

16 November 2016

Secretary-Treasurer
Canadian Group Psychotherapy Foundation

Dear Dr Söchting,

I'm one of the recipients of this year's CGPF Endowments Conference Scholarships. I'm writing to describe the impact that the scholarship had by allowing me to attend my first CGPA Conference last month in Toronto.

The conference was really a unique experience for me. I found the more didactic sessions to be quite stimulating, as they were interactive and really got the audience involved. I found the session about hesitations on the edge of intimacy with Joan-Diane Smith and Allan Sheps particularly interesting and enjoyable.

The most memorable component of the conference was the experiential training group. To date, my experience in groups had been restricted to the role of a junior therapist, and I really didn't understand what it was like to be a group member. In the ETG I discovered the emotion-amplifying effect of the group. I found it really remarkable that a group of strangers was capable of achieving such intimacy in just 3 half-days. Together we experienced warmth and conflict, intimacy and distance, fear and loss. We learned about each other and ourselves. I left the experiential group feeling confident that groups represent a powerful medium in which to conduct psychotherapy, and am motivated to pursue further training in this area.

I am grateful to have had this career-influencing experience and for the CGPF scholarship that enabled it. Thank you so much!

Sincerely,

Dr Roy Ulrich MD
PGY-4 Psychiatry
University of Alberta

December 8, 2016

Canadian Group Psychotherapy Foundation &
Canadian Group Psychotherapy Conference Committee

Re: CGPF 2016 Scholarship

To Whom It May Concern:

I want to extend my gratitude toward the Canadian Group Psychotherapy Foundation for providing scholarships and assisting emerging psychotherapists to connect to a wider community of professionals and engage in influential learning opportunities. As a scholarship recipient, I used the financial assistance to attend the Canadian Group Psychotherapy Association's 2016 annual conference: The Power and Potential for Groups. The conference program was rich with learning and the workshops and social activities provided a great atmosphere for exploration and authentic connection. I have experienced and witnessed the benefits of group therapy but this conference cemented my belief in the work and connected me to a multidisciplinary group of supportive individuals who hold a breadth of knowledge and experience. The content presented at the conference has been a point of reflection over the last couple months; I truly believe the learning will serve to inform my future practice.

As an emerging psychotherapist, one of my training goals is to gain competence, experience, and confidence in applying mindfulness-based interventions (MBI) within group therapy. This year's CGPA keynote speaker, Dr. Zindel Segal, who is a pioneer in mindfulness-based clinical care, presented recent and primary research on the benefits of utilizing MBI in clinical and community settings. He engaged the audience in several mindfulness activities and facilitated a dynamic question period that shed light onto the skepticism and optimism of this developing approach. Again, as a new psychotherapist it is so important to understand the benefits of theoretical approaches but also be aware of broader professional communities resistance and cautions.

I attend all three days of the conference and particularly appreciated the opportunity to participate in a full day of experiential training group (ETG). The ETG offered me the benefit of being a group participant, while observing a skilled facilitator model leadership and navigate through challenging issues that occurred during the group development process. I believe this experience benefited me both personally and professionally; the immersion provided an invaluable opportunity to critically examine and explore issues of diversity and power imbalances that are present in all groups.

The Power & Potential of Groups 2016 conference was different than most conferences I have attended, in both the felt experience and the seed of curiosity it has planted. Almost instantly following the conference, I applied to become a member of the CGPA and look forward to benefiting from and contributing to the membership. The conference helped me recognize the need for and value of groups. I look forward to attending the CGPA conference in the future and in the meantime, I am committed to honing my skills as a group leader and advocating for the benefit of therapeutic groups.

Sincerely,

Christine Bilinski
M.ED. Candidate
University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan
christine.bilinski@gmail.com

I was pleased to attend the CGPA in Toronto in October 2016 with the support of the Canadian Group Psychotherapy Foundation conference scholarship endowment. This scholarship gave me the opportunity to experience hands-on learning of group psychotherapy theory and techniques. I valued having the time to learn alongside other passionate clinicians and students in both formal and informal ways, through workshops and delicious lunches. A workshop on learning about a novel mindfulness-based peer supervision model was a highlight for me. I will certainly reflect on the lessons I learned during this conference in my future group therapy endeavors.

Hanna McCabe-Bennett, MA

PhD Candidate in Clinical Psychology, Ryerson University

Dear Canadian Group Psychotherapy Foundation,

The CGPA 2016 conference scholarship was very beneficial to my practice as a community-worker-in-training who is passionate about leadership and community development. A worker who is trying to learn more about psychotherapy, who is working with conflict resolution, as well as with the harm reduction model in group settings. The conference helped me to better understand group culture and processes, which is crucial to the work I do, and something I hope to continue while working with people who are in conflict with the law.

The experiential training component was also a helpful opportunity, and I feel the difficulties and effects of group therapy firsthand. I was able to not only witness how group members see their reflection in others, how a group moves through stages of conflict, but also to discuss it with experienced practitioners. The conference was a great place for meeting likeminded people, beyond just networking, and I felt like I had found my home.

I have already started to apply the lessons I learned at the conference as a placement student at John Howard Society's Reintegration Centre, and the advocacy work and programs we facilitate in the South Toronto Detention Centre. I am grateful for the scholarship as it has made all of this possible for me.

Forever grateful, and looking forward to next year's conference.

Sincerely,

Rachelle Van Dijk

Canadian Group Psychotherapy Foundation

"Attending the 2016 CGPA conference in Toronto was an incredibly positive and inspiring experience. Having recently graduated from school, and being a new professional in the mental health field, receiving the scholarship from The Canadian Group Psychotherapy Foundation made attending the conference possible for me. Over the course of the conference, I attended many educational and thought provoking workshops, all of which I found to be very beneficial to my continued learning and professional development. Zindel Segal's keynote speech on MBCT was comprehensive and engaging, and the experiential component was particularly useful and skillfully led.

Overall, one of the most memorable aspects of my experience was meeting the incredibly welcoming, inclusive, and generous community of professionals that were in attendance at the conference. The interprofessional collection of members brought a particularly notable and valued depth to each workshop and gathering. As well, the social and networking opportunities organized in the evenings were a great addition to the day's activities; I met many more interesting and supportive like-minded professionals within these friendly outings.

I am very grateful for the CGPF scholarship and opportunity to attend this fantastic conference, and I look forward to attending many more in the future."

With gratitude,
Michelle