

GROUP

The Journal of the Eastern Group Psychotherapy Society

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS:

Expanding the Social Justice Frame in Group Work and Group Psychotherapy

Guest Editor: Christine Schmidt, LCSW, CGP

Senior Editor: Marty Cooper, PhD, LMHC, NCC

Associate Editor, Cheryl Gerson, LCSW, CGP

This *special issue* of [GROUP](#) invites group psychotherapists, psychoanalysts, group work activists, and scholars from around the world to contribute literature that centers social justice within therapeutic groups and organizations. "Therapeutic" refers to group work that addresses interpersonal and systemic harm with the intention of fostering a healing experience.

Group psychotherapists and group workers are deepening their understanding of the relationship between the political and the personal. Normative social and political values that express biases of the dominant culture are embedded in unconscious processes until they are consciously disrupted (Holmes, 2023; Layton, 2020; Morgan, 2024; Schmidt & Lucas, 2024; Sheehi & Sheehi, 2022). Layton (2020, p. xxxix) describes "unconscious" as the way "social positions and power differentials shape continuous and ever-present unconscious processes" in interpersonal interactions.

Liberation psychologists and decolonial scholars Sheehi and Sheehi (2022, p 67) explain how the psychotherapy process can produce "disalienation, a consciousness in the colonial patient, an awareness that they are sociogenic subjects forged by the violence pressed upon them and the material of their individual and collective subjectivity that resides in their body and psyche." Psychological liberation must develop understanding of the objective and subjective roots of alienation/oppression.

Group interventions, as explained and recommended by the Holmes Commission report (HC, 2023b, pp. 161–162), provide an essential tool to disrupt oppressive norms:

Racialized enactments take their most forceful forms as group phenomena, on the public stage which involves organizational policies and procedures, classroom dynamics, and community events and programs. The individualist nature of psychoanalytic thinking and practice is not only inadequate to address these group phenomena, but it can also cause much more harm. Locating the problem in individuals, with attendant blame, can exacerbate already volatile affects and fail to provide the necessary containment for the group, thereby eschewing working through which might lead to a healing process.

Expanding the frame in group psychotherapy and other configurations of therapeutic group work must include examining the societal power dynamics that are expressed in interpersonal dynamics.

This special issue seeks to inspire new thinking and practice about groups. Interdisciplinary contributions and cross-geography collaborations are encouraged. Additionally, obstacles to expanding the frame should be accompanied by suggestions of creative pathways that utilize psychodynamic group work approaches to transform relationships and systems of domination.

Potential Submission Topics:

- Group work as a liberatory and therapeutic practice
- The political as personal in group psychotherapy
- The therapeutic value of psychoeducational groups
- Community engagement as group psychotherapy
- Therapeutics of international solidarity work
- Interrupting unconscious processes in groups that reinforce societal norms
- Systems of domination and control enacted in groups
- Co-creating new frames for group psychotherapy
- Ensuring equity and inclusion in group psychotherapy
- Diversity vs. anti-oppression in organizational groups
- Organizations as groups and the unconscious power dynamics

We invite contributions that offer new insights, theoretical perspectives, and evidence on the topic. We welcome various formats, including empirical, theoretical, and narrative submissions.

Prospective authors may submit abstracts of up to 500 words to Christine Schmidt, Guest Editor, at cschmidt535@gmail.com by **October 15, 2025**. Full articles of approximately 8,000 words with APA citations are due by **January 1, 2026**. Revised submissions of selected articles are due by **April 1, 2026**, with publication of the issue anticipated in the **fall of 2026**.

- Holmes Commission. (2023, June 19). *Final report of the Holmes Commission on Racial Equality in American Psychoanalysis 2023*.
<https://apsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Holmes-Commission-Final-Report-2023-Report-rv6-19-23.pdf>
- Layton, L. (2020). *Toward a Social Psychoanalysis*. Routledge.
- Morgan, T. (2024). Must We Drown in the Wake? Notes on Addressing Racism at Psychoanalytic Institutes. *GROUP*, 48(2-3), 11-47. DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.1353/grp.2024.a949682>
- Schmidt, C. & Lucas, R. (2023). Group Psychotherapy, Racial and Social Justice. *GROUP*, 47(3-4), 9-19. DOI <https://doi.org/10.1353/grp.2023.a916642>
- Sheehi, L., & Sheehi, S. (2022). *Psychoanalysis Under Occupation*. Routledge.