a society that is just and democratically organized one that ensures that the basic human needs of all its members are met. This value is presented to the group whenever it is appropriate and reinforced when members articulate it.



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Methods for Connecting the Global Agenda with Group Work

- Establishing the Work Group
- Review of the Literature
- Multiple Case Study Approach
 - Organizing by Global Agenda Commitments
 - Identifying Four Exemplary Case Studies
 - Developing Interview Guide and Conducting Interviews
 - Analysis Within and Across Case Studies
- Working from the Local to the Global
 - Themes Emerging from these Exemplars
 - Dissemination, Outreach and Invitation to Join Work Group



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Exemplar One: Center for Family Life

Groupwork's Role in Promoting Social & Economic Equalities

- **Location:** Brooklyn, NY
- **Mission/Purpose:** To promote positive outcomes for children, adults and families in Sunset Park, Brooklyn through the provision of a comprehensive range of neighborhood-based family and social services. CFL works primarily with immigrant families providing family counseling, neighborhood-based foster care, cultural, educational and recreational programs at neighborhood public schools, adult and youth employment programs, and an emergency store front for food and advocacy.
- **Selection Criteria:** Center for Family Life is a tremendously successful grassroots organization that is dedicated to empowering immigrant families. Its Co-Director, Julie Stein Brockaway is a long-time member of IASWG and the entire organizational system is operated in a group work method approach.



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Exemplar One: Center for Family Life



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Exemplar One: Center for Family Life

- **Grassroots/Client/Service Delivery/Community level**
 - Almost all program participants are involved in groups as part of services.
 - Worker co-ops: Goal is to create living wage jobs in a safe environment and provide social supports and educational opportunities for members.
- **Middle Management/Supervisory/Staff level**
 - Programs are facilitated entirely by democratic processes.
 - All staff and supervisors participate in learning communities that focus on professional development through individual and group context.
- **Administrative/Board/Management Team Level**
 - All senior management and Board are dedicated to values of representation, integration and promotion of democratic group process through entire agency.
 - Use of “Senior Round Table” strategy to operationalize these values for the mutual benefit and involvement of all workers.



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Exemplar Two: Turning Point for Women & Families

Groupwork's Role in Promoting the Dignity and Worth of Peoples

- Location: Queens, New York
- Mission and Services: *Turning Point is a community based, non-profit organization addressing the needs of Muslim women and children through crisis intervention, individual and group counseling, advocacy, outreach, education and training. Responding to the wide gap between needs and services available to the Muslim community, Turning Point offers culturally competent services, especially in the area of domestic violence. In a safe and nurturing environment, Turning Point helps women empower themselves and transform their own lives as well as those of their families and children. In partnership with public, private and religious institutions, Turning Point also aims at mentoring a new generation of social workers trained to address the unique needs of the Muslim community.*
- Katy Papell: (an IASWG founding mother) became familiar with this organization in her community of Flushing, Queens. She strongly supported its mission, and became a friend of the organization and Executive Director, Robina Niaz. The agency is committed to team and group-based empowerment practice.



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Exemplar Two: Turning Point for Women & Families

- **Manhattan to Mecca Project for Young Women: Muslim Women Moving Mountains**



- **Turning Point for Women and Families at the Arise NY! 2014 Interfaith Summit**



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Exemplar Two: Turning Point for Women & Families

- **Grassroots/Client/Service Delivery/Community Level**
 - All program participants encouraged to attend ongoing groups
 - Groups provide sense of belonging and helps take away shame and stigma
 - Groups particularly powerful with survivors and marginalized women and girls
 - **Middle Management/Supervisory/Staff Level**
 - Participants become peer leaders, and active agency staff
 - Staff groups include informal, community building elements
 - **Administrative/Board/Management Team Level**
 - Teamwork is seen as essential on management level
 - Attention to developing relationships among board members
- “Organizational survival depends on groups and team work”



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Exemplar Three: North Shore Child and Family Services

Groupwork's Role in Working Towards Environmental and Community Sustainability

- Location: Roslyn Heights, NY, US
- Mission/Purpose: Dedicated to restoring and strengthening the emotional well-being of children and families.
- Selection Criteria: Director and IASWG member and Editor of Social Work with Groups, Andy Malekoff, wrote an article titled *Sandy and Sandy* focusing on the efforts of his organization about the impact of Superstorm Sandy and the secondary trauma of the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary on the community. North Shore Child and Family Services provides individual, group and family services. In preparation for possible hurricanes, and after Superstorm Sandy, groups were mobilized to support individuals, and families who were affected by the storm.



