

**LETTERS OF APPRECIATION RECEIVED FROM
RECIPIENTS OF SCHOLARSHIPS TO ATTEND
THE 2011 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
AMERICAN GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION**

My experience at AGPA, fantastic! In a way it is indescribable, so powerful, so growthful, it is hard to compare to other experiences. Since this was my second year I thought I knew more of what to expect, but maybe I should have guessed because AGPA defies expectations. This year I attended the workshop Dancing With the Unconscious, the first non-verbal based conference presentation I have ever been to. It proved to be a learning experience I could have never predicted. Throughout the conference I continued to meet unique individuals from all over the world with various perspectives and ideas different than my own, pushing me to think and feel in ways unforeseen. Although this was my second AGPA Institute as well, the experience of the institute is always surprising in its personal insights and awareness into my own unconscious. The price of the conference is quantifiable, yet my time at AGPA could not be so well defined. I believe the value is beyond the dollars and cents that we typically associate with the conference. So I need to say as big a thank you as imaginable to the scholarship committee for affording me the opportunity to become a better researcher, clinician, and person by attending the AGPA conference. Your generosity does not go unnoticed or unappreciated. Because of this scholarship I will look back upon my youth as an old man grateful to AGPA making me the person I wanted to become.

Thank you for the gift of AGPA and thank you for sharing your conference with me.

As a psychiatry resident, everything I do is something that I am learning, not something I know. In particular, though, group-based psychotherapy is something that I want to become better practiced at as I make it a part of my career. Before this year's AGPA conference, my group psychotherapy experience was entirely cognitive based. I liked the format, but found myself drawn to more psychodynamic kinds of work. For that reason, I applied to the GPF for a scholarship to attend AGPA's annual conference, this year entitled "Group as a Source of Resilience and Change" to expand my knowledge and experience. I was awarded a Wilkenfeld scholarship, which enabled me to attend for five days, including the Institute and conference.

On my first day of the Institute, I walked into a mixed-experience process group being led by Bernie Frankel. I'd liken it to jumping it into the deep end of a pool. But I'll tell you, after that process group, I think that's the only way to swim: going straight in. The other members saw my badge—the "New Member" and "First Time Attendee"—and acknowledged it, and me, but didn't coddle me. I was a member of the group as they were. Perhaps you can share this feeling of not having the words; simply, the group gave me what I needed. To be honest, it's a gift I'm still working with and benefitting from.

Similarly, I think I'm still working with what I learned from the conference. I attended sessions that had both didactic and group portions. The didactic work is critical to someone in my position—I'll be leading my first psychodynamic group in four months. I learned how to establish trust and safety, facilitate emotional expression, deal with aggression and sexuality, and work on different levels with different needs. I also learned a lot about trauma, something that has been one of my longstanding personal interests. The group work was just as critical. I saw how a group does its work. I learned the kinds of things that concern me in group—like aggression—and, then I learned how those same kinds of things can be therapeutic.

Today, seeing psychotherapy patients, I absolutely feel that I am a better therapist. I also have a better window on the therapist I want to be.

Again, please accept my utmost gratitude for the scholarship and for accepting me into AGPA membership. It has made a substantial difference in both my professional and personal lives.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you for another wonderful AGPA meeting. This was my second year in attendance, so I was looking forward to attending all year long. It fully met my expectations. I got a chance to meet up with colleagues that I had met last year and whom I had kept in contact with throughout the year. These colleagues have become essential resources and supports for me. This year I attended the mix experience process group and I learned so much from observing and being a part of a wide variety of professionals. Then, I got to attend three psychodrama workshop, mindfulness workshop, and others that I enjoyed immensely! I do not get this type of opportunity in Idaho and the classes inspired me to bring this type of work to Idaho. The facilitators were very knowledgeable and cultivated a strong learning environment. There was never a dull moment and my passion for group therapy was further provoked. This annual meeting is a highlight of my year. Thanks again for the opportunity to attend. See you next year!

As a third year resident in psychiatry, attending the 2011 American Group Psychotherapy Association was an eye-opening experience. I was compelled to better understand and utilize the many techniques I learned in the group sessions. I was impressed by the knowledge of the experts who were invited to lead the groups. I also learned from the many international attendees and how therapy was similar to and different from therapy in the United States. If I could offer one suggestion for the next conference, there should be a clear distinction between sessions where there would be purely lectures versus participatory workshops. I am very grateful to the Ruth Hochberg Scholarship as well as the Group Psychotherapy Foundation for making my attendance possible.

As one of the scholarship recipients and a new member, I experienced the AGPA for the first time this year. What an amazing time this was for me. I consider the 2 day institute that I attended to be a life-changing experience for myself personally and professionally. As a psychiatrist still in residency training, I am relatively new to group therapy and this was an unparalleled way to get intensive, "hands on" if you will, experience with group dynamics and techniques. I was amazed with the extent of offerings at the conference, though I primarily took part in the 2 day institute, and then joined into several of the open sessions that were offered, including the larg group. It was so helpful to have those options, to be able to participate in things in a flexible way, according to my own stamina, as some of the experiences were incredibly intense.

I appreciated the openness of the people I encountered at the AGPA and have the email/phone numbers for several of the people I got to know. I truly look forward to meeting up with them again in future years, and think of this as the beginning of a "beautiful friendship" both with the AGPA, and with individuals I had the privilege of getting to know for a brief time.

Thank you again, for the opportunity to attend AGPA at a reduced fee, as this is definitely not an inexpensive conference, but worth every penny. As I transition from training into practice, I hope to be able to continue to take advantage of this great conference, and I am so grateful that I was given a scholarship to help me get there this year for the first time.

Thank you so much for providing me with a scholarship to attend the conference this year. As a recent graduate from a PsyD program in my pre-licensure years, I am making very little income. I would not have been able to afford the conference this year without assistance, even though I live in NYC. The scholarship allowed me to attend for the fifth year. I have been finding that my appreciation of the quality of the conference grows as I am moving into my adolescence as a clinician. Since last year's conference, I was actively involved in running at the counseling center at UCLA until my internship ended. Now I supervise social skills and parent support groups at the Tourette Syndrome Program at Rutgers University. As I begin to build a private practice in Manhattan, I do not have the enough patients (or space in my small office) for group work. However I look forward to making it a big part of my clinical practice in the future.

At AGPA this year, I sought clinical and personal growth in the 2-day institute. I felt that I grew in both areas. I sought and achieved close connection to my fellow members, as I simultaneously learned about the skillful execution of the process group experience. I observed the group leader use consistent warmth and curiosity as a way to encourage members to closely look at their interpersonal struggles. Professionally, I will bring these skills back into my life as a group leader. Personally, I was surprised about some of the realizations I made about my need for distance to feel safe.

The conference following the group continued along the trajectory of profound intellectual experiences with a healthy dose of intense emotional ones as well. While I enjoyed all of my choices this year, I found particular value from three amazing workshops. First, there was a workshop on building a private practice through networking and marketing. Highly relevant as I just began this journey. The content and the useful resources provided in this workshop have since changed my day-to-day actions and decision making toward building a practice. Next was Zipora Shechtmen's workshop on children and adolescent groups. I wish I had known about her techniques in getting children to talk about emotion and interpersonal connection years ago. I was so inspired that I bought her book. Then, there was Dr. Cox's ambitious panel on mirror neurons, mindfulness, and a particularly unique approach to group therapy. I learned an incredible amount about how to use neurological thinking to facilitate group. While some of the techniques appeared odd at first, I am excited to utilize many of the approaches in how to structure group in a way that blatantly encourages members to join one and other. As a

recent student of Lacanian theory, I was thrilled to again see Macario as the leader of the large group. I find the large group to be an increasingly meaningful experience, despite its tendency toward seeming chaos. With all the information I was absorbing, I found myself exhausted at the end of each day, but it was a satisfied sense of exhaustion.

So in conclusion, I am a huge fan of group and a huge fan of AGPA. The world that is created at the conference is a world of hope and of possibilities. By attending, I feel the call to bring pieces of that world of openness and closeness into my clinical, educational and personal life. I have a deep felt appreciation that I received a scholarship and will be looking forward to round six, once again in New York City.

I can not say enough good about my experience. My two day intensive with Elaine Cooper PHD and my one day workshop with *Yvonne M. Agazarian*, EdD stood out as exceptional. Additionally, I met brilliant people from all over the country. Networking and carousing with the many members of the Northern California Group Psychotherapy Society NCGPS provided great enjoyment and understanding of the work and time many NCGPS members have given for the benefit of group psychotherapy outreach and practice.

Not every moment was easy and not every moment was exceptional. Group psychotherapy is about group work - it provides social learning which generally can't be learned in one to one psychotherapy. It is supposed to challenge!

Overall the experience was life changing and left me with a great deal of juice to take home to my practice. I am grateful and humbled by the generosity of AGPA members and the hard work of all AGPA staff involved.

Thank you very much for affording me the opportunity to take part in this year's AGPA conference! This was an invaluable educational experience that held many surprises for me. I came expecting to strengthen my clinical skills as it applies to group psychotherapy, which I did; however, I did not expect that I would learn more about myself and how I interact with others. The institute was particularly helpful in this regard. During the institute, I was able to become more aware of my own experience in the group process. More specifically, I found that my internal process, contrary to my preconceptions, had profound implications on the group dynamic and vice versa. Of course my educational experience did not end with the institute. I attended groups that tended to focus on child and group psychotherapy. As I am considering a career in child Psychiatry, these groups were instrumental in providing guidance as to how I may apply group psychotherapy to my future practice.

I would be remiss if I did not mention another great benefit of the AGPA conference; the new relationships formed during the conference. I encountered a very diverse group of clinicians and students who helped me to expand my perceptions of group psychotherapy. As we continued to challenge each other and grow as clinicians, I was further able to discover that these were not simply excellent clinicians, but they were great people as well. Though I thought I was simply attending a conference with my colleagues, it turns out that I actually attended a conference with many of my friends. Again, this was a fantastic experience and one I hope to repeat next year!

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Group Psychotherapy Foundation and AGPA for paving the way for me to attend the 2011 Conference in New York City. This year I was the elated recipient of the Susan Jensen Scholarship. I felt honored to have been selected for this scholarship and profoundly humbled to meet Dr. Jensen in person. The generosity of this organization and the dedication to train, support and empower professionals in the field of group psychotherapy is unparalleled.

This year's experience was an incredible one for me. As a second time attendee, it was nice to see colleagues and friends I had met the year before; to catch up on how much we had grown, what we were up to from the year before; and to even participate in the same workshops and process groups. I had the privilege to attend several workshops this year that were simply superb! I particularly enjoyed the workshop with Dr. Michael Adler. His wonderful blend of didactic and experiential learning left me "wanting for more." His approach is practical yet so profoundly relevant to the patients/clients I encounter. The institutes with Drs. Billow and Frankel ("Bernie" as he is affectionately called), were transformative experiences for me. I left each session in awe; challenged; reflective; and eager to delve more into their style of group work, as well as my own growth experience. It was equally nice to attend the Women's SIG and meet so many powerful women who are out to make a difference in their communities and who are a stand for the success of other women around them. It was invigorating.

An equally treasured moment for me was meeting Dr. Suzanne Phillips in person. We had been communicating for an entire year since the Haiti earthquake via telephone and email, but never in person. It was a refreshing experience. There is something so inexplicable about AGPA that makes me feel so professionally at home. I always leave feeling inspired, motivated and eager to take action and implement what I have learned from the masters of group therapy and from casual conversations from experts in the field. AGPA truly provides a wealth and breadth of professional and personal experiences and opportunities that I have not found anywhere else. It is a dynamic group indeed.

Speaking of dynamic, I also want to acknowledge the hard work of all those who work behind the scenes to make this conference possible, especially Diane Fierman, Angela and Marsha Block. I've had the pleasure to meet these women in person. I always walk away from the experience feeling as though they've known me for years! The sincere warmth, enthusiasm and dedication they exude is so profoundly moving. You are phenomenal women for sure! Thank you for your stand for excellence, dedication, efficiency and compassion! I admire your tireless efforts year in and year out. Thank you for making a difference and thank you for giving me an opportunity to do the same in the lives of those I serve. I look forward to being and remaining an active member/leader in this organization.

Thank you for granting me a scholarship and giving me the opportunity to attend this year's annual meeting of the American Group Psychotherapy Association. The experience ranked as one of the most meaningful and intense learning experiences I have had in my training. I attended the special institute and institute portions of the conference.

I first attended Judith Coche's special institute on couple group psychotherapy and, unfortunately, found this to be largely disappointing. In the afternoon, I switched workshops, instead attending Rich Billow's institute and found this to be a more valuable learning experience. While I was genuinely interested in the topic of Dr. Coche's special institute, I found that the seminar offered little in the way of understanding the work of couple group therapy, the theory behind the model, or the clinical techniques involved. I heard a lot about how great the Coche Center is, but little about the actual work that is done there. While I found Dr. Billow's seminar to be of greater use, I missed what was presented in the morning, but benefitted from observing the *in vivo* group work and Dr. Billow's discussion of the rationale behind his approach and technique.

On my second and third days at the conference, I participated in the experiential institute led by Elaine Cooper. This was, by far, the highlight of my AGPA experience. I was unsure of what to expect and heard that this was sure to be an "intense" experience. The experience was amazing and sparked both clinical and personal insight. The opportunity to be a member of a process group while also being able to take pause between processing to integrate group theory with what was happening in the room was quite valuable. I was fascinated by the pace with which the group worked and the sense of safety that was established in the first half of the first day. Our facilitator, Elaine, was ever present and felt fully connected to what was happening at each moment. Observing and experiencing her in the group caused me to think about how I run groups and wonder how group members experience my presence. Elaine discussed the group roles that can emerge in the group and I was amazed to see how these roles became solidified over the course of the two days. Elaine was gentle, non-defensive, and mindful; I am so glad I found myself in her group.

