



COLLABORATION and COMPETITION

*Exploring the Dynamics of Working Together
in groups, organisations and communities*
A residential group relations conference

19-24 November 2018, Melbourne, Australia

THE
TAVISTOCK
INSTITUTE®



An invitation to learn

In our communities, organisations and society we depend upon people to work together effectively. Many collaborative structures help us work together — teams, partnerships, federations, strategic alliances, committees, cooperatives, communities of interest, councils and parliaments, and many more ...

To survive and thrive at work and in our communities we both collaborate and compete.

We collaborate because of the imperative to work across boundaries. Working together on a shared enterprise we are better able to create something larger than what we could alone. We can share finite resources and individual skills for mutual benefit. Collaboration is reciprocity at work. But it also has its shadow side in collusions that exclude others or betray group values.

Collaboration is not easy. It requires us to give up proprietorship, narcissistic desires, fixed views and beliefs, and to be open to different ways of thinking and doing things. In collaboration we encounter the potential to be changed by ‘the other’.

When we compete we can experience the exhilaration of winning ambitious goals, a well-debated argument, or successfully achieving desired project results. It enlivens our endeavours, inspiring creativity, innovation and striving for excellence. Competition can positively stimulate desires to achieve higher levels of knowledge, skills, and performance. We also compete for scarce resources, to get a bigger slice of pie. The latter may lead to destructive rivalry, where the ‘winner takes all’.

Constructive and destructive aspects of collaboration and competition are visible in every sphere of life. They can be seen in the political and commercial manoeuvring to exploit the emerging resources of the Arctic as the sea ice retreats. We can see them in the manipulation of ‘big data’ and social media technologies. Or in the effects of a global financial crisis caused in part by collusions and rivalries blind to their ultimate consequences. And, we know it in our working lives — our organisations promote and reward collaboration, partnerships, teamwork — but these may be sabotaged or subverted by competitive dynamics present in equal force within and outside the organisational system.

What is the relationship between collaboration and competition? What can we understand of the political tensions in collaboration? Of the impact of collaboration upon authority? What do we need to learn about competing that does not require the destruction of the other?

I invite you to work with us in exploring these and other questions in a unique learning environment — that of a group relations conference, where the learning is in real-time, experiential and long-lasting.

Jinette de Gooijer, Conference Director

What is a group relations conference?

A group relations conference is a unique opportunity to study rational thinking and emotional experience, without giving precedence of one over the other.

Group relations conference technology originated with the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (UK) as a method for understanding group and organisational behaviour through learning from experience. Based on clinical and research practices from psychoanalysis and the social sciences, group relations conferences have developed around the world as a powerful mode of learning about the roles we take up for effectively participating in groups, organisations and society.

In Australia, group relations conferences have been held almost continuously since the 1980s under the auspices of professional associations and university higher degree programs. **Collaboration and Competition: Exploring the Dynamics of Working Together** is the 5th residential conference hosted by Group Relations Australia.

In a group relations conference you will experience a learning model different from any other kind of conference. There are no 'conference presentations' as such. You will be engaged in various organisational and learning tasks in groups with different configurations that will challenge ways of thinking about self, others and group behaviour. Learning happens within programmed events, and in the spaces between events in the interactions with others. The learning is participative, immediate and continues long beyond the time of the conference. It is an intensive model of learning with a ratio of approximately 1 staff to every 5 participants.

You can expect to learn about:

- **Yourself —**
the formal and informal roles you take up in work groups, and why you might take up those roles; gain insight to one's own behaviour in relation to others; deepen your understanding of the question, "How is it that I am having the experience I am having, right now?"
- **Skills for organisational roles —**
for taking up leadership, followership and exercising authority; effectively consulting to groups at work; of working with uncertainty and 'not knowing'.
- **Dynamic forces that influence group behaviour —**
the conscious and unconscious dynamics of groups at work; the systemic forces at play within an organisation —rational and irrational, authority and power, the co-existent presence of collaboration and competition.

Who is the conference for?

The conference is for those who wish to grow their understanding and practice of working with others. It will appeal to those who have responsibility for groups at work, or who work across boundaries where the imperative to collaborate is critical for success.

Participants come from different professions and backgrounds. They are leaders, managers, educators, researchers, consultants, clinicians, administrators, students, service providers, professional or technical workers.

They are typically people who seek to expand the range of possibilities for thoughtful action and responding to conundrums at work.

Previous experience of an experiential group relations conference is not a requirement for attendance. Curiosity and desire to learn is all that is needed.



Purpose and primary task

The purpose of the conference is educational.

Participants are involved in a program of studying groups at work, in real-time, with structured discussions for review and application of insights.

Collectively, participants and staff work on the primary task.

To study the nature of collaboration and competition in a shared endeavour.

Conference program

The conference is designed as a temporary institution for learning, that is co-created by its members — participants and staff. Together, the staff and participant members create an organisational culture unique to this institution.

By design and unconsciously, members take up differentiated roles to perform the primary task of the conference. Staff support participants to explore their experiences of working together, of taking up multiple roles, of exercising leadership and authority, and of collaboration and competition. In facilitated reflection groups, participants gain a deepened insight into the overt and hidden influences upon working together in groups, organisations and communities, and enhanced understanding of the dynamics of collaboration and competition.

