

Proposal for course on groups and group process

Intro:

Although work in our offices is most often done with an individual patient, our work within the San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis is done in—and by—groups. Each group is devoted to tasks important to fostering the ongoing work of educating future analysts and therapists and continuing the education and development of past and future graduates. The management of these important groups is in turn conducted by other groups, such as the Management Team and the Board. We are in what seems like a paradoxical position: we foster work devoted to individual development and the treatment of individual psychic pain, yet manage that enterprise entirely with the use of groups. Of course this is not unique to our organization. For-profit and non-profit businesses serve society by selling products or providing services to individuals while they themselves are organized into groups to achieve their purpose. Yet despite this reality, we at the Center have paid relatively little attention to the emotional life of groups and the way that it either supports our work or undermines it.

The importance of groups has certainly been of interest to analysts from the very beginning of our history. It has also been a focus for many others, even before it entered our field. A few names illustrate this: Max Weber studied organizations and classified them as ‘charismatic’, ‘traditional’ and ‘rational-legal.’ Kurt Lewin introduced the idea of “Gestalt” psychology and the notion of the field and the psychological forces at work in the group. These ideas continue to influence both psychoanalysis and the study of group processes. Freud addressed groups in Totem and Taboo in 1912 and Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego in 1922 . In the latter work he explored his thoughts about the role and effect of major institutions in society. More recently Bion began thinking and writing about groups. His work has subsequently been carried forward by men and women associated with the Tavistock clinic. There have been many other analysts and non-analysts who have continued to explore the behavioral and psychological nature of groups in order to understand what makes them effective, rather than ineffective or even harmful to the goals of an organization and its members. Despite this history of psychoanalytic interest in groups, and despite the active interest in groups and organizations on the part of many of our colleagues, the study of groups has not been a focus in our Center.

Intention of this Course:

Groups have always been of interest to me. I came from a large extended family. My first very compelling group! My psychiatric residency was at the Menninger Hospital during their years in Topeka Kansas. The entire inpatient and out patient treatment program was conducted in groups. I was a member of the group psychotherapy faculty and was in group psychotherapy myself for several years. There was an organizational consulting component at the Clinic and we were exposed to their work via lectures and consultations. Subsequent experience in various organizations in which I have worked including psychoanalytic organizations have only intensified my interest in the capacity of groups to shape the behavior of their members for both good and ill. I believe strongly that we must fully understand the power of groups and the source of the power as it resides in the group and in each of us. It was for these reasons that when Robin Deutsch then president of the Center, asked me to create a task force to propose a way that groups could be more formally a part of the Center, that I was happy to say yes. There had already been many people doing process/educational groups at the center. Elizabeth Simpson had begun Working Together Groups (WTR) for some few years. Eileen Keller, Zoe Grusky, Jack Giuliani, Debbie Vuong, Susmita Shah (and more) had been active participant in group process activities and facilitating groups with candidates. I can't here name all those who have been working in and promoting the study of groups at the Institute and now the Center.* These activities though lacked a home and a mission to study in depth the nature of groups in general and in particular groups in organizations such as ours. This elective I hope will encourage interest in groups and group process to continue to grow at the Center.

We will spend some time initially familiarizing ourselves with an understanding of groups from a psychoanalytic perspective. I plan on choosing readings such as those by Wilfred Bion, M.J. Rioch, Isabel Menzies Lys, Kenneth Eisold and Vamik D. Volkan and others that will provide concepts that will enable us to better understand groups in psychoanalytic institutes and the dynamics of much larger social and political groups.

WEEK 1 and 2: Basic Concepts

articles: 1. **To be read for the seminar**

Class Week 1

Bion, W.R. (1952). Group Dynamics: A Re-View. Int. J. Psycho-Anal., 33:235-247.

Rioch, Margaret J.(1970) The Work of Wilfred Bion on Groups from Psychiatry, Vol. 33, Pages 56-66

Class Week 2

Selection from Tavistock primer pages 1-4.