Aside from clinical insights gained, the institute provided an intense connective experience that I find difficult to adequately describe in words. A few days before attending the AGPA conference, I learned that I was pregnant. I debated whether or not to share this with my group and decided to disclose the information as this was undeniably part of my experience and of what I would bring to the group. Once sharing this information, my experience of being pregnant no longer stayed with me but was with the group. I was amazed at how my experience affected others to reflect on their feelings about motherhood, their relationships with their mothers, and their wish to be mothered. I feared that my sharing my news would leave me feeling as if I had shared too much or that the group would respond by focusing too much of their attention on me; to my pleasant surprise, my experience was now part of the group experience and could be shared by all.

Entering the group, I set a goal for myself to connect to others more through presence and to rely less on self-disclosure to build connections. In past group experiences, I have tended to attempt to connect to others through sharing more information about myself and have sometimes regretted sharing too much and feeling as if I had lost myself in the process of disclosure. I was amazed to see how connected I could feel to others in the room through simple presence. While I refrained from sharing details of my personal history, I fully opened my being to my fellow group members and felt their mutual presence. This bond was stronger with a few members in particular. I found myself moved to tears by the sheer beauty of human connection and shared experience.

In closing, thank you for this memorable and valuable experience. I am most grateful to have had this clinical and personal learning opportunity. I look forward to attending the 2012 AGPA annual meeting.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the scholarship committee for the thoughtfulness and generosity behind my scholarship award for the 2011 conference. I enjoyed this conference even more than the 2010 conference as I have now developed some enduring relationships with other presenters and participants which were deeply enriched by our time together in New York.

For example, I witnessed some of the work and supervision provided by Dr. Billow in an experiential group during the 2010 conference. As such, I was delighted that he was presenting a Special Institute this year. His focus on the three R's of group from a didactic perspective offered me a new lens through which to view groups and while I did not participate in the experiential portions as an audience member I gained a new awareness and appreciation for his style and vantage. I knew, going into this year's program, that I was looking forward most to the 2-day institute. My leader this year, Trish Cleary, displayed tremendous compassion and intelligence in her interventions in my group while being quite patient as the process unfolded. I felt gently held in my exploration and safe in naming both my process and my perceptions of the group process. Ms. Cleary had a tremendous task, arriving in a room that was drafty and from the onset we faced threats to safety that Ms. Cleary handled with extreme competence. Following the group, several members were so pleased that we decided to try to reform our group around Trish again next year!

I found the plenary talk on neurobiology and sexual dimorphism fascinating and left intrigued particularly by the evidence presented around brain structure and functional differences between men and women. What a way to start the day! As for my relationships with the Colorado Society members and participants from around the country my circle both widened and deepened. My acquaintances from last year are now my friends. And the friends I already had are even dearer to me than before. I am now committed to being a participant at the state level (COGPS) and am looking forward to a highly productive year helping to organize meetings and events for the Colorado society and hopefully in a few years gaining enough support and momentum such that we can actually host a national conference!

Finally, and most importantly, I think that the relevance to my work and the ramifications of this conference bear note. Upon returning to Boulder, I helped co-facilitate a workshop for families and participants of a transitional program I work for. My clinical director had a sizable role in both the Thursday and Friday parts of this program and came down with the flu on Thursday night. My team was unprepared for this turn of events. However, Friday morning we got together and I suggested that we implement mixed process groups (young adults and their parents). My team decided to follow my lead even though this type of experiential had never been offered. It went phenomenally well and I felt I held my seat with skill, intelligence and emotional balance facilitating my first mixed age Modern analytic group ever for this company. I felt competent and keenly aware of the process and utilized a number of intervention strategies that I had seen in groups only days before at AGPA. What a thrill!

This year I left the conference feeling more skillful, nourished, and more deeply involved in both my work and my relationships with the other AGPA members. Thank you again for making this possible and I look forward eagerly to next year!

While I had been told by a classmate that the AGPA conference was a wonderful and exceptional experience, nothing could have prepared me for how stimulating, delightful, and exciting the week ahead of me would prove to be. I was fortunate to speak with some people before the conference who guided me through the process of signing up for workshops and pacing myself through the week, which was very helpful.

When choosing workshops for the conference, I focused on psychoanalytic groups (particularly modern analytic). The best learning experience throughout the week was the institute that I attended, "Shaken, Rattled, and Rolled," with Janice Morris. She distributed readings on our first day, and I found these to be closely in line with concepts in my graduate studies. We had an opportunity to engage in the process of group work with each other and to then reflect on that process and ask questions about what we had experienced.

I came to the conference knowing few people whom I hardly saw, and I left knowing many people, one with whom I have ongoing contact. While I did feel lost, at times, with so many activities happening around me, attendees were very helpful in orienting me.

After the week had ended, I returned to my school and immediately began telling people about AGPA and presenting this as a future opportunity for students during our school-wide student meeting. I plan to continue encouraging our students here to attend the conference. My favorite thing about AGPA is that there seems to be a place for a variety of practitioners from cognitive behavioral to psychoanalytic. I left the conference feeling very alive and passionate for this field— one of the faculty members had warned me that this happens to people. I plan to return next year, and hopefully will have a cohort from Boston coming along as well. Thank you for the opportunity to attend and for welcoming my comments following the conference.

The conference was an extremely beneficial experience for me as a new professional and student. I was overwhelmed with the choices and opportunities to attend lectures, workshops and learning in general. I was so excited to be able to attend lectures from Dr. Legato and Dr. Larchman this was an incredible opportunity. Additionally I was able to attend a Bion Workshop, a Systems Theory Workshop, Metaphor and Writing Workshop and a Workshop by Coche, just to name a few of the opportunities. The conference was well planned and the organizers have seemed to thoughtfully planned for every need of the those attending the conference.

Although the location was a distance for me to travel (I from Utah) having the benefit of receiving a scholarship made it possible for me attend. The generosity of AGPA to offer scholarships to more than one attendee is another unique aspect of AGPA. I was happy that I was able to attend special interest groups. Specifically the racial and ethnic special interest group. I am deeply interested in Multicultural topics and I was excited that AGPA offered a space to have the topic addressed. Additionally, I attended the New Members Breakfast and was able to have a number of my questions answered. Furthermore, so many members were extremely helpful and when I needed assistance having the central room for scheduling changes and overall visiting was a great hub to build connection. I visited the new member table a number of times throughout the six days at the conference.

I hope to attend the AGPA conference next year and in many years to come.

Thank you for all the hard work and organization efforts that are made to make the conference such a beneficial experience.

I would like to summarize my experience at the meeting this year in New York, 2011. I unfortunately do not have the program descriptions with me so I do not remember the formal names of the workshops, however I can give a description of things that I found to be particularly memorable.

This is the second year I have attended the meeting, and I feel that I was able to learn a lot more this year than I did my first year. Part of the reason for this, is because I believe that the institute which I attended this year, whose theme was about Jung, was an extremely powerful experience. I dont know if this is because the group leader was really good, or if it was the particular blend of group members, but I felt that I really learned a lot about Jung, about the power of group dynamics, about my fellow group members, and as a result, more about myself. I think it really contributed towards my personal and professional development being able to have that experience, and the group leader was also a good model for a particular style of leading.

I also enjoyed the interpretation of dreams workshop, as well as the hunger and intimacy workshop. I found these group leaders to also be very knowledgeable in their respective subject matters. I did think that the dream workshop may have been too large. I think part of what makes these experiences so meaningful is that instead of sitting in a "lecture" we are able to participate and enact our own experiences either through group participation, or by watching demo process groups, or doing the excercises that the group leaders set up. Again, I found that the eye contact excercise that we did in the hunger/intimacy workshop was a really interesting way of mimicking people's relational styles, and although many of the concepts are not necessarily totally new, its different to learn about them in this type of context instead of just reading about it in a textbook or hearing it in a lecture.

The other two workshops which I feel had a profound impact on me were the father/daughters group, and the large group. I think the father/daughters group may be better as a day long workshop, as having the psychodrama aspect as well as process group was something that I think could have been better served with more time. I was unable to attend all of the large group sessions, and found the experience to be very confusing and disorienting. In some ways, it seemed like an interesting metaphor for what it feels like to live in NY city. On the one hand, it seemed like there was a lot of noise, and people coming and going, and there was a sense of wanting to try to participate and connect by wanting to respond to other people, however at the same time, because the group was so large, of wanting to define yourself as an individual and NOT lose your identity, and being somewhat overwhelmed. I do wish I had been able to attend more sessions because I think it just felt confusing. It was also explained to me that it could be seen as many different drives within the human psyche, all fighting to assert themselves against a larger force, which I also really enjoyed thinking about. I, unfortunately, due to an administrative error, was unable to attend the conference one day because I got called in to work, as I work and live in NYC, so there were some seminars that I had wanted to attend which I did not get a chance to attend.

Overall, I really enjoyed the group conference immensely, and like I said before, I feel that I learned a lot this year, and that this will contribute to both my personal and professional development. I often want to refer my own patients to group

therapy, and as the realm of the psychiatrist is often confined to medication management, it is really great to be able to participate in something that is more interactive, creative, dynamic, and relational. Both years, I have very strongly encouraged my friends to also try to attend the conference so that they can have these experiences as well. I think I probably connected the most to the people who were in my Institute. It was nice to be able to hear the input and issues of fellow professionals. I think that one of the things that may have contributed towards me being able to get more out of the second conference experience is that I was less scared to participate. I really appreciate that these opportunities were awarded to me, and I hope to be able to continue to participate in upcoming years.

The only other suggestion I have is that in my day to day clinical experience, I know very little about where to refer people if I would like to refer them to group therapy. If there was more of a central referral source so that you would know what was available in your area, that would be great. Thank you.

I am writing to inform you of my experience when I attended the annual AGPA meeting in New York. First, however, I would like to thank you for your generosity in providing me with a scholarship and helping me to attend the annual conference. For two years now, the AGPA meeting has been the highlight of my year. When I attended the meeting last year in San Diego, I was a second year graduate student; attending the meeting helped to boost my confidence as a group psychotherapist and prepared me for my internship. This year, after working with combat veterans with PTSD in group for almost 9 months as a part of my third-year internship, attending the AGPA conference helped me to hone my skills and prepare me for my career after graduation.

As before, my favorite experience this year was in the two-day institute, led this year by Francis Kaklauskas. Not only was this a chance to take a look at myself as a group member, but it also helped me learn from a group leader with years of experience. I have taken many of the interventions and observations that Francis made over the two days and used them in my own groups at my internship. I also realized that a part of becoming an effective group leader is developing my own style without having to always do what someone else would do in the same situation. Overall, it was a wonderful two days, and my favorite part of the conference.

On Thursday, I attended the all-day workshop on Couples Therapy led by Eleanor Counselman and Joseph Shay. I have a number of couples in my internship caseload, and I also started a group for military couples (the first time a group like this has been done at my internship site) in January of this year. In this workshop I got a wonderful refresher on attachment theory, and then learned about some of the complications when working with couples. This knowledge helped me in my internship, and the tools I gained will continue to benefit me as I work with couples in my private practice.

Friday I attended a session about selling reluctant clients on group, and in that session I got a lot of practical tips for starting a practice and setting up my group contracts. I also attended the large group session during lunch, which was very stimulating and provocative. I attended the large group last year as well, and I feel that it helps me to tap into the pulse of the association and the world. Finally, I went to a short session on easing barriers in group, and in this session I received some support around a difficult situation that I was dealing with at my internship site. All in all, it was a very productive and helpful day.

In the final group day, I attended the most rewarding session of the final three days – the Difficult Group Moment with Gregory MacColl. Greg was an engaging and dynamic group leader, and simply being in his presence seemed to help my personal growth. This workshop was led like a process group, and I left there wishing that it could have gone on longer, or perhaps that it could have been an institute group. I was inspired and motivated to become a better group leader.

Aside from the business of the conference, I also enjoyed being in New York, dancing with my colleagues, and making connections with other group leaders. I left the conference energized and re-charged, and I believe that my experience at the AGPA conference will help me to finish the final stretch of my Master's Degree and internship. I plan on making this conference an annual part of my practice, and look forward to attending for years to come.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to attend, and I look forward to connecting with you all in the future.

The AGPA 2011 annual meeting was a life-changing experience for me and I feel very grateful that I was able to get a scholarship to help defract the cost of attending. I plan on attending again and again, as well as attending regional conferences when I can. I've never experienced so much experiential learning in my lifetime and found it incredibly refreshing compared to the more didactic ways of learning in other conferences. The Instiute taught me more about group process than all of my classes, t groups, and group supervision has. I immediately took back what I learned from that experience into my group. Hank Fallon was a tremendous group leader to learn from and I can only hope to run groups as effectively as him some day. I was fortunate enough to be there with a subgroup, the Red Well Theater group, who I've made deep, lasting connections with. Most of the other connections I made with people were folks in my Institute. In general, there was so much support and warmth in the air that I felt even more welcome as a newbie. Other workshops I attended that I found useful were the Large Group, "Creating Vital Energies in Group Play", and "Philosophical Underpinnings of Group Psychotherapy". I thought the last two did an amazing job of integrating didactic with experiential components in ways that have made lasting impacts on my life and my group work. I also found an additional home within the AGPA in the physician group, which made me realize the wide range of possibilities. Thanks again for this amazing opportunity and hope to see you next year!

I would like to begin my summary, by expressing my deepest gratitude to the board members, for providing me with the opportunity to participate in the AGPA annual conference 2011. It has been a wonderful group experience and an important milestone in my personal and professional life. Reflecting on the theme of the conference I can truly add that it was a source of resilience and change for me.

In my summary I would like to refer to two main subjects, firstly my general feeling and impressions as a first time attendee and a new member. Secondly to offer my evaluations of the workshops that I participated in.