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Exemplar Three: North Shore Child and Family Services



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Exemplar Three: North Shore Child and Family Services

• Grassroots/Client/Service Delivery/Community Level

- Began as a grassroots effort by parents in Nassau County to provide services to people who were not being helped.
- The program is known for helping the community during times of crisis.
- Different community groups were created, families and children separately.
- Weeks after Superstorm Sandy, the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary school occurred, re-traumatizing the affected children.

• Middle Management/Supervisory/Staff Level

- Support groups, Storm Survivors, for staff were created after Superstorm Sandy because many of the providers were also impacted by the storm.
- Staff went to the shelters the day after the storm to help others.
- Staff had shared experiences as responders and survivors.

• Administrative/Board/Management Team Level

- Director created and participated in the Storm Survivor group.
- Board met to debrief after Superstorm Sandy.



Exemplar Four: New York City Administration for Children's Services

Groupwork's Role in Strengthening Recognition of the Importance of Human Relationships

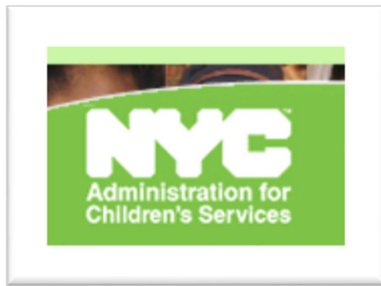
- **Location:** Serves NYC's 5 boroughs with multiple sites in all boroughs except Staten Island.
- **Mission:** The Administration for Children's Services protects and promotes the safety and well-being of New York City's children, young people, families, and communities by providing excellent child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and education services.
- **Selection Criteria:** On January 10, 1996, the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) was created as the first NYC government agency devoted solely to serving children and their families. Within this context, the agency has become increasingly committed to the well-being of children, the family and the workforce. Within this well-being framework, a recognition of the need for supportive relationships is critical for the growth and development of all the cohorts listed above. Group-team work has increased as the agency focuses on outcomes, professional development and collective problem solving.



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Exemplar Four: New York City Administration for Children's Services



Cómo Reconocer y Denunciar el Maltrato y la Negligencia Infantil

Las preguntas más frecuentes que hacen los amigos, vecinos y familiares



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Exemplar Four: New York City Administration for Children's Services

- **Grassroots/client/service delivery/community level**

- Group work on the client level is evolving. Groups are frequently mandated given the nature of the agency.
- Group work promotes mutual aide, and contains an empowerment component, as clients involved with the public child welfare system are often faced with structural forces which impact individual functioning.

- **Middle management/supervisory/staff level**

- Group work focuses on the professional development of staff creating communities of practice, and supporting transfer of learning.
- Group work approach in staff supervision creates a space for collective problem solving- the *teaming* approach to child welfare practice.

Administrative/board/management team level

- Executive team- formalized team work promotes increased communication across multiple divisions, with an emphasis on outcomes. Group work lessens silo work.
- Informal team work “brown bag lunches” with executive staff, mid level staff, and frontline staff promotes a caring organization.



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Discussion of Exemplars and Participants' Experiences

- Themes Appearing Across Exemplary Case Studies
- Reflections on Opportunities for Groups and Teams Across Levels of Participants' Organizations
- Supports for Team Approaches Across Levels in Participants' Organizations
- Barriers at Various Organizational Levels to Group Approaches at Participants' Organizations
- Potential Exemplars in Participants' Communities
- Utility of Multiple Case Study Approach in this Inquiry



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Take-Aways and Next Steps

- Looking at One's Own and Other Organizations to Promote the Global Agenda through Group Work
- Interests in Joining This Project Through Collecting Case Studies
- Interests in Participating in Analysis, Dissemination and Advocacy for Group Work Internationally



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Thank You

We look forward to continuing this conversation!

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