Conference events

The conference is structured as a series of events. Each event aims to build awareness of conscious and unconscious dynamics that emerge when people work together. Participants will experience being a member of different groups, of different sizes and complexity of relations, each with its own specific task.

Events include: discussion plenaries, here-and-now events for studying small, large, inter-group and whole-of-organisation dynamics, a dreams matrix, and sessions for participants to reflect on their experiences, review and apply their learning.

Learning groups

Three Learning Groups are provided for in the conference design. They form part of the organisational structure for studying collaboration and competition in the shared endeavour that is the conference.

Learning Groups A & B

Participants become a member of one of these two groups based on prior experience of group relations conferences.

Learning Group A: for participants with no prior experience

Learning Group B: for participants who have attended one or more conferences

Advanced Consultancy Skills Training Group

For those who want to advance their praxis, the conference offers an opportunity to extend skills in psychoanalytic-systemic observation, consultancy, and application of group relations methodologies to organisational experience.

Training Group participants will have opportunities to:

1. Design and consult to some Training Group events.
2. Take up consultancy roles in some conference events.
3. Engage with staff in exploration and systemic thinking of emergent dynamic behaviour.

The Training Group is open for application by participants who have attended at least two group relations conferences.



Staff

A team of professional staff facilitate participants' learning through consultancy and reflective discussions, and overall management of the conference organisation. Collectively they hold qualifications and expertise in management education, psychotherapy, group relations, organisational consultancy and leadership coaching.

The role of staff

Staff work collaboratively with participants on the conference primary task, from their roles as consultants and collective management of the conference. They are informed by their own experiences and offer interpretations and hypotheses of what is happening in the 'here and now' experiences of conference events for all to consider and work on. These experiences include the hidden, unconscious processes in group interactions. As a collective management they hold the boundaries of time, task and territory. Their roles are always open for examination.

Executive team

The Conference Directors and Conference Operations Manager (in addition to their consultancy roles) constitute the Conference Executive.

Jinette de Gooijer, PhD **Conference Director and Director Training Group**



Jinette is former Director of Innovative Practice Pty Ltd providing role analysis, supervision and organisational consultancy services. She has worked on staff of group relations conferences in Australia and internationally, and published several articles, book chapters and a book in the field of systems psychodynamics. Jinette is also an exhibiting artist who integrates socioanalysis into her studio practice. She is a founding member and Past President of Group Relations Australia, Member, International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations, and Organisation Promoting Understanding of Society. Jinette holds a Doctorate in systems psychodynamics and further qualifications in business studies and the visual arts.

Mary McRae, Ed.D **Associate Director, Learning Group A**



Mary is a recently retired New York University professor of Applied Psychology, where she taught courses in Group Dynamics and Multicultural Counselling for 27 years. She has directed and worked on staff of group relations conferences in the United States and internationally, including co-director of the Leicester Conference. She has published a book, an educational video and many articles and book chapters focusing on racial and cultural dynamics in group and organizational life. She currently is in private practice as a psychotherapist and she does executive coaching and group facilitation. Mary is a fellow and affiliate in the A. K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems and a member of the New York Center for the Study of Groups, Organizations and Social Systems.

Allan Souter, BA **Associate Director, Learning Group B**



Allan has worked in his private practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, with individuals, couples and groups for over 30 years, and been involved in group relations work since the late 1980s. In addition to working on group relations conferences and events he toiled for some years in the institutional side of the sponsoring and educational organisational aspects, with the Australian Institute of SocioAnalysis, where he was introduced to social dreaming. He has consulted to and hosted dream matrices since the early 1990s. Allan is a member of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organization and chaired the 2002 Annual Symposium in Melbourne. Increasingly he works as a viticulturalist in a small family vineyard in northeast Victoria.

Jennifer Burrows, MPhSocInn **Manager, Conference Operations**



Jennifer is an organisational consultant and executive coach, most recently heading the Woman of the World leadership program for Australia. She has extensive experience working in education supporting change innovations and curriculum development. Jennifer holds a Masters in Philosophy of Social Innovation (Organisational Analysis & Leadership) through the Grubb School of Organisational Analysis, as well as a Masters of Business (Training & Change Management) and further qualifications in education. Jennifer is a member of Group Relations Australia and the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations. She is a Board member of Annecto, a not-for-profit age and disability support organisation, and Chair of the Culture Committee.

Consultancy team

Consultants to the several events in the conference will be drawn from the following:

Claes Agin, MAppSci(OD)



Claes is a freelance organisational consultant and coach working in a variety of industries such as health, automotive retail, government, energy, water and manufacturing. He has participated in and worked on staff of group relations conferences in Australia. Claes provides services with a systems psychodynamics orientation to groups and individuals in organisations. He is highly involved in community sports and volunteers as the referee coordinator for his local Futsal Club. Claes also holds degrees in Computer Science and Engineering.