Although, I was "warned" about the size of the conference before arriving at the venue on Thursday morning, I was still amazed by the extent of the number of participants and events scheduled. Not being familiar with the American conference culture, increased my anxiety on the one hand and on the other hand added to my enthusiasm about participating. While participating in the welcome breakfast, I began to understand the importance of this initial get together. It was a warm welcome, and provided the atmosphere for feeling part of this "huge" enterprise.

However, I was a little disappointed at my first workshop, by the way the "welcome" part was conducted. It was a bigger group than I was expecting and as a result, there was not enough time, from my perspective, for adequate dialog between the leader and the members and between the members themselves. As it was my first day at the conference I felt the need for more explanation about the format and structure before the formal beginning (for example –the number of participant in the demo group), and an informal introduction as to the expectations and "rules" of AGPA workshops. The two days after were better and I felt more secure and familiar, which reinforced the feelings that the beginning could have been different.

Regarding the workshops, my overall impression was very positive. It seemed that all three leaders had invested a great deal of efforts in preparing and conducting the workshop. At the first workshop I felt that the didactic part, although it was well organized, was too long and did not meet the group expectations. Moreover it was mainly theoretical ideas and not sufficiently connected to the clinical process.

On the second day I participated in an all day course. Although the group was large, it was a challenging experience. The group leader succeeded to keeping the group “alive” and engaged by offering, fascinating clinical examples to reinforce the theoretical materiel. It seemed that the group leader managed to bridge the gap between the knowledge’s of the more experienced professionals and that of the beginners, and succeeded in creating a feeling of an intimate working group.

My last workshop had the strongest emotional effect on me. I was introduced to a new way of thinking and working in groups, by a very impressive and inspiring leader. She kept the group “working” all day, through experiences and reflections of the process. This enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the process on one hand, and on the other to experience the power of group work.

Last but not least, I would also like to express my thanks and appreciation to the administrative staff. From my first correspondence by e-mail, all through the process of receiving the scholarship and at the conference itself, the different issues and problems popped up, were handled professionally, with a friendly and warm touch.

Thank you all again for giving me the opportunity to take part in the conference. As a new resident in the U.S.A, feeling part of the AGPA organization was a wonderful professional and social experience, and I am looking forward to being part of more AGPA events in the future.

I would like to take this time and thank the Group Psychotherapy Foundation (GPF) for your generosity for honoring me with a scholarship so that I could attend AGPA annual conference.

I am practicing social worker whose agency provides group therapy for adults with mental illness. I feel that it is important for me to further my knowledge and training regarding group therapy. By attending the conference, I was able to learn more about resources available for therapists and different styles and approaches for leading psychotherapy groups.

While at the conference, I had the chance to participate in a process group and attend several workshops. The process group helped me to understand that it is beneficial to release feelings from within instead of keeping them inside. I also learned that I am not alone in my own fears as social worker. As for the workshops, I was very impressed and happy with the ones I selected to attend. There were two workshops in particular that I left wanting more. They were “The Group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Model: integrating CBT with Psychodrama” and “A Beginner’s Guide to Utilizing Role Play in Therapy and Training Groups”. Both workshops had an experiential and demonstration component, which helped me to visual how I would be able to incorporate it within my own psychotherapy groups.

I am proud to say that I am a member of AGPA and want to become more involved with the association. The conference showed me how important AGPA is to professionals across the country. I would like to thank again the GPF for his scholarship and express my appreciation for this opportunity that was given to me.

After three years of eager anticipation, I was finally able to attend the 2011 New York Annual Meeting due to a generous scholarship.

I am our local Affiliate Representative, and so I spent my first day in New York meeting with the Affiliate Society Assembly. This time was much more rewarding and engaging than I anticipated. I was warmly welcomed and felt immediately that I had a voice among many Representatives who have been involved with AGPA and the ASA for years on end. Our work felt relevant and was exciting to be a part of. It was a great way to be introduced to AGPA as an organization.

The two-day institute was the highlight of my time at the meeting. I was deeply impacted by the people in my group and what we were able to achieve in such a short time. Being so moved by that work during the day, I was almost shocked to then be able to evaluate that same work for our professional development. I cannot say enough about how effective the format of the institute is.

I was quite drained after the institute, yet I found myself energized by each subsequent session, SIG and workshop I attended during the conference. The demo groups and subsequent discussion was all quite useful. Being a kinetic learner, the discourse, disagreements and co-creation that happened around each topic made me to feel that what I was learning was sinking into my bones. I was goaded and challenged but all the while felt encouraged and accepted.

Lastly, I want to add that I am grateful that so many AGPA members sought me out to specifically welcome me as a newcomer and check-in on my experiences. It contributed to the firm sense I now have that I have a home and a resource in AGPA. I hope to stay involved and to myself contribute for many years to come.

Thank you for the experience. It has been one of the most pivotal in my career as a psychotherapist thus far and it would not have happened without your help.

I have been thinking of the best way to summarize my experience at the AGPA conference and I am coming up blank. There is so much I learned. Yet, it is difficult to find words to describe exactly what it is that I did learn. As I reflect on my difficulty in describing my experience, it occurs to me that I have gained a sense of knowing or a sense of wisdom as opposed to a step-by-step methodology for doing something. How do I begin to tell you what I feel that I have metabolized and assimilated into my awareness?

Maybe it's best to start with appreciations of what I witnessed and experienced. On Monday, I attended "Loving, Hating, and Knowing" with Richard Billow. Rich shared lots of useful information about group work, but the thing that was most enlightening was watching him lead two demonstration groups. Each group was very different and Rich interacted with each group differently. It was enriching to watch how the audience-observers experienced both the group members at each session and Rich. At the very least, I learned that there is no one right way to conduct a group and it is always possible, and often useful, to change the therapeutic model during a session. In other words, it doesn't make sense to keep the frame if the group is going in or needs a different direction. I also appreciated watching Rich handle all variety of questions and comments, critiques and criticisms. It helped me get a deep understanding of the reality that there are always multiple perspectives regarding an issue and that intelligent people can agree (or not) to have different opinions.

On Tuesday and Wednesday I attended a two-day institute. Our group got to some important interpersonal patterns and I learned so much from participating. It was fascinating to experience and watch the dynamics in the group emerge. Here is where it gets tricky to put into words what I learned because it feels embodied rather than intellectual to me. The experience gave me a greater sense of comfort with group processes and a way of being able to anticipate where the energy in the group will go. I feel like I earned my learning in this group and I really value it.

On Thursday and Friday I attended “Principles of Group Psychotherapy” with Nancy Fawcett and Keith Rand. Nancy and Keith were such great teachers! They worked beautifully together and I learned as much by watching them interact as I did from the course workbook. The course included an ongoing demonstration group, which both presenters took turns leading. Again, it was so valuable to watch the leaders work with the group and later reflect on why they made decisions they did but also acknowledge that they could have made different choices for intervening that would also have been equally as useful for the group. In addition to getting loads of applicable information from the course, I came away with more confidence about leading a group and making “good enough” choices for intervening.

Throughout the conference, I had delightful conversations and moments of real connection with people from different parts of the country and different parts of the world. I had dinner with strangers that quickly became friends. The conference seemed to bring out the best, most curious, and collaborative parts of us. I thoroughly enjoyed the social aspects of being with so many like-minded people. It was energizing both personally and professionally.

The scholarship I received afforded me the opportunity to attend the conference. Without the scholarship, I would not have been able to attend. So I am very appreciative to those that helped make the scholarship and my learning possible. As I said at the beginning of my summary, I don’t know if I can adequately put into words what attending the conference has given me. But I can say that participating in the experience has changed me and broadened my perspective. I think that speaks volumes.

Many, many thanks to you, Diane, and to the scholarship supporters.

I thoroughly enjoyed the AGPA conference. I found the experience to be an invaluable resource for both learning about group therapy, and for meeting many knowledgeable and helpful group therapists. At the conference I met many individuals who are very experienced and relatively new to the field of group therapy. Connecting with these individuals and learning about them both personally and professionally was extremely helpful. Being a student I am new to the field and speaking with people who are also new but often slightly farther along was wonderful. It was also great to speak to therapists who are psychiatrists and social workers. I found everyone brought a unique and valuable viewpoint and resources as well as being very friendly and engaging to someone new to the field and the AGPA conference. I found there to be a very genuine and authentic sense of community at AGPA which is both emotionally warm and intellectually stimulating. The conference was extremely enjoyable and certainly something I plan to be a part of for years to come.

I attended the two day process group for people with 0-4 years of experience that was run by Molly Donovan. The experience of the process group allowed me to get an experience of what it is like to be a member of a group as well as gain insight into a seasoned therapist's leadership style. I was also able to gain a good deal of insight into how I behave in a group. This information has been very helpful for me in understanding my own dynamics both as a group facilitator as well as in my day to day interactions with others.

I also attended the Experiencing a Practiced Based Evidence group. This was also extremely enlightening. I learned about several measures which are very useful to track clients progress as well as to help inform my understanding of what is going on for them clinically. I found this to be useful for both research as well as being helpful to inform leaders. In my role as a coordinator of Group services at the Rutgers clinic, instituting some of these measures is something I am in the process of advocating for incorporation into our program.

I also attended the Mindful Therapist workshop. This workshop was very useful for helping me understand how to address stress and trauma in group therapy. I learned ways of self regulating for my self in order to help contain these feelings in a group therapy situation. I also learned strategies that can provide benefit to several patients with whom I work. I believe some of the skills and information I learned will help me be a better therapist to clients who are coping with stress and trauma.

Please let me know if there is anything else you would like to know about my experience at AGPA. I really enjoyed it and am encouraging other students in my program to attend next year.

In the two-day institute, I attended the section XIV " Projective Identification and Countertransference", led by Barbara Keezell. In the first International Psychoanalytic Association Asian conference held in Beijing in October, 2010, I made a presentation on " Projective Identification and Mentalization in Group Psychotherapy", however, there were many places on this concept I was not very clear. Through this experiential group focusing on projective identification, my understanding about PI got greatly improved.

This is my fourth time attending AGPA annual meeting. Like previous ones, I had great experience of learning group therapy and making friends in the 2011 annual meeting. Attending AGPA annual meeting is the only training opportunity I can get.

Every activity I attended was very inspiring and impressive. For example, in the session 305, I observed two leading group psychotherapists demonstrating their models and styles of leading groups. It's very educational and inspiring to me.

This meeting is so important for me that I will do my best to come back every time.

As an MFT Trainee, and as someone interested in Group Therapy, the annual AGPA conference was automatically very appealing to me. I am so thankful that AGPA offers scholarships, otherwise I would not have been able to attend! The conference exceeded my expectations on both an educational level and a personal one. Frankly, I didn't realize that I could learn so much about Group Therapy in one week. I found my Institute leader, Jeff Hudson, to be so experienced and knowledgeable, and I found all of the workshops that I attended to be enriching and enlightening. I was also equally impressed by so many wonderful people that I met at the conference who made me feel welcomed. I grew personally because of my experience and interactions with others in my Institute, and I feel that the knowledge that I gained has already made me a better therapist. It is no exaggeration to say that this conference was pivotal in my formation as a beginning therapist and the pointed me in a direction that I will continue to pursue. Thank you so much for your generosity. I am so appreciative for this incredible experience.

I would like to take this opportunity to formally share my appreciation for the 2011 conference tuition scholarship that I received. This was my second time attending the conference, the first in 2009. Without this scholarship I would not have been able to attend. The conference, again, was an enlightening experience on many levels.

I'd like to share a handful of highlights from my experience:

- 1) The institute, led by the masterful Elaine Cooper, was by far, the stand-out experience for me. I don't have the opportunity to be in a process group right now, and having the chance to do it with Elaine and my fellow institute members enabled me to become aware of a pattern of aggressive interactions that I have been developing recently. I realized that I was unconsciously exploring the aggressive and conflict-engaging aspects of my self. I realized that I needed to be doing this, and that I had been judging myself for being aggressive. From the institute, I was also reminded of the importance of developing a clear-enough contract of emotional safety before diving into conflict – which I have taken back to the groups I lead.
- 2) The social aspect of the AGPA conference was a tremendously wonderful experience. I developed a handful of great friendships that I hope to continue exploring and many more that may bear fruit in the future. The dance was really fun!
- 3) The GLBTI SIG was a fantastic group of like-hearted/minded folks with whom I could share life stories and struggles. I felt a connection with many of the members of this group.
- 4) The day-long Somatic Experiencing workshop was meaningful for me. I appreciated Roger Saint-Laurent and Peter Taylor's facilitation styles and mastery of the subject. I will definitely use some of the information I learned in my own work– especially the usefulness of doing some inner awareness work before diving into the group, or at some point in the group development – to help members become able to touch into their inner experiences more easily.
- 5) Finally, I simply had a great time visiting New York, and hope I can make it again next year.

Thank you again for your donations that enabled me to attend the conference and walk away with realizations, reminders, and wonderful connections.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude for the scholarship to attend the AGPA conference. The scholarship provided me with an opportunity I would not otherwise have had to better myself in my career. As a social worker I feel such a responsibility to provide my clients with the best service there is to offer. AGPA has a large part in making that possible.

The AGPA conference was such a huge learning experience for me. I felt so renewed and enriched following my time there. More importantly I was able to gain new information to bring back to my practice and enrich the lives of others.

I have already been able to utilize some of the tools I gained at the conference in my work with clients. The impact has been incredible. In these couple of weeks large movements have been made by them to improve their lives. Part of that improvement is due to the environment I was able to provide for them based off the knowledge and skills I learned at the conference.

The conference really was such a blessing for me and I am extremely grateful for having been given that opportunity. I will now be able to provide other staff at my company with some of the information by leading one of our own Staff Developments. Thank you for making all of this possible.

It was an honor and a privilege to attend five days of this year's AGPA Annual Meeting with the financial aid that I was awarded. I was absolutely blown away by how much I learned, and I came back telling several fellow students that it is an opportunity they should not miss!

