

Boundaries, Belonging and Well-Being: Re-negotiating Roles and Authority in our Communities



Fall 2023 Group Relations Conference

Teachers College, Columbia University, NY

November 17-19, 2023

This event is co-sponsored by Teachers College, Columbia University & The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations

TEACHERS COLLEGE
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Dear Prospective Member:

On local, national, and international levels, there have been major challenges and changes to the social order—in recent years in particular—ranging from a rise in authoritarianism, the development of alternate realities, conflicts related to the status and ‘value’ of lives of certain racial/cultural groups, climate change, and the global COVID pandemic—which drastically decreased our sense of security and well-being and increased our sense of isolation and reliance on technology to work and relate to each other. In addition to our ongoing efforts to navigate these issues and create a ‘new sense of normal’, the recent “migration crisis” has added to this sense of flux and change as thousands of individuals cross national boundaries in search of better lives. This has further challenged our understanding of and relationship to authority; the roles we and others (including the migrants) take up in these developing spaces; and is forcing us to re-negotiate our collective sense of self and community as physical and social boundaries bend, break, dissolve, form, and reform.

Authority, roles, and boundaries are essential characteristics of all groups and social systems. These phenomena provide the structure necessary to develop a sense of community, belonging, security, and well-being within social systems.

This GRC provides an experiential learning environment to explore these group phenomena and dynamics as they unfold within the boundaries of a temporary organization. Conference members will have opportunities to negotiate and renegotiate both the conscious **AND** the unconscious group dynamics involved in the formation and functioning of groups and social systems. This may include exploring and learning about boundaries, authority and roles in groups and how these affect our sense of belonging, community, and well-being within our groups. Perhaps we might even reimagine our collective understanding of boundaries in a way that helps make sense of community, belonging, authority, and roles in these times. In the conference we will explore together, *in the here and now*, what we might collectively create and learn.

Directorate

Eliat Aram

Conference Director

Jean Sohn

Associate Director of Administration

Chelsea Rodriguez and Jonathan Rust

The Administrative Team

Primary Task

The primary task is to study the intra- and inter-personal, group and inter-group, and organizational behavior and dynamics as they unfold in the here-and-now of the conference as a temporary organization within its context.

You will have an opportunity to learn about:

- Conscious and unconscious factors that shape participation in groups
- What roles we take up in groups and why
- How we take up our own leadership and authority
- How our leadership and authority are taken up by others
- How aspects of our identities influence and are influenced by our social, political and ecological context

Conference Design and Role of Staff:

The conference is designed as a temporary organization with the primary task of providing opportunities for learning. It is not about teaching in conventional ways. Staff manage the conference boundaries, but they do not manage people. They will be observing, interpreting, reflecting on and making sense of the various groups' experiences, as well as their own, including those that are hidden and sometimes unconscious. The consulting staff's interpretations will focus on group-level phenomena rather than on individual behavior. A complete staff list with brief biographies will be provided at registration.

Logistics

Location:

Teachers College, Columbia University
525 West 120th Street
New York, New York, 10027

Registration:

This conference is available to all students of Teachers College, Columbia University and other Columbia-affiliated schools, as well as any interested and willing members of the public. In order to preserve the integrity of the group dynamics, applicants should plan to attend all events. Those who know in advance that they may miss any significant portion of the conference are asked to forego attendance at this time. Experiential learning is sometimes intense and often effortful. If you are undergoing significant stress or managing a difficult situation currently, please consider postponing your attendance in this conference. If you are not sure whether or not to attend this year, we are happy to talk this through with you via email or by phone.

To reserve a spot in the conference you must register by November 6, 2023, by using the following registration link: <https://form.jotform.com/70415341585151>

If you have questions, please email the conference administrative team at: teacherscollegeGRC@gmail.com

Schedule:

Friday,	November 17, 2023	9:15 AM - 7:30 PM
Saturday,	November 18, 2023	9:00 AM - 7:30 PM
Sunday,	November 19, 2023	9:00 AM - 5:45 PM

Registration takes place on Friday from 9:15 to 9:45 am.
There will be a reception on Sunday from 5:15 to 5:45 pm.

Meals and Lodging:

Light refreshments and hot beverages will be available each morning in the Member Lounge. Members are responsible for securing their own meals at the lunch breaks.

The conference is non-residential. Recommendations for housing accommodations are provided upon request by contacting the conference administrative team.