Leslie B. Brissett, PhD



Leslie is the Director of the Group Relations Programme at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. His role involves working across the networks of group relations institutions and practitioners to understand what impact can be achieved and what needs can be met, through application of learning about groups in society. For the last 20 years Leslie has served as a Magistrate and Board member in further education. He was a member of the British Psychoanalytic Council's Independent Scrutiny and Advisory Committee (ISAAC). Leslie has studied at post-graduate level at the London School of Economics and Cambridge University.

Jennifer Burrows

Greg Cook, BSW



Greg is a psychologist and organisational consultant and a director of Centre for Leadership and Management. CLM provides executive coaching, organisational consulting and leadership development programs for government, health and tertiary education organisations throughout Australia. Greg also holds professional qualifications as a teacher and social worker and has worked in schools and prisons, in clinical roles in community mental health, acute psychiatry and private practice; and in higher education. He is a member of Group Relations Australia and formerly, a member of the Committee of Management.

Jinette de Gooijer

Nuala Dent, MAppSci(OD)



Nuala is Director of Drawing on Experience and a NIODA staff member. As well as teaching and research, her consulting work provides services in leadership development and organisational change, drawing on socioanalytic and arts-based methods. She has previously worked on group relations conferences and has published several articles. Nuala is a member of Group Relations Australia and the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations. She is nearing completion of her PhD, exploring unconscious processes in partially distributed teams.

Helen McKelvie, MMgtL(OD)



Helen has worked as a lawyer, researcher and legal policy officer in the public sector. For the past 20 years she has been the Manager, Medico-legal Policy and Projects at the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine where she has more recently taken up a part-time internal consultant role in planning and organisation dynamics. Helen also holds law and arts degrees, and qualifications as a yoga teacher. She is an associate member of Group Relations Australia.

Mary McRae

Allan Souter

Consultants to Advanced Consultancy Skills Training Group

Leslie B. Brissett

Jinette de Gooijer



Conference details

Dates

Conference begins 10am Monday, 19 November and ends 4pm Saturday, 24 November.
Arrival and Registration is from 8:30am Monday.

Venue

George Hicks Building, International House, 197 Royal Parade, Parkville. Accommodation in International House, a residential college of The University of Melbourne, located on the traditional lands of the Kulin nation.

Fee

\$3,850 (AUD)

The fee includes participation in the conference, 5 nights accommodation, all daily meals, and 3 evening meals inhouse.

Discounts

\$500 discount if you apply and pay in full by 31 July 2018.

\$400 each for 2 or more applicants from the same organisation

\$400 Group Relations Australia Members/Associates*

Some bursaries are available to assist those on low incomes. Please contact the Manager Conference Operations to discuss.

** Applications to apply for membership of GRA are welcomed.*

Accommodation

Standard accommodation is single room with shared bathroom. Some twin-share rooms with shared bathrooms are available for an additional \$100 discount.

Applications

More information and to apply online: www.grouprelations.org.au

Acceptance to the conference is not automatic and places are limited.

Closing date for applications

Monday, 5 November 2018.

Host organisation

Group Relations Australia

Learn about self, organisation and society in depth

Group Relations Australia (GRA) is a not-for-profit professional association established in 2005 whose members seek to develop the field of group relations and systems psychodynamics.

We apply its methods to working with groups, organisations and communities, in the belief that there has to be a better way of living and working in groups, organisations and society — a way that promotes learning from experience, engaging the whole system, and developing our capacity for thoughtful, effective action.

Our members work as organisation consultants and managers, academic researchers and teachers, psychoanalysts and socioanalysts amongst other roles. Through GRA, they enjoy the benefits of mutual links with international associations in the field of group relations.

We conduct a stimulating range of activities and events for members that include: professional practice and scientific meetings, working conferences, workshops, seminars and lectures. The Association also publishes the peer-reviewed journal *Socioanalysis*.

www.grouprelations.org.au

Sponsoring organisation

The Tavistock Institute

The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (London) (TIHR) applies social science to contemporary issues and problems. It was established as a not-for-profit organisation with charitable purpose in 1947.

The TIHR is dedicated to the study of human relations for the purpose of bettering working life and conditions for all humans within their organisations, communities and broader societies.

www.tavinstitute.org

Enquiries

**Jennifer Burrows,
Manager Conference Operations**

e: conference@grouprelations.org.au

m: +61 (0) 439 000 304



previous members of a group relations conference have said:

**"I'm much more aware of systems all around me,
from the home to shopping malls to organizations."**

Enoch Li, Founder & Managing Director, Organizational change and mental health

***"The conference has been a valuable medium for thinking about
the way power flows through socio-emotional roles,
and the way authority structures adjust in the attempt to accommodate this."***

Ross Williams, Training Manager, Care sector

**"It was a fantastic experience and has given me much food for thought in the work
of the PhD research and my consultancy."**

Dr Bernadette Miles, Director, Kardia Formation P/L

***"The Group Relations Conference was a highlight of my year.
I notice something to do with my relationship to authority and power (especially my own) in my work place,
as sometimes necessary and containing for all, rather than dangerous and imposing (abusive)."***

Tony Jackson, Managing Director, Gestalt