AGPA's Annual Meeting is different from all the other conferences I have been to because it prioritizes experiential learning. The demonstration groups and active feedback during Dr. Billow's *Loving, Hating and Knowing* Institute presentation was an interactive learning day, and I felt that I got so much more out of the talk because of how audience members challenged Billow's decisions during the demonstration groups. I also attended Gaea Logan's all-day workshop on *The Mindful Therapist*. I appreciated the opportunity to think about the mindfulness principles I have been utilizing in individual therapy in a group therapy setting. Once again, the experiential components of that workshop made the topic personally relevant. Moreover, I learned from everyone in the room rather than just the lecturer.

Seeing the interactive nature of AGPA presentations in general shaped the way I presented my own material for the workshop I led with two of my professors. I kept my notes in my bag and concentrated on using the wisdom in the room to talk about mimetic desire and scapegoating. This was the only time I have ever not read a paper at a conference, and it was liberating!

I think most of all I learned from the two-day process group I attended. What an experience! It is difficult to describe to others how profoundly one can be moved in such a short time period, and with a group of strangers! But I was stretched, not only as a psychology trainee but as a person--to confront others, to be vulnerable, to give and receive honest feedback.

I want to thank the Scholarship Committee for the financial assistance I was given to attend this conference--I would not have been able to come for five days without it. I also want to thank everyone who donates money to the scholarship fund. It is because of you that students like me can be exposed to AGPA's rich and stimulating community. This year I have begun to co-lead groups for the first time. I love it, and I feel that I learned as much from a week at the AGPA Annual Meeting as I have from graduate school classes and books on group psychotherapy! I definitely want to attend the conference next year, and I am going to encourage other students to come as well.

I LOVED my experience at the 2011 Annual Group Psychotherapy Institute and Conference. I went with a love a groups and left with a deepened appreciation and sense of possibility.

The institute was everything that previous attendees from my school said it would be and more! It was intense, transformative and related directly to the work I am doing in my Graduate studies. I learned about myself as well as some techniques for facilitating process groups. I am so grateful, even with the backache that came from sitting in chairs for such long period!

The conference was also very engaging and informative. I took several courses with a theme of psychodrama. I was able to see a variety of perspectives and get a handle on what it would be like to integrate them into my future practice.

I AM SOOOO GRATEFUL for the opportunity to attend this conference, which I know that I couldn't have done without the financial support of donors to the scholarship fund. THANK YOU SOOO MUCH!

Thank you for the reminder, and the opportunity to express how grateful I was to receive a scholarship to the NY conference. As a first-time attendee, it was incredibly exciting to finally participate with the AGPA, after having been introduced to group therapy through Naropa University's MA in Contemplative Psychotherapy program.

Billow's institute, "Loving, Hating and Knowing," was my very first experience, and it was gripping. I was particularly impressed with the members who volunteered to participate in the small group demonstrations. I was truly moved by their willingness to be real, direct, and vulnerable in front of the larger group, and it set a high bar for me to strive for regarding my willingness to be seen and heard.

Next, I entered my two-day process group experience with Molly Walsh Donovan. Although I had experienced ongoing small group process before with my classmates, this was my very first experience engaging with small group process with complete strangers. It was genuinely exciting to face an unknown circle and explore the thresholds of what I was willing to share, and what kind of space I was able to hold for others. Donovan was incredibly insightful and yet gentle, and facilitated a fascinating two days.

Unfortunately, the process group was my last opportunity to participate in the conference this year, due to having to return to Boulder unexpectedly on Thursday because of a family emergency.

I've certainly come to recognize the unique growth and opportunity provided by group therapy, both through my program at Naropa and the AGPA conference, and can't wait to explore further. Thank you again for the opportunity to attend this year's conference, and hope to see you next year!

I would like to send my personal thanks to all of the members who contributed to the scholarship funds for the 2011 annual conference in New York. I am currently working in private practice as an LMSW in Boise, Idaho after graduating last May from Boise State University. I received a scholarship that paid for my entrance to the full five day special institute and conference, without which I would not have been able to attend. The special institute was very educational; it is always great to see true professionals work their magic at the AGPA conference. My group facilitator for the two day institute, Elaine Cooper, was very professional and knowledgeable about group therapy.

Overall, the conference was first-rate and I would encourage all professionals in the field to attend this conference annually. The knowledge I gained in the sessions through didactic and experiential training as well as the instruction from renowned professionals in the field made this an instrumental step in my personal and professional growth. I truly feel at home when I attend the AGPA Annual Conference and love seeing friends and

colleagues I have gained over the past couple of years. Thank you again for your generous support and I wish you the best in the upcoming year!

This is a belated, but extremely heartfelt, thank you for granting me a scholarship to attend this year's conference in New York City. The experience was overwhelmingly valuable to my continued development as a clinician, administrator and newly certified CGP.

I appreciated being able to attend the Special Institute presented by Richard Billow. Although I experienced him to be extremely lacking in multicultural competence, the ability to learn from this uncomfortable incident was invaluable. The validation, support and encouragement I encountered from others who had attended this same SI reminded me why I value being part of AGPA. Another notable training I attended was Saiger & Saiger's 2-day institute. This team was able to create a safe space wherein I could process the trauma from the prior day's training. Saiger & Saiger also illustrated how video can effectively be employed in deepening dialogue around diversity issues. Another workshop I attended that I would like to mention as outstanding was the one on subgrouping and neural networks. Although I was frustrated at the directive language used, I found the technique useful and will adapt it to my style of facilitation. All in all, I was able to gain clinically useful information from all of the sessions I attended.

As an administrator of our agency's groups program, I appreciated the opportunity to network with others who have similar roles. There is never enough time to do so, and I'm hoping I will make the time during this next year to keep in touch with them. The college counseling center listserv is invaluable for helping me maintain my connection throughout the year.

I am proud to display my CGP certificate, and happy to elaborate on the value of it when people inquire as to the meaning of CGP. That said, I'm hoping that I will muster the confidence to propose a workshop for next year's conference. I don't like to criticize, but from what I've observed in my limited exposure to AGPA (2 conferences isn't very many), the organization seems lacking in diversity awareness and multicultural competence. I have a lot of experience, expertise and interest in diversity/multiculturalism and would be honored to share my knowledge with the organization.

Again, thank you so much for providing me with the scholarship. I would not have been able to attend had you not granted me this funding.

From the Pre-conference Institute, to the Plenaries, to the sessions (especially one on marketing), my attendance at the AGPA 2011 Annual Meeting was crucial to the next stage after training—setting up more formally, and increasing, my practice. The AGPA Award enabled me to attend, and learn so much about the many positive steps and the obstacles in my path—some of which I put there myself!

It is an incredible experience to see hundreds upon hundreds—nearly 1100 attended overall—at the Plenaries—where I learned, for example, about research linking plaintive music to human baby (as well as animal baby) cries, and how the music elicits responses similar to when mothers all over the animal kingdom are called into action physiologically to soothe their babies. Since I have also done volunteer support group work with La Leche League Canada for over 20 years, this information was particularly relevant to that work!

The two day Institute just prior to the conference was yet another intense experience. I attended a process group for less experienced professionals. In addition to the work going on, we were all meta-processing at times. We all noted dynamics and connections, risks, and perplexing situations, both for members, as well as for the Leader.

That session on marketing was rather helpful to getting my "elevator speech" ready, as well as in other areas, and the materials provided will encourage me to continue that process. Small groups were used for brainstorming and feedback in a manner to which I don't otherwise readily have access. And since we were all connected to a therapeutic following, we didn't have to spend time on that. What is notable is that there were a number of *established* therapists looking to increase or adjust their practices.

Finally, since I want part of my practice to deal with creative visualization and meditation, I opted to attend a session on Qigong and another on Mindfulness. Both were at the same time relaxing and energizing.

As an end-note, I want to add that I have been in charge of coordinating Shabbat dinner for the last two conferences through and including cross-continent and worldwide connections forged through my attendance at AGPA—both with the assistance of the AGPA Scholarship—for those who would like to partake with other like-minded folk—across the various stripes of practice. I must admit that this is also one of the more pleasant *groups* I have had the pleasure to attend!

I had a wonderful and insightful experience attending the 2011 AGPA Annual Meeting. I was so grateful to be a recipient of a partial scholarship provided by the Group Psychotherapy Foundation which made it possible for me to attend the annual meeting. I participated in all 6 days of the meeting beginning with the Special Institute on Monday, February 28th and concluding with a final workshop on Saturday afternoon, March 4th. The following represents some of the highlights of my experiential learning:

Monday - Special Institute with Richard Billow – All day workshop with Dr. Billow provided me with a better understanding of the dominant role of the group leader in the groups' development. I witnessed through two demo groups the role of the leader in balancing safety, stability and security with shaking things up. I was energized by Dr. Billow's emphasis on authenticity and truth as powerful forces for both the individual and the group as regards to change. I also observed how groups use what Dr. Billow refers to as the 3 "R's", rebellion, resistance and refusal to deal with their fears and anxiety for seeking the truth. I was able to see that one of the primary roles of the therapist is the search for the truth – to help the group find its own personality, to feel "safe enough" but not complacent or too at ease. It is a fine line and one which I plan to explore and develop in the groups I either lead or co-lead.

Tuesday/Wednesday – Process Group with Judith Sharer. This was the highlight of my week since it allowed me the opportunity for the first time in many years to be a participant in a group and not the leader. The experience offered me a great deal of insight into how I relate and respond to members in the group. I learned that I am influenced by gender, race and age differences. I became aware of how I associate a particular individual with a member of my family and how I respond accordingly. I also became much more conscious of the positive role of sub-groups in providing individuals with a measure of safety in order to eventually take more risks in the group. I observed the different styles of leadership and the use of variety of direct and indirect interventions to promote safety and growth for the individual and the group. I also become much more aware of the power of transference and counter-transference. Lastly, I realized how much the group process can really encourage people to grow both as an individual and in a social and cultural setting.

CBT-Psychodrama - Excellent experiential and didactic workshop integrating CBT with psychodrama. Leader was very skilled in leading 2 different demo groups which clearly articulated and integrated the theory and practice of both therapeutic disciplines.

Lost Or Found In The Transference – I participated in the demo group which provided me with a wonderful opportunity to work with 2 renowned group therapists with different theories and approaches to group practice. Although both leaders approached the group from different perspectives, I experienced how similar their styles were with respect to group boundaries, safety, non-judgment, truth and growth.

Mindful Therapist-Self Regulation – Led by a very experienced therapist and Buddhist practitioner, this full-day workshop provided an excellent base for integrating mindfulness with group practice to benefit the group and the therapist. I learned more about the clinical application of mindfulness including presence, attention, sensory stabilization and neural integration. The workshop also provided information about how mindfulness in a group setting can change the structure of the brain by regulating physical reactions, emotions, self awareness and morality. I also learned to recognize the importance of seeing in the group the conflict between regulation and dis-regulation and the variety of interventions that can move the group towards regulation.

Group Catalyst: Impediment To Change - This was a particularly moving workshop since my Dad, Dr. Bernie Frankel was one of the panelists. It was wonderful to hear his thoughts and reaction to the demo group. Some of the things that I learned were the importance of authenticity between the individuals in the group and the leader. Authenticity was defined as forthrightness, skillfulness and helpfulness or said in a more psychoanalytical way: trying to bring the unconscious or the unknown into awareness. The intervention of the therapist in terms of timing, process, curiosity and transference can make or break the group's wish for cohesion and collaboration. I was also struck by the importance of the leader bringing playful curiosity and humor into groups.

Secrets: What You Don't Know Could Hurt You – This group was led by what I considered the most skillful leader during the meetings – Oona Metz. I participated in the demo group and was struck by how balanced her interventions were coupled with her sincere empathy and heart. She provided an excellent overview of how holding secrets in the group mask fear, denial, habit, culture, aggression and low self esteem. The role of the therapist is to bring the secrets out into the group – to focus on what the group is not talking about. Also, she provided some concrete and personal examples from her practice where initial rules for her groups' were broken and needed to be adjusted to become more realistic. I liked her statement that we as therapists should "anticipate that rules are going to be broken".

In closing, I learned so much from my experience at so many different levels, made new friends and lastly, met members of the AGPA from Northern California that are involved in a regional group psychotherapy association which I plan to join.

I am already using some of the techniques I learned including: being more assertive as a leader, facilitating more communication between group members, acknowledging my counter-transference feelings, using role-playing in the group, promotion the fundamental value of authenticity, understanding the importance of culture, gender and age in the group, and using sub-group linking to help individual members in the group feel more safe and secure. I am sure that I will continue over the next several months to feed and be nourished by this enriching experience. I am so appreciative that the Group Psychotherapy Foundation provided me with a partial scholarship which I believe did what you were hoping it would – increased my skills as a group therapist and propelled me to become an ambassador for the AGPA and the importance of group therapy and process in helping people suffering from a variety of psychological and social challenges.

I could talk about the educational programs I attended at AGPA for hours, and have actually to professors, classmates, friends, parents, etc. Ester Perel's Mating in Captivity Seminar was the most intriguing educational program I attended while at the conference. I am already very interested in attachment theory, so to be able to bring that theory into another context, such as sexuality, was a treat! Being a new therapist in the field, it feels good to learn more and more about a particular theory that really resonates for myself and seems to resonate in a number of different contexts.

It was wonderful to see my professors outside of school. Their personalities are so different! I especially enjoyed their support after the institute. The group experience was intense, but being able to process through it with my professors was highly educational. It was also nice to learn that even group leaders with a ton of experience make mistakes in group.

I could not have gained this experience and these learnings without being awarded this scholarship. I find myself taking more risks in my process groups at Naropa after this experience. Those of us that went are commented on frequently by other classmates. The difference is seen not only within me but outside of me as well.

