

# Editorial

This issue of *Groupwork* is the first to include a new feature – a section of *Groupwork in Practice* which will publish papers that are descriptive of groupwork in practice, and perhaps less ‘scientific’ than those that we have traditionally published. In this section we will publish papers that provide rich descriptions of examples of groupwork and reflection on them and what happened. We welcome contributions that raise issues and challenges and which will stimulate discussion and debate. We are keen to publish more papers focusing in more detail on groupwork practice in the future.

For the Guidance on writing for the *Groupwork in Practice* section please visit:

<https://groupworkjournal.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/gpwkpracticepapers.pdf>.

We are pleased to publish Valerie Roy and Mark Doel’s paper *Stories of Change in a Québec Group for Men who have Perpetrated Violence against a Partner* as our first in this section.

The articles in this issue of *Groupwork* cluster around a number of overlapping themes, although each makes their own unique contribution. These themes are groups with parents, groups with men, co-working and mindfulness. All papers in this issue consider in varying depth issues of co-working; two are about groupwork with men, three focus on groupwork with parents, and two reflect on the concept of mindfulness.

Cheryl Fulton and Kevin Fall’s paper, *Mindfulness as a Mechanism for Developing the Co-Leader Relationship* explores the relationship between leaders in therapeutic groups and the role mindfulness can play and the contribution it can make to co-working. Based in Texas USA they highlight that co-leadership is a specific model of group leadership and that the relationship between the leaders is a therapeutic device to positively impact change within the group. They

draw on their experience of co-leading therapeutic groups and they argue that the development of mindfulness has both *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* benefits which can be particularly relevant to developing and maintaining the co-leader relationship. The paper uses Tuckman's (2001) framework of preparation pre-group, forming, storming, norming performing, adjourning stages of a group to explore what mindfulness offers a co-working relationship in therapeutic groups.

Hilary Jenkinson's paper *The value of peer support and a strengths based approach in a groupwork programme for fathers in a family support setting* critically explores the experience and learning gained from planning and facilitating a fathers' group in a family support setting, in Cork, Ireland. It recounts the journey of Just for Dads, a groupwork programme for fathers. Jenkinson makes the case that groupwork is a very powerful tool for learning and change when operating from a strengths perspective and facilitating peer learning in the group process as they stimulate a sense of self-belief and cultivate resilience. The issue of co-working also arises in this paper and it discusses effective working relationships between co-workers and the importance of both male only space, and the inclusion of female perspectives.

Julia Jude, Veronica Rivera Gould, and Gilda Flores are family therapists based in England. Their paper includes the themes of work with parents, mindfulness and considers co-working. They write about an area of practice that can be important for social workers and other practitioners in social and health care. They draw on a variety of theories and practice based ideas in their application of groupwork principles. They combine approaches derived from Bowlby's ideas on attachment and emotional availability (AEA), with mindfulness, non-violent resistance (NVR) and systemic practices. *Using groupwork to enhance parental presence and emotional availability* takes the unusual approach of presenting the groupwork by focusing on the experiences and outcomes of one member. They explore participants' reflections on the group process and its impact on them as parents and highlight the power for the parents of coming together in a group over family therapy because of the shared struggle with the same issues. They conclude by offering recommendations for groupwork practice to enhance parents' emotional availability, highlighting some of the strengths and issues encountered during the process of the group and suggesting use of a more diverse theoretical framework to better accommodate the complex, cultural

and embodied experiences that comes with our family relationships to which we are deeply connected.

## **Groupwork in Practice**

Reports of Interventions and groupwork with men are rare – and here we are with two papers in one journal! In *Stories of Change in a Québec Group for Men who have Perpetrated Violence against a Partner* the authors Valerie Roy and Mark Doel provide a compelling argument for the benefit of groupwork for this population and the importance of applying these findings to future work. They describe a group run by GAPI (Groupe d'aide aux personnes impulsives) which has been offering services to men who have perpetrated violence against a partner since 1988, to encourage men to change their violent behaviour toward their partner. They describe an example of a group meeting and write about the issues of co-leading, referral and waiting time, the men joining an existing group and how this is handled, how group members support and challenge each other to 'work harder' at their issues. They highlight how the active participation in the group and the mutual aid provided by listening to one another, sharing different viewpoints on the same situation, and exchanging tips were all identified as important aspects by participants. They end with lessons learnt for groupwork from this specific experience that are relevant across a range of other groups.

The issue concludes with a review written by Angela Olsen of Roger Grainger's *Educating Anglicans: Investigating Groupwork in the Church of England*.

Jennie Fleming

## **Reference**

Tuckman, B. (2001). Developmental Sequence in Small Groups. (PDF) *Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications Journal*, Spring, 71–72