Rioch, Margaret J. “All We Like Sheep—“ (Isaiah 52:6): Followers and Leaders. Psychiatry, Vol.34, August 1971.

2. Suggested Reading

Earl Hopper(The Theory of the Basic Assumption of Incohesion Aggregation/Massification or (BA) I:A/M)

Book Review: The complete works of W.R. Bion edited by Chris Mawson; consultant editor, Francesca Bion Karnac, London, 2014; 16 vols, 4,352 pp. £675

Bion and Foulkes at Northfield: The Early Development of Group Psychotherapy in Britain by Brian Nichol

Elinor Ostrom and James Walker, editors: Trust and Reciprocity: Lessons from Experimental Research. Chapt 6, “The Transformation of a Skeptic”: Russel/ Sage Foundation 112 East 64th Street, New York, New York 10021

Having briefly studied together some of these concepts then we can see how they apply to literature on the problems our analytic Institutes have dealing with group issues including the problems our organizations have in dealing with diversity.

Week 3-4: Group Dynamics in Psychoanalytic Organizations

1. To be read for the seminar

Class Week 3

Eisold, Kenneth. (1994). The intolerance of diversity in psychoanalytic institutes. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 75, 785-800.

Menzies Lyth; Containing Anxiety in Institutions Pp.43-85.

Hinshelwood, Bob. Bio Margaret J. Rioch (2010)BRITISH JOURNAL OF PSYCHOTHERAPY(26/2)

Class Week 4

Jacques, Elliott. (1955). Social systems as a defense against persecutory and depressive anxiety. *New Directions in Psychoanalysis*. (pp. 478-497). New York: Basic Books.

Rustin, M. (1985). The Social Organization of Secrets: Towards a Sociology of Psychoanalysis. *Int. R. Psycho-Anal.*, 12:143-159.

2. Suggested Reading:

Skolnick, Marvin R., Green, Zachary G. In *Group Relations Reader*, 3rd edition. Pages 117-130.

This part of the course introduces the study literature on large groups that allows us to use the concepts we have discussed as well as some new ones toward understanding the behavior of large groups. This will take us into the realm of societal issues that often result in polarization and attacks on other more vulnerable social groups by the hegemonic large societal groups.

WEEK 5-6: Large Group Dynamics

1. To be read for the seminar

Class Week 5

Goggin, J.E. Goggin, E.B.(2001). Politics, Ideology, And The Psychoanalytic Movement Before, During, And After The Third Reich. *Psychoanal. Rev.*, 88(2):155-193.

Erlich, H. Shumel. In The Systems Psychodynamics of Organizations. Laurence J.Gould Ed. Chapter 5 'Enemies Within and Without: Paranoia and Regression in Groups and Organizations.', Pp.116-131.

Class Week 6

Vadik D Volcan(2008). Large-Group Identity, International Relations and Psychoanalysis. *Int. Forum Psychoanal.*, 18(4):206-213.

Poggi, Ray(2017) 'Precarious Identity', paper presented in Chicago at APA.

2. Suggested Reading

Alford, C. F.(1990) Reparation and Civilization: A Kleinian Account of Large Groups.Free Associations, 11:7-30.

Putnam, Robert D.(1993). Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy. Chapter 6: Social Capital and Institutional Success. Pp: 164-185. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

selections from :Freud, S. (1930). Civilization and its Discontents. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XXI (1927-1931): The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and its Discontents, and Other Works, 57-146

(1918). Totem and Taboo. By Professor Dr. Sigmund Freud. Translated By A. A. Brill. New York, Moffat, Yard Co., 1918. Pp. 265.

I expect this will be an exciting course of study. I am very much looking forward to discussing groups and group process with you.

*Current members of the Committee on Groups: Elizabeth Simpson, Jack Giuliani, Susmita Shah, Debbie Vuong, Debora Fletcher, Forrest Hamer, Fred Huang, Beth Steinberg, Ray Poggi