This experience has given me more confidence in leading groups and has sparked more curiosity around attachment theory. I hope to use some of what I learned at AGPA in my Master's Thesis paper

Please thank those responsible for this experience and feel free to share my thoughts and comments with the primary contributors to the scholarship fund, the Joint AGPA Board, and print portions in future communications about the Foundation scholarships.

I would like to thank the funders of the Durkin-Glatzer scholarship for making my attendance at the 2011 American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) conference possible. For me, the highlights of the conference were (1) the two-day experiential institute led by Dr. Molly Donovan; (2) the workshops on leading general (facilitator Dr. Anne Slocum Mceneaney) and meal process (facilitator Dr. Stacey Rosenfeld) groups for individuals with eating disorders; and (3) the Thursday evening networking dinner with AGPA leadership including Drs. Kathy Ulman, Jerry Gans, and Scott Rutan. Because it was the institute that made the greatest impression on my personal and professional development, I would like to describe that experience in detail here, in appreciation of the generous scholarship donations that afforded me the opportunity to participate.

Tales of an AGPA Process Group Novice

It was with excitement and trepidation that I arrived for my first 2-day institute at AGPA. As a research-trained cognitive-behavioral therapist, the impending 48-hour immersion in an unstructured experiential process group with other therapists was at once thrilling and terrifying. How would we know what to talk about, un-cocooned by the safe structure of the CBT handouts that I present in the groups that I myself lead? Would our group appropriately form, norm, storm, and perform—as I'd learned about from my group therapy seminar leader, Dr. Kathy Ulman? At it happens, that's exactly what we did, catalyzed in part by my inadvertent 5-minute tardiness on Day 2. But let me start at the beginning...

Upon walking into the room and participating in the first hour of the institute, the most salient aspect of our group was its amazing diversity. Not only were we a veritable United Nations of race, ethnicity, and religion, but we also differed with regard to age, medical discipline, extraversion, and theoretical and sexual orientation. However, as the afternoon approached, our appreciation of diversity melded into an even richer understanding of key similarities. All of us shared the experience of working with patients we wished we'd been able to help more. Most of us had siblings with whom we wish we could feel closer, or significant others for whom we wished we could be even better partners.

As we talked, our conversation began to flow more naturally. There was space for everyone to speak, even if it meant taking the risk of inviting a previously silent member to join the discussion. It soon became okay for a group member to cry while relating a particularly heartbreaking or tragic story, and for others to offer empathic understanding and tissues.

There was a decided shift, however, when I arrived to group approximately 5 minutes late the next morning. I had no idea how powerfully my lateness would impact upon group discussion over this final day. At first I felt defensive about the group's consensus that my tardiness suggested that I was "devaluing" the experience. Our preliminary discussion confirmed my worry that process groups run the risk of making mountains out of proverbial molehills in the pursuit of identifying shared group experiences to analyze. After all, I was only 5 minutes late!

But as each group member discussed his or her own individual experience of my tardiness—one member looked longingly at my iced coffee as he related his decision to forgo Starbucks in order to make it to group on time, and another discussed waking up at 5:30 a.m. for her 2-hour commute from a neighboring state—I began to feel grateful that the members were able to speak so honestly about how they truly felt. Was this how my friends and work colleagues felt when I regularly arrived to meetings "just a few minutes late?" Once the group established that it was comfortably able to address but also contain interpersonal conflicts, members felt freer to give one another personalized feedback about they came across.

Because the efficacy of the CBT interventions I utilize in my own practice have largely been supported by randomized controlled trials, I entered my first AGPA institute wondering how much process groups could actually produce behavioral change. At the end of my first institute, I can certainly attest to the effectiveness of experiential groups ($N = 1$). I have not been late to a meeting since! I am therefore very much looking forward to incorporating attention to group process in my ongoing CBT groups, and cannot wait to attend the 2012 AGPA next year... on time.

Thank you very much for awarding me a scholarship to attend the AGPA 2011 Annual Meeting. What a wonderful experience! I attended the one-day Special Institute with Dr. Richard Billow, the two-day Institute with Dr. Elaine Cooper and the three-day conference, during which I participated in the two-day Principles of Group Psychotherapy Course, conducted by Nancy Fawcett and Keith Rand, and several enlightening workshops.

As this was my first time to attend an annual meeting, the one-day Special Institute served as an example of what was to come. I observed groups led by this skilled group therapist and learned about Dr. Billow's approach to groups and managing conflict in the fishbowl group as well as the larger observing group. Dr. Cooper very effectively taught the group members about group development and process by alternating our experiences as group members and as therapists who examined and explored our experiences as group members. Through my personal experience as a group member, I learned other members can have powerful insights about themselves when I share my perceptions and thoughts that result from me being who I am, a female of a specific age with certain life experiences. As a therapist I learned firsthand the power of transference and experienced the group process. The two-day Principles of Group Psychotherapy Course was a highlight for me. Nancy Fawcett and Keith Rand were very knowledgeable and excellent teachers. Not only did I learn more about group development and the group process, but I learned the power of group bonding to protect the integrity of the group when someone attempts to enter the group after the bond has been established.

I feel fortunate that two women shared my experiences in the Institute group with Dr. Cooper and the Principles of Group Psychotherapy Course. We became quite familiar with each other. I met another woman with whom I connected during the interactive portions of several workshops on the last day of the conference and exchanged contact information. I hope to reconnect with these women at future meetings.

Without being awarded this scholarship, I would not have been able to attend the annual meeting. Being present afforded me the opportunity to learn about group therapy from those who have contributed so much to the development of this powerful tool and from those who regularly use group therapy because they believe in its power. They have inspired me to develop my skills as a group therapist and to start groups in my own practice. Additionally, I had the opportunity to experience the AGPA family. I felt very welcomed by the staff and members. From this experience, I know I will be supported, both professionally and personally, by this group as I continue my affiliation with AGPA. I truly have found my professional home.

Thank you very much for awarding me the AGPA conference scholarship. It has been a huge help for me and I really appreciated it. I could not have attended the conference without the scholarship!

The institute was the best part for me. I tend to learn more about myself and relationships during the institute, so I find it very helpful personally and professionally- for developing my clinical skills. I attended Elizabeth Olson's "I have seen this movie before, working effectively with the reluctance to change" workshop. She was truly amazing, I learned a lot about

her style and how I might use it in my own practice. Debbie Ellis' early morning session on using rational emotive therapy with groups was also great. She inspired me to read on Albert Ellis, which I will do as soon as I get a chance. I think if she gave a workshop for a few hours (maybe an afternoon or morning workshop), I would want to attend that too.

I signed up for the 2 day trauma workshop. I was a bit disappointed at the end of the first day because I think I was looking for more structured training on how we can do a group therapy treatment for individuals with trauma. Since I am a novice in this area, I was looking for more hand-holding. My experience at the end of the first day was that it was more like an illustration of what kinds of trauma groups can be done (i.e. an annual group, or utilizing communities to deal with traumatic experiences) rather than teaching the techniques of a trauma group. I talked to friends who stayed for the 2nd day and they said it was much better, so maybe if I stayed for the 2nd day I might have had a different idea on the 2-day workshop. I instead took a one day mindfulness group and I believe I learned more-compared to my previous knowledge-on mindfulness through experience.

I attended the women's SIG lunch meeting and I got to meet with colleagues. It was a great experience to connect them. I am also matched to a mentor through Women's SIG so I am looking forward to learning from my mentor and doing more in agpa.

I would like to thank you for granting me the International Scholarship for the 2011 meeting.

The meeting has been an enriching experience for me and I learned a lot. Especially, I found rewarding the opportunity to watch experienced leaders, such as Billow, Gans, and Dennis (the leader of the group I took at the institute) in their work and in demonstration groups. Being educated as a Group Analyst, I could notice differences in the ways the groups were led, which I found enriching. Also, during the meeting, I took courses on the use of quantitative tools and treatment of schizophrenia, which I found useful to my work. Participating in the large group, I found it enormously important, examining the social characteristics of the current global society as well as the American. This was a strong, moving experience.

I myself presented a paper in the meeting. I found the discussion deep and thought provoking. I thank you for having the opportunity to do so.

I would also like to thank you for the warmth welcoming that I felt through the whole meeting. That was really moving for me.

The scholarship that you granted me enabled me to participate in a deep going, enriching experience. I took a lot from it, especially to my work as coordinator of group psychotherapy at the psychiatric hospital that I work in, in Israel.

March 5th 2011, it's 5 o'clock in the afternoon. It's about the time everyone is wrapping up the last workshop of the day. It's about the time everyone is starting to leave. Yes, it's time to say Good-bye. Standing here, in the center of Sheraton lobby, I am looking for people. People from the 2-day process group, people from the demo-group, people from the workshops I attended, people from the SIG meetings, people who I chatted with at the dinner table last night, and people who I danced with at the Friday night party... all the people who I had a great time with for the last 6 days. Last night, I was crying in my bed like a little child separating from her mom. Facing the last day of the conference, I was realizing it was time to say Good-bye to everyone. Deep in my heart, I realized how I had a wonderful time during this one week conference, how much I became attached to these people, how much I have learned from them, and how much I truly loved this heartwarming place. Standing in the lobby, my mind is going back to the numerous pieces of the memory. All the precious moments with the group for last 6 days...

"Hey guys, come on! Let's take a risk!" One group member spoke up finally after minutes of a dreadful silence. It was the first day of the experiential process group, and everybody including myself was still wrapped up with layers of the guard and uncertainty. "Well... take a risk? Take a step out of my comfort zone? Hmm... I kind of like that. Why not?" Later, I did start to take a risk cautiously just like dipping my toes in the water. It was my first time attending AGPA and I had no experience with groups prior to this meeting; I didn't even know what I was doing or what I was supposed to do. Just following my heart; that was the only guidance I had. Let's be authentic and be real! It didn't take much time for me to take off my defenses one by one; I started to enjoy the catharsis and happiness following risk taking and embracing my true feelings. Anxiety, fear, tears, jealousy, shame, hatred, courage, anger, heartbreaking, understanding, grief, sadness, happiness, and love... The intense feelings drove me to the brink of a breakdown not only mentally but also physically. At one point I got sick and threw up in the bathroom all day, which was completely surprising to me since I had never considered myself as a neurotic or stomach person. Well... the important thing is, I didn't die. I did survive through the process of healing; as a matter of fact, I felt much stronger and happier than ever. It would have been impossible without the warm support and genuine love from the group and AGPA family.

Through my own experiences of the process institute and workshops I came to understand how the process in the group could help someone at that significant level. Also, I was able to understand how much impact group therapy can have not only on the individual but also on the group as a whole. The last day of the conference, everybody was able to tell my face was shining with fulfilled gratefulness, joy and happiness, which I can never show enough appreciation to AGPA.

Now, I am standing in the Sheraton lobby, looking for my dear friends. Earlier today, I had numerous random thoughts going through my mind, 'I have no clue if I would be able to see them ever again. I have no clue if I would be able to take a moment and write a little hello-letter to them once in a while. It may be wiser to start my detachment process so this separation will not be that much painful to me. Saying Good-bye might be meaningless at this point, isn't it?' Well... Even if I would never be able to see them again, that's ok. Even if I would never hear from any of them, that's ok. Even if I have to cry more after saying Good-bye, that's fine. Regardless, I want to say Good-bye to my friends. I would love to give a big hug to each of them; and say, 'Thank you. I learned so much from you guys, and I will miss you a lot.' Yes, I will follow my heart to the last moment as I have learned from AGPA!

Before leaving for the 2011 AGPA Annual Meeting in New York City, I had been personally considering the utility or futility of pursuing group therapy further. I had several questions percolating in the back of my mind. What is it like to be on the other side? I had conducted a group during my third year of psychiatry residency, and I often wondered how it could be helpful for the patients. I felt inept and lost as a group leader, and the process seemed somewhat arbitrary. Could group therapy be used as a treatment modality for survivors of trauma in resource-limited areas around the world, where I hope to continue working? In what ways can group therapy be helpful? Are there individuals in other areas of the globe conducting group therapy for trauma victims, and what are they doing?

First, I was struck by the experience of the process group, which greatly increased my appreciation of the utility of group therapy. I found a safe space in which to express my feelings and in which to share my reaction to the feelings of others. I discovered that it was this protected vulnerability that created an opportunity for me and others to grow emotionally and interpersonally. I am grateful that I chose to attend a group that will be meeting several times during the coming year, and I am looking forward to the experience. Now I understand what all the fuss was about, and while I realize I have a long way to go to develop my own skills as a group leader, I am humbled and energized by this new-found treatment modality, in which I have truly become a believer.

Second, I had the opportunity to attend several sections with people from all around the world, who were conducting group therapy for survivors of trauma, and who were engaged in very innovative and practical work that included psychodynamic as well as other group therapy treatment modalities. I was impressed with the breadth of research and the exchange of ideas that occurred during and between sections, and I was encouraged by the collegiality, kindness, and interest that individuals from differing educational and cultural backgrounds showed each other during the conference. The experience was quite inspiring.

Finally, attending the AGPA annual meeting allowed me to begin to examine how I would like group therapy to become part of my own professional career. As a treatment modality for survivors of trauma living in resource-limited settings, I can find no equal. Trauma survivors often feel isolated and have difficulty trusting others; if done appropriately, group therapy can create an environment where people feel safe and where individuals create communities in which they gain trust in other members. Group therapy is cost-effective, which is vital to the sustainability of any intervention conducted in resource-limited areas. Additionally, I now recognize the plausibility of training local group leaders. The breadth of backgrounds among practitioners at the annual meeting provided the testament.

I am extremely glad that I had the opportunity to attend the 2011 AGPA annual meeting, and I am eternally grateful to those whose generosity made this possible. The experience was eye-opening and mind-blowing, and I look forward to attending local, regional, national, and international meetings in the future. Mostly, though, I am eager to begin incorporating group therapy into my future career.

I would like to convey my deepest gratitude to the Group Psychotherapy Foundation for providing me with a scholarship to attend the 2011 Annual AGPA Meeting in NY and also for the many years of support during my training. As you are aware, I have been developing within the context of the AGPA during my graduate and post-doctoral education. I truly appreciate that the GPF has supported my participation at the AGPA during my graduate and fellowship years. Every AGPA meeting experience has been meaningful for me, and the 2011 AGPA Meeting was exceptionally rewarding and growth promoting. It was packed full of work and play, membership and leadership. I met with mentors, friends, and colleagues. After all of the work and play – I felt psychologically rejuvenated, as if returning from summer camp!

During the AGPA Meeting, information that was unconsolidated and not metabolized previously, lodged in my body and mind, unable to find voice in me, was loosened and processed. Coming away from the experience, I now have more

language to express what was previously unexpressed. Unconscious and conscious material which I was carrying around -- contagious grief and trauma from patients -- became less traumatic following my AGPA meeting experience. Sadness was lightened. Hope and energy were rekindled as I felt strong and meaningful connections with other group therapists. I am stunned by the power of the AGPA group!

At AGPA Meeting this year, and particularly in my 2-day institute experience, I expressed a certain value for interdependence coupled with an appreciation for my own limits, personal boundaries, and needs. For me, this was a new level of appreciating both the importance of bonding with others in groups, and also differentiating myself as an individual with individual boundaries. I know of no other meeting or organization that holds both the individual and the group quite as well as the AGPA.

The most poignant experience for me this year was facing fears related to my professional voice. I co-presented in an open session, which addressed issues pertaining to inner city school-based therapy groups. In that open session, I shared my clinical insights related to group leadership in schools that are located in gang-ridden and impoverished neighborhoods. I tackled the topics of poverty, violence, trauma, and grief. Because of the complexity and sensitivity of the topic, prior to my presentation, I was quite afraid -- I was worried that my comments might be unpopular or unwelcome. This was not the case! The participants in the open session and the AGPA leadership responded well to the presentation. As a result of the opportunity to present the material, I now feel more confidence in myself, but I also feel more faith in our professional community -- it is open to thinking and learning together. The AGPA is truly a "holding environment" and it facilitates growth in its' members and leaders! I feel fortunate to have the support of the GPF to experience such holding and growth.

To sum it up - because of the opportunity to attend and work at the AGPA meeting, I gained a sense of rejuvenation, increased confidence, a stronger and more authentic professional voice, increased faith and confidence in my colleagues, and a better understanding of my own limits and boundaries. Knowing myself better in the group allows me feel closer to the AGPA community and its leaders. Following years of supporting my growth and development, I am extremely grateful to the GPF! Thank you so much for offering this essential "play space" for me and for other scholarship recipients.

I thank you and the committee for allowing me to participate in the AGPA 2011 Congress. The knowledge and skills that I acquired and professional contacts that I made were tremendous. Here are some thoughts and comments on my experience.

I learned a lot from the all day course: "Experiencing a Practice Based Evidence Group" with a wonderful team headed by Thomas Golightly, Ph.d. , Mark Beecher, Ph.d, Gary Burlingame, Ph.d, Robert Gleave, Ph.d and Dallas Jensen, Ph.d. I learned how to identify evidence-based principles for selecting group members using the Group Questionnaire (GQ) and outcome measures using the Outcome Questionnaire (OQ).

I also gained knowledge and skills from the "Mating in Captivity" workshop by Esther Perel, MFT. Ms. Perel's highly interactive modality and video on couples therapy were very instructive. It was up to to date and included the important area of multicultural issues.

In "The Integrative Cognitive Behavioral Group Therapy" workshop, I learned to utilize cognitive behavioral therapy in groups. It was well led by Greg Crosby, M.A.

I forged many wonderful professional relationships and made world wide friendships.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to participate in the AGPA 2011 Conference.

I felt extremely welcome and was treated excellently during my first AGPA Conference.

I attended a 2 day workshop coordinated by Frederic Ilfeld, Jr. and Barbara Square-Ilfeld titled, "Using Effective Co-Therapy Collaboration to Build a Therapeutic Group Culture." I was utterly impressed by their flawless facilitation of the group. They demonstrated the didactic method that one can use to reveal deep seeded emotions and events, handle them effectively, and later bring to closure, all with limited time and objectives.

The participants collaborated very intensely on the work and the coordinators promoted and achieved a very cohesive group. The experience will be very useful for my clinical practice and for non therapeutic groups since I learned practical, theoretical aspects not only from the coordinators, but the other participants.

I'll take with me for example the technique called "fish bowl" that I will put into practice with my non therapeutic groups.

At every moment respect was present, the touch and timing of the coordination led to a two day experience that will remain unforgettable in my 31 years as a group psychoanalyst.

My second experience was attending the two day course: "Trauma Interventions Across Time, Populations and Cultures" coordinated by Suzanne B. Phillips and Dianne Kane, in which I presented my work with a group of traumatized women that were survivors of sexual torture in a Mexican prison

I attended the two day session in which I heard very interesting experiences such as the work with couples of people traumatized by 9/11, war veterans and others.

One powerful program worked for the prevention and care associated with juvenile suicide.

There were also other international contributors from Italy and England that also enriched my knowledge around work with Holocaust survivors and group work with women.

Important and very current conceptual developments such as "postvention", different group facilitation will all be very useful in my theoretical reflections and my practice.

The workshop was coordinated in an excellent manner and the time given for the diverse presentations was adequate, drawing the involvement of the participants that also shared interesting contributions.

My work was very well received and I was humbled to receive some recognition. Dr. Alfred Garwood, treasurer of The Group Analytic Society of London, even invited me to present at the 15th European Symposium in Group Analysis, Goldsmiths College, London in August/September 2011. It was a session of sharing experiences in an interesting and committed way. I left very satisfied with the facilitation of the workshop, the workshop itself and the high caliber of the works presented.

In addition we are able to establish connections between our countries. I believe that above all with Mexico, as a neighbor, and in general with Latin America AGPA should consider increasing its presence. I left with the impression that our commonalities are much greater than our differences.

I returned impressed with the predominance of the psychoanalytic orientation in the facilitation and understanding of groups.

Of course given my powerful experience, I would like to declare my desire to attend the Conference in 2012 and I hope to again be considered for scholarship.

I would first like to thank the AGPA scholarship committee for allowing me the opportunity to participate in the 2011 annual meeting. I am very grateful. There are so many thoughts and feelings that come to my mind when I reflect on my experience.

What comes to my mind first is the wonderful feeling of being surrounded by like-minded individuals—people who share my passion for group psychotherapy. Walking around the hotel and seeing people energized and excited about learning was great. I liked that very much.

I also had the opportunity to meet new people and touch base with old friends. This was often exhilarating. I shared a room with a colleague that I found through Haim's list serve and we became fast friends. It was great to have someone to come "home" to and talk about the experiences of the day.

I started with the two day process group experience. This part of the experience was probably my biggest disappointment. I so looked forward to it, because there are really so few places one can professionally experience such a group. Upon entering the room I was disillusioned to see that there were only three people in the group. Later two more showed up, but the group lacked depth and I found it pretty shallow in terms of exploring process. The leader seemed somewhat timid, and I found this frustrating. Also, one member of the group was not a psychologist and had very little, if any, understanding of group process, and we spent a good part of the first morning trying to bring her up

to speed. This session was described as a process group for 10+ years of experience. This was really very frustrating for me. I think AGPA should have contingency plans if a group does not have enough members showing up. Perhaps we could have joined up with another group. Also, I would have preferred to have had two leaders.

I also attended Dani's Living Dance which was a very different experience. While I enjoyed it, I found myself frustrated with the fact that there was no room for verbal processing of feelings that emerged as we danced. To be fair, I may not have been clear enough in my own mind what the goals were of that group.

The Large Group experience was very fascinating to me, and I am so glad to have experienced it. I plan on doing more reading about it so that I can increase my knowledge about the goals of such groups.

In general I found group members to be welcoming. If I am so fortunate as to have an opportunity to attend again next year, I will make more of an effort to attend less formal events scheduled around the regular offerings. The cost of the whole experience, in spite of the generous grant from AGPA, is a problem for me. It really is prohibitive, with the cost of travel, food and hotel.

All in all I am so happy and grateful that I had the opportunity to go this year. I love AGPA and I feel wonderful sharing and talking with others who share my passion. Thank you!

I am writing to express my appreciation for allowing me to be part of such a wonderful conference. This year, as in the previous two years, I participated in the Institute. This time, however, I was part of a group of more experienced therapists. The whole group process, including the didactic part was incredibly helpful. We talked about the role of scapegoats, psychoanalytic self- psychology, modern psychoanalysis and other modalities that the facilitator integrates in group therapy. The didactic part in the first day of group process was surprisingly helpful. I thought initially that it could hinder the process, but it did not. I always learn something new in these conferences and that is why I always come back for more.

This was my third year attending to the AGPA conference. I already have created strong bonds with therapists from all over the world. Every year some of my new friends meet for dinner and we catch up on our professional and personal lives. This conference in particular feels like a family to me. I cannot wait for next year! Thank you so much for allowing me to be part of your big family!!

I am so motivated with group psychotherapy that I have volunteered to take a leadership role on the COGPS (Colorado Group Psychotherapy Society). Hopefully, AGPA can come to Colorado in a few years!

I want to thank you sincerely for the opportunity to attend this year's conference. Walking away from the experience, I feel expanded, professionally, socially and emotionally. I could not have hoped for this to be such a transformative experience.

I participated in Jan Morris' Modern Analytic two day workshop. Jan's leadership allowed the group to have a powerful experience. Most striking for me was Jan's transparency about her countertransference feelings. She allowed us to peek behind the curtain and understand what her experience was like and some of the choices she made. I found her radical non-defensiveness refreshing and modeled for me that I, too, can be this way with my groups.

I attended a workshop on humor, which was nice once the audience members began to share their own experience of humor in their practices. I built the courage to share a story from my experience. Each time I did this, shared in front of a new group, I got to see that I could be part of. I was accepted and what I had to say was interesting and useful to others.

I attended a workshop about overfunctioning called "Murder in Disguise." This workshop helped me to see, live, the relationship between a therapist's verbal feeding and the level of felt aggression in a group. Jeanne and DeLinda did a marvelous job modeling how not to overfunction. The group was alive and exciting.

I attended a panel discussion with Elliot Zeisel, Stew Aledort and some others. I participated in the demo group for that workshop and, also, that was a brilliant experience. It was particularly interesting to see how people of different theoretical frames think about group. I train at the Center for Group Studies so I'm getting a heavy dose of Modern Analysis outside of AGPA. At AGPA I really got to see that there are many ways of thinking about groups.

I attended a large group experience. It made me uncomfortable when a gentleman went into action and moved his chair to the inside of the circle. I was even more uncomfortable when the group leaders did not address it. I wondered if I was safe. I feared I might have to go into action to protect myself. I don't think I'll be interested in participating in the large group again. I did learn, however, that the large group was a place to explore political and social unconscious.

I attended the Lou Ormont lecture with Phyllis Cohen. I participated in the demo supervision group and a multiplicity of responses about a case I presented. Once again, I saw just how many ways there are to think about countertransference and groups. One of the audience members thought he'd view my case from an intra-psychic point of view and wondered whether, personally, I would like to be married. I'm seeing how all of the material of my life is grist in the mill of my work with others.

The final workshop I attended was about erotic countertransference with a group analyst from Austin whose name is slipping my mind. I learned about my own response to erotic countertransference. I had some memories during the experiential portion of that workshop that I had never previously thought of. I'm seeing that this mixture of experiential work with didactic learning is important for me. I crave the experiential learning. I cannot learn this stuff only from a book.

I must say that each of the programs I attended were powerful. I encountered some people who felt like they made poor workshop choices and I just did not have that experience. I feel lucky in that regard.

I met many new people and got to spend time with many of my colleagues from the Center for Group Studies. Without going into the details of each new person I met, I'm beginning to see how attending the AGPA conference is making my career transition possible. Once I'm ready to leave teaching, or transition into more of a support role when I have a mental health license (I'm currently training at CGS and not yet in a license granting program), that the professional and social community I'm building here will be a tremendous resource for me.

I am taking so many things away from this experience. I feel most grateful for the opportunity to be nurtured in this way. It has resulted in professional confidence and a real sense that I have a knack for this kind of work. I intend to make AGPA a staple of my year. I feel deeply appreciative to the people who make this possible. This is truly a special community and I'm honored to be able to participate.

I was recently awarded a scholarship for the annual conference in New York City. This was an amazing experience where I was able to engage in an incredible institute, attend world class training and develop relationships with some of the best group therapists in the country. I have never attended a training so engaging, thoughtful, and skillful where the experts are so approachable. I am so grateful for the opportunity to attend this powerful conference that AGPA has graciously afforded me.

My desire to grow as a group therapist was sparked several years ago when I was encouraged to attend a Los Angeles Group Psychotherapy Society (an AGPA affiliate) training. I was blown away by the experiential learning component and the skill of the presenters. Additionally, I was intrigued by the different ways the therapists used the group to foster reflection and growth. I didn't miss a LAGPS training that year and was soon encouraged to take the "next step" and go to the APGA conference.

LAGPS brought me into contact with the best group therapists in the LA area and I found that AGPA did the same thing on a national and international level. I have been part of a group therapy book club for the past year and we recently decided to read Richard Billow's most recent book. My first day at the AGPA conference I had the opportunity to see him present and lead several fishbowls that are still etched in my mind. I was amazed and at times shocked by his provocative and warm style. To see such an amazing therapist doing therapy live is something I have only seen or heard of at an AGPA conference.

My second and third days at the conference just accelerated in intensity and my wonderment. I was part of a two year institute with Gil Spielberg and Robert Unger. I was apprehensive about the group going to New York and wasn't sure how much I would get out of it. The first day was rough as the group and myself seemed to struggle for our footing. However, what happened in day two I cannot explain or understand. The group and

leaders continued to work and the ways that members connected was both profound and genuine. The leaders persevered in many terrible situations and showed amazing character, strength, genuineness, growth and love. Thinking about the work this group did and the relationships formed, still chokes me up as I write. I will never forget this experience.

Finally, this conference put me face to face with some of the top group therapists both nationally and internationally. Through colleagues and mentors such as Jeff Hudson and Keith Rand I had the opportunity to meet giants such as Elliot Zeisel and even share an evening at dinner with Pricilla Kauf. I met more world class therapists during my week in New York than I have in my entire career. The AGPA annual conference has become an integral part of my professional development and I am so grateful for the scholarship that has made this possible.

I would like to thank everyone in the AGPA for offering me with the generous opportunity to attend the annual AGPA conference. It was a wonderful experience, almost magical, and the conference has become one of my favorite events that I will look forward to in the upcoming years.

First of all, amongst the various workshops and institutes I've participated in, the process group experience during the 2-day institute was the one that I enjoyed the most for several reasons. I was skeptical at best, in the beginning of the process group, since the group experience was limited to only two days and eight sessions which felt awfully short to me. I wondered if the leader would be able to create a safe environment where people would feel compelled to jump in to and eventually contain group members' affect while getting some meaningful work done. I have had various group experiences in diverse settings but this was probably the quickest in terms of group stage development. The leader did a wonderful job from the beginning in waiting and observing without interfering with any of the crucial interactions that took place during the first session. At the same time, he was able to make terse remarks on the underlying processes in the right moment without forcing anything.

Throughout the two-day group process I have learned a great deal from the leader, especially in relation to 1) noticing non-verbal processes taking place, 2) working with repetitive patterns that emerge as a gestalt both in individual and group level, 3) how to deal with resistance and questioning towards the leader. He also demonstrated and explicitly talked about the role of a group leader; namely, not needing support from the group members, because he gets enough support from the outside, and being the one person who can contain and hold the frame *for* the group. I also really enjoyed the group leader talking about points when he "screwed up" during various instances in the group. During the didactic component, after the group was over, the leader shared specific comments that didn't go right and discussed ways in which he could have done a better job which was extremely comforting and eye-opening. Finding out that even seasoned therapists can make mistakes was a soothing and empowering experience at the same time.

Among the workshops I've attended, I very much enjoyed the Group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Model in integration with Psychodrama (#14). The instructor not only taught basic theories and concepts but also did a wonderful job in demonstrating what he has learned so far through integrating CBT with Psychodrama, which was very powerful. I also enjoyed the discussion following the demonstration where the instructor answered questions without trying to be defensive but was ready to embrace other ideas as well.

In overall, I have gained more expertise in doing group work as a therapist, forged relationships with various professionals coming from all kinds of disciplines and areas throughout the country, and most importantly, felt proud to be part of the great tradition of being a group therapist. I would love to have the privilege of participating in the upcoming events in the future as well. Thanks a lot again and I hope to see you all in our future AGPA conferences.

I wanted to take this time to write you a letter of gratitude for allowing me the opportunity to attend the American Group Psychotherapy Association's Annual Conference in New York, New York. This is my second time attending the annual conference and I cannot sing AGPA's praises enough. I have hugely enjoyed the experiential learning experience that AGPA offers to professionals interested in and who currently practice group psychotherapy.

Last year, I wasn't sure what to expect for the conference and I felt slightly overwhelmed by the experience. I recognized that a lot of my anxiety in participating in the experiential groups came from my overwhelming admiration for the level of experience of other professionals in the room. I allowed my feelings to keep me from expressing myself which led to anxiety. When I returned home I felt some regret for not having shared my feelings and wished that I had been different.

This year I took a risk and I feel it has changed me for the better. I didn't have the opportunity to participate in the 2-day institute due to restrictions from my employer; however I participated in some truly meaningful workshops. After experiencing some anxiety once again about actively participating in group, I finally reached a point in which I decided to take a risk. I participated in a workshop on Redescision Therapy that I feel may have changed my life. I learned more about myself from 15 minutes of empty-chair work than I have known my entire life. I finally felt that it was okay for me to have a voice and to express my feelings. Following this workshop, I was able to spontaneously participate in other workshops, finding that the more I became emotionally involved and "open", the more I gained from the experience.

During my Saturday workshop on Mindfulness, I learned that the feelings I experience in response to the verbalizations of others are useful to the group process. I used to suppress my own feelings thinking that I might "feel too much" and in essence lose myself in the process. I now realize that I won't lose myself by allowing myself to feel, however it is fully possible that I could lose myself if I continue to repress my emotional experiences.

I am so grateful to have had this experience and furthermore I cannot imagine not attending in the future. I made a commitment to myself upon returning from AGPA this year, that I will attend AGPA yearly and I will advocate for group psychotherapy. I have been asked by my mentor, Karen Travis, to share my experience at AGPA with others to increase interest and involvement in AGPA. I will make every effort to create interest in group therapy because I truly feel that group is a special therapeutic experience that offers so much to individuals including feelings of normalcy, mirrors into the self and clues about how we relate to others. AGPA is an experience like none other, it is truly indescribable. I feel that it is the best way to attain CEUs, where else can you learn through experience and come away feeling energized with knowledge and closer to yourself and others.

I will be attending my local chapter of LGPS (Louisiana Group Psychotherapy Society) in May to show my continued commitment to group psychotherapy. Once again I would like to thank you for the scholarship to attend AGPA, without assistance from donors and GPF I wouldn't have been able to afford this experience. Thank you again..

The AGPA conference was really wonderful for me this year, and I so much appreciate the opportunity to attend afforded by the scholarship. For the first time--this is my third conference--I felt the sense of belonging that many AGPA conference attendees talk about. I found that I saw more familiar faces, had made enduring friendships from prior meetings, was more familiar with the energy and structure of the conference, and felt more confident about meeting new people and making connections.

This year I focused on the Modern Analytic theory of group leadership. I have had some exposure to this style--notably from Jeffrey Hudson, whose institute I was a part of last year. This year I was able to attend an excellent institute on working with the leader's countertransference, "Shaken, Rattled and Rolled" with Jan Morris. She was wonderful and excellently combined didactic with experiential, and created a safe atmosphere where I learned a lot about myself and group process. I met several interesting people in my institute, and look forward to continuing work with them at future conferences. I also attended Elizabeth Olson's workshop on resistances, and found not only an affinity between her style and mine, but also theoretical ideas to back up those types of interventions. I attended the "Dead or Alive" open session, observed Eliot Ziesel at work, and understood much better than before the lively discussion among presenters and audience members that followed the demonstration group.

I am also excited to have connected with Gail Brown, who directs the CGS in New York, and I was encouraged by her to pursue further training in Modern Analytic group techniques in New York, which I think I will definitely do. I really felt welcomed and inspired by her response. I am also working towards the CGP credential, and am currently tracking my hours. Next year, I may take the CGP course offered at the conference--one of my friends did it this year, and got a lot from it.

I have attempted to bring some of the techniques of modern analytic thought back to my leadership of the two groups I have in my private practice--they are not working as well as they did in the demo groups at the AGPA, but I at least I am trying! I know I have a lot more to learn, but my leadership style, ability and comfort level has dramatically improved due to all of the learning experiences I've had at AGPA. I now have a group therapy

consultant to work with, but, prior to that, my graduate training did not give me half as much preparation as attending a few AGPA conferences. I am very grateful to the scholarship program, since this is a very expensive conference to attend, and the scholarships allows it to be a financial reality for me. My private practice is still new and I am the sole support of my family at this time. It has been anxiety-provoking to miss a whole week of work to attend the conference, but I think this year I am finally truly hooked and understand the immense value this experience provides for me year round as an investment in myself in both my personal and professional life.

Please let me know if you would like further information on my experience, and I look forward to attending next year's conference.

I felt compelled to express my gratitude for the opportunity to attend this year's AGPA conference and for the growth and transformation which it has given me. If I believed in the power of group to bring insight, growth and healing before, after my experience in the two day institute, it has solidified and fortified my belief in group process ever so much more.

I know the next few months will be spent trying to get my beliefs in the group process out there to as many people as I can. Nothing other than experiencing this process first hand could have had such an impact on me. I appreciate the wisdom of those who have implemented this powerful process as part of the conference.

I want to thank you once again for this tremendous experience of attending the annual conference. This year, through the scholarship provided by the Foundation, I was able to attend all six days of the conference, and wow! I must have lived through six years in those six days. The two day institute continues to be a deep and profoundly moving experience in which I stood face to face with the wars within myself: between shame and compassion, between fear and generosity, between a tongue-tied-ness and an overflowing creativity. Through my fellow group members, I saw parts of myself die and parts of myself being reborn. In a lasting way, I found that I could keep in mind all these people, thoughts, and feelings, and that I am capable of being patient with them all, giving all these parts of me a place to exist and a time to speak. The institute was an experience of abundance. It provided me with a place from which to really listen with my heart, to feel the resonances of other people within me, and to respond to them with the felt-truths.

At the conference, I found kindred spirits with whom I felt at home and was able to relate in intimate and affirming ways. I found persons who share similar curiosities about the world as I do and who, like me, want to expand therapy beyond the confines of individual treatment. In the three conference days, I attended a group dance therapy workshop, a group CBT workshop, and special interest sessions on meditation and on schizophrenia and psychosis. The dance movement workshop with Danielle Fraenkel and the CBT workshop with Greg Crosby were particularly impactful for me. As an externing CBT group facilitator on an inpatient psychiatric unit, I had somehow become disinterested in many of the CBT concepts I've been teaching, due to their rigidity of logic. Greg's compassionate energies showed me how I could imbue CBT concepts with spirituality, story-telling, and meaning. He, for example, talked about framing "pleasant events" as "ways to follow one's bliss." These ways of making a semi-structured group more interpersonal and heart-felt is something that I have taken back into the real world and implemented with success and a sense of personal renewal.

Thank you for recognizing and promoting the power of groups and for sharing this amazing gift with students like myself!

I would like to thank you so much by giving me a scholarship that enabled me to attend for the first time the AGPA conference, as a student this was a worthy experiment for me. Being in different sessions and lectures added a lot to my professional knowledge and personal experience/

I had a chance as a Palestinian woman from the minority inside Israel to bring my feelings issues, to contribute and to be contributed to.

Being in such a big and multicultural conference contributed to me also in a social way.

I had a little difficulty with the huge number of participants that affected in my eyes the intimacy.

ONCE AGAIN I WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERY PERSON THAT MADE THOSE SCHOLARSHIPS POSSIBLE
HOPING TO MEET YOU ALL AGAIN

I would really like to thank the AGPA for the scholarship I was awarded to attend the 2 day Group Institute at the conference this March. I would not have been able to attend the institute without this scholarship and reduced rate, and feel I have grown so much as an individual and budding practitioner.

My experience in groups prior to the conference was limited. I had taken a course about group psychotherapy which had peaked my interest, but only had experience in individual psychotherapy modalities. Attending the institute and participating in a process group was really wonderful-- and challenging- because It showed me first hand the power of the group experience in bringing up (and helping us work towards understanding) our social patterns. I left the institute feeling changed, and I actually needed a couple of days to process what had come up for me. On a personal note, I will take the insights I gained about myself from this experience with me always. On a professional level, I am now committed to learning more about groups, particularly with an interest in learning how to become a group leader. I imagine this will involve participation in many more groups and conferences, and I look forward to participating in AGPA conference in the future!

I am writing to express my sincere appreciation as a recipient of the **Barry Bukatman, M.D. Memorial AGPA Scholarship**. I thoroughly enjoyed my experience at this year's AGPA Annual Meeting in New York from February 28th to March 5th and felt very grateful to be able to attend the conference in its entirety which the scholarship and Bob Schulte and Dr. Barry Wepman, who recommended me for it, made possible.

Dr. Richard Billow was inspiring in his special institute, *Loving, Hating & Knowing: Working with Resistance, Rebellion, and Refusal*. As a fellow New Yorker, I appreciated his direct and playful style as well as his concept of "truthing", or finding truth as a premise in the group encounter. He elucidated the relevance of Bion's quote:

"Truth is as important for the mind as food is for the stomach."

He demonstrated how group has the power to alter truths and change narratives. Just as various levels of truth exist in all interpersonal encounters, so too do various levels of falsity. His concept of 'slanted truth' especially made sense to me given my experience in running groups.

Dr. Billow also invoked another brilliant thinker, Nietzsche, who said:

"Every profound spirit needs a mask."

He emphasized the importance of the social (slanted) self that everyone develops as they navigate the world. I marveled at how astute Dr. Billow was in his demonstration group as he adeptly and quickly noted specific patterns of behavior in its' brave members. A particular intervention he made with an overly critical member will stay with me: "No matter what I say, I'm doing wrong by you. I think that's, perhaps, how you need to connect." He modeled tolerance and clarity and how to see through to an individual's pattern of behavior which underlies their criticism and negative response to the therapist. I found it endearing that he mentioned and owned his sarcasm which many responded to (not always well) and mentioned that his patients "put up with me". Dr. Billow was a far cry from a 'cookie-cutter therapist' and I appreciated the way in which his ballsy New Yorker personality came shining through in his interventions. It highlighted how the therapist being human - very human - can be life-giving and eye-opening for those who need to be awakened to their relational barriers.

Perhaps the most impactful of my conference experience was participating in the two-day pre-conference institute in a *Process Group Experience*. Dr. Hank Fallon is a gem! His quiet, calm and gentle nature quickly established a sense of trust, connection and grounded-ness in our small group of twelve. He emanated a sense of tranquil peace and warmth that drew out each person in the room. I secretly wished for his level of attunement to somehow seep in.

In the next two days, I was thrilled to get the *Basic Principles of Group Therapy* course over with because I would like to apply for a CGP. Since I myself have designed and introduced a group therapy seminar for our psychology interns at the university counseling center, the course was more of a review of what I've already studied and teach but interesting nonetheless. The only missing piece now on the path to certification is the supervision component.

On Saturday morning, I participated as a guest artist invited by Bob Schulte of the Redwell Theater Group in performing the play *Dog Sees God*, a play that depicts the Peanuts' characters as adolescents with psychiatric disorders. I thoroughly enjoyed this experience and found myself enlivened by the experience of playing Peppermint Patty, who grew up to be a mean and derisive teen, a character so different from myself and my own experience of adolescence. It gave me perspective into the type of character who behaves in such an arrogant and condescending way, and an appreciation for who I am (and those who have made me who I am) at the same time. More than that, I thrived on the bond that formed among the cast and formed some meaningful connections with seasoned group therapist, Maryetta Andrews-Sachs as well as newbie psychiatry resident, Yavar Moghimi. This happened in down-time moments like dinner in which we exchanged stories about real life experiences. Having this already formed small group really provided me with a strong sense of belonging and purpose from the conference's start until its finish.

Attending the entire conference was transformative and deepened my sense of groupwork and belief in myself as a group therapist. I saw my own group therapist, Dr. Stewart Aledort, at the conference. On the verge of terminating group therapy myself and having experienced profound growth in Stewart's group, it was fitting to see him and interact with him on a different and - if you knew Stewart at all - less grueling level. A real highlight was when he greeted me enthusiastically with his heart-warming grin and called me "sweetie"! Is it clear yet that I learned how much I value when the therapist becomes human?!

Thank you again for this most wonderful learning experiencing. I hope to only become more involved with AGPA as time goes on.

As a recipient of the Mary M. Tannenbaum scholarship I would like to first say thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to attend the 2011 AGPA Annual Conference as a first time recipient. It was with the financial support of the scholarship that I was able to attend the conference in its entirety.

Overall, I enjoyed the conference as a first time attendee. I was fully welcomed by various AGPA members and introduced to many fascinating professionals as the recipient of the scholarship. The Women's SIG set the tone for me at their luncheon. The Women's SIG leaders were awesome and provided great information about how to get involved in AGPA and what to expect as an attendee. The various receptions and luncheons were great networking opportunities. I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Phil Flores, Dr. Rebecca MacNair-Semands, and a host of other professionals that I exchanged information with. As a third year graduate student applying for internship next year networking with advanced group leaders from a variety of settings was a great opportunity for me.

In regards to the educational programs I attended the most salient experience was participating in the process-oriented group with Dr. Hank Fallon. I truly enjoyed this experience and learned a lot about the kind of group leader I would like to become. Dr. Fallon was an excellent group leader and I learned a few group

interventions and techniques from him that I would like to add to my own group skill set. As a first time participant in the process-oriented group and hearing of the previous experiences of other members, I was very glad to have the experience of working with Dr. Fallon. I liked the fact that outside of group he was very warm and approachable to me as a person and group member. I remember various interactions with him being genuine and pleasant and noting for myself that this is the kind of experience I want group members to have with me.

Another educational experience was the college counseling trends workshop. Since my area of interest is college counseling I welcomed the stories of success that the various college counselor centers shared. The panel delivered great information of what has worked for them in regards to depression, anxiety and religious groups. They shared challenges and offered successful strategies to promote and maintain groups on a college campus. In addition to the workshop I truly enjoyed meeting with the various individuals interested in college counseling at the College Counseling SIG round-table meeting. My short-term goal is to obtain an internship in a college counseling setting and then eventually find a full-time job in this setting upon completion of my degree. Attending this round-table meeting allowed me to meet a variety of people from different college counseling centers and hear about the groups they offer on their campus. Moreover, it was also great to brainstorm ideas and discuss challenges regarding group work.

It was my first time presenting at AGPA along with colleagues from my institution. Our presentation titled, "Building a Group Psychotherapy Program at a University Counseling Center: Lessons Learned from the Field" was well attended with active participation and engagement. The verbal feedback and the evaluations were stellar regarding our presentation and I was proud to represent Wright State University.

As a graduate student member of AGPA I would like to offer some constructive feedback in regards to my attendance at the conference. As a student I found the registration process to be at times very confusing and tedious. In addition, the registration fee for a graduate student is quite high. I realize without the scholarship I would have missed out on so many great opportunities. It would be great to have the registration fee affordable for the many graduate students who unfortunately did not receive a scholarship. Next, it was difficult connecting with other graduate students because the primary focus and attention is geared to working and

practicing professionals. It would be great to have a graduate student round-table and/or reception to meet other students from various programs and hear about their research. Lastly, I felt very welcomed at AGPA; however, I did notice the lack of diversity in regards to African-American women and men. Moreover, there was a lack of institutes and workshops that focused on working with ethnic minorities in group psychotherapy.

Overall, the experience being at AGPA and in New York City was rewarding and I look forward to my participation in AGPA and attending future conferences.

I took so much home with me, inspired by practitioners doing risky and important work around the world. I was inspired by Canel Bingol and his work with the mothers of disappeared political dissidents in Turkey. The ADAPT model he introduced and many of his exercises with group psychodrama have already provided new directions for my capstone research project. Likewise, Celia Riskin's experiences in Argentina - shared in the same session - provided me with reality-based examples of what's possible in difficult political contexts, helping to inform my exploration of options for work in Colombia.

Presentations by Robi Friedman and Nimer Said offered me new perspectives on forgiveness and intergenerational trauma, relevant to my past experience working with public housing residents and the survivors' families in Colombia, and practitioners and leaders with the New York-based group GEMS offered a model for co-creating resiliency with sexually exploited and trafficked youth.

I also made connections with new practitioners with similar backgrounds to my own (social activists in urban areas, working with multinational populations) based in New York and San Francisco, and look forward to continuing conversations that lasted late into the evening.

I left the conference feeling energized, and with an altogether fresh sense of possibility far removed from academic and professional environments I've been exploring, which have offered little in the way of practical experience or insight in working with groups. I returned to my campus in rural Virginia with a journal full of notes, stories for professors and classmates and buzzing with ideas, all made possible by this scholarship to attend AGPA.

I would very much like to thank the AGPA Board and Contributors to the Scholarship Fund for providing the funding that allowed me to attend the AGPA annual conference this year. I had a very enjoyable experience and am very much looking forward to attending next year.

There were many great learning experiences, but I will focus on those that impacted me the most. I attended the institute before the start of the full conference and had a fantastic experience. I am very much a beginner as my experience leading groups is very limited, so it was amazing to be a participant in a group where over 2 days we moved through each stage of development and became a cohesive and functional working group. I had not had that experience before, so it showed me what was possible, and the therapeutic impact such a group can have on all members. I really hope to reconnect with all the members of that group again next year.

In addition to the institute, the sessions that also had great impact were the Aggression in Groups session and Attachment session. The Aggression in Groups session demonstrated how groups can become unsafe when aggression flows unchecked. There is a delicate balance that must be managed by the group leader to prevent both a group that gets stuck in appreciation and niceness and a group where aggression is expressed in the form of insults and cheap shots. Although I had previous knowledge of attachment styles, the Attachment session reviewed the concepts and had a guided experiential piece that allowed each participant to consider their own attachment style. I look forward to learning more about how to use knowledge of group members' attachment styles to inform interventions in group therapy.

Overall I had a wonderful time at AGPA 2011, and again wish to express my sincere gratitude to the AGPA foundation and contributors to the scholarship fund.

It was wonderful to be able to return again and to have a completely different experience than my first year. I much appreciated the mixed level institute I attended, where I was able to learn about group leading from a very different perspective than my training. I also appreciated being a member of a group with colleagues of all experience levels, as I understood that one is always growing, expanding and taking risks in this field. It was both humbling and inspiring.

Like last year, I was again overwhelmed with all of the participants' and facilitators' openness – everyone was very supportive and willing to authentically share themselves. It is wonderful to know there is a community of therapists who incorporate their work into their lives in such a powerful way.

I also want to note I really enjoyed the large group experience again. Although it is quite intimidating, it seems like such an important aspect of group work and of AGPA in general. Being in the large group teaches me about myself and my community in a way I cannot get anywhere else. I hope this group continues to thrive through years to come.

Again, thank you so much for the opportunity to attend the 2011 AGPA conference. I look forward to next year in NYC again!

The 2011 Annual Meeting was a professionally inspiring and personally healing and life-changing experience for me. Not only did I have the opportunity to connect to a professional community that resonates deeply with my own outlook and shares my interests, but I learned new skills, approaches, and ways of being that have immensely enriched the child and adolescent groups that I currently lead and the variety of groups that I will lead in the future. Additionally, the two day process group gave me my first opportunity to participate as a group member, rather than leader, in the group therapy process. During this time, I not only got to learn professionally from observing a brilliant group therapist in action, but was able to experience personal healing and gain personal insight, for the first time experiencing for myself the tremendous power of group.

I would never have been able to attend this AGPA conference if not for the generous scholarship I received. I am incredibly grateful to have had this opportunity. I hope to continue to attend conferences in the future and am increasingly committed to deepening my involvement in AGPA as my career progresses. I expect the professional contacts and friendships I began at this conference to continue to grow, deepen, and expand and be a major source of sustenance for me throughout the years.

Butterflies were rampant on Monday night as I prepared for the opening day of the Institute. I was reflecting on how much I had learned last year and how excited I was to reconnect with the people I had met. Having been lucky enough to attend the Annual Meeting twice now, I am almost at a loss for how much experiencing can be packed into 5 days.

This year I attended an institute focused on the Social Unconscious, and I had thought I kind of knew what to expect. Haim Weinberg nearly blew my top in my institute experience as I worked to soak up all I was learning from watching him manage a difficult group member, a large age gap, and take the group from intellectualization to experiencing, and also allow myself to be open to the learning and reflecting that I was doing for myself as a person and a professional. The institute is the best thing ever. I walked away rejuvenated and with an increased awareness of myself that continues to grow and solidify. I also was able to form new friendships.

The conference portion of the meeting also provided a myriad of experiences that opened my mind up to ways to lead groups and form connections between people that is therapeutic, creative, and amazing. I was able to attend several sessions and SIG activities that enabled me to get information, as well as connect with colleagues that will help me stay fresh and current in my group practice. I have already followed up with several of them, and have begun working on some projects.

I returned from the annual meeting refreshed, rejuvenated, and ready to infuse the group program at the university where I work with energy and enthusiasm. I can not say enough about the learning and growing that happens there to anyone who will listen. Thank you so much to the Foundation for allowing early career practitioners, such as myself, to take part in this life-impacting experience.

The 2010 meeting was the first AGPA meeting I attended, and it left me with great expectations for this year's meeting in New York. I was almost afraid that my expectations had grown too high to come true; however, I was yet again surprised in very positive ways.

Prior to the meeting, I have received a warm welcoming email from one of the leaders of the Women's SIG, Karin Hodges. I was fortunate to run in to her while we stood in line to get a cup of coffee on the first day of the meeting. Although we have never met in person before this time, she immediately recognized my name when I introduced myself, and I had a warm feeling that I truly did matter to the SIG and the organization.

This was only the beginning of the "welcome home" feeling of the AGPA. As the week went on, I reconnected with many people I met in the previous meeting, some from the institute and some from the Counseling Center SIG. And I began thinking how much I would like to create my place in this "family." So when Michele Ribeiro announced in the Counseling Center SIG meeting that new co-chairs will be needed for the SIG, I decided I would like to try stepping up for the position. Of course, I was worried I was still too new in the organization and in the field itself to fill Michele's and Mark Beecher's shoes. When I expressed my interest and concern to Michele; however, she was very supportive and encouraged me to take on the role. I particularly appreciated that she based her encouragement on our "interactions" on the SIG listserv over the year, which made me feel again, that I was seen as "somebody" in this organization. I will be serving as a co-chair for the Counseling Center SIG when Michel and Mark complete their term next year, and I greatly look forward to this opportunity to serve in that role under mentorship of Michel and Mark.

Taking on a co-chair role is probably quite a challenge for me, but I even have a greater ambition of someday starting our own regional affiliate society. A present, the closest regional affiliate for us in Utah is probably Colorado, as there is none in Utah, Nevada or Idaho. If we are able to create our own affiliate society, perhaps a joint society of these three states, that will generate a lot of opportunities for group training at a local level. My hope is that many students will attend such local meetings and institutes, and grow their interests in group therapy. I would also long to have periodical continuing education and networking opportunities between AGPA's annual meetings. I have talked to several people from this region, and they all seem interested in the idea of having our own local affiliate society. Despite my desires and motivation, the realist in me reminds me that I have no idea what it takes to create and maintain an affiliate society. The closest thing I have done to this is to start a small local providers group for networking, which has 15-20 active members. What I would like to do now is to research what is involved in such process and how realistic it is for me to pursue it. Karen Hodges has told me about the mentorship program in the Women's SIG, so I plan to apply for it this year and seek guidance through this venue.

At this year's meeting, I also decided to apply for the CGP certification. This decision was finalized for me during the Principles of Group Psychotherapy course taught by Keith Rand and Nancy Fawcett. Prior to this, I had been thinking about someday applying for one, but I felt unqualified to be the CGP, particularly after seeing how truly experienced group therapists run AGPA groups. Yet Keith said in the class; the CGP only means we meet minimum criteria and not necessarily experts yet, which relieved a lot of pressure from me. In addition, I agreed with and wanted to support the aspect of "quality control" the CGP certifications can establish in the field. So with some anxiety, I turned in my application for the CGP certification and now wait for the result.

My first AGPA meeting last year "hooked" me to the organization. My second meeting this year "caught" me for certain. I have not felt the kind of kinship and desire to belong in any other organizations. I now feel committed to AGPA and plan to stay a part of this group for years to come. Last but not the least; I would like to express my gratitude for the GPF, and specifically, the Durkin-Glatzer scholarship that enabled me to attend to this year's meeting. Someday I hope to start repaying for the support I received from the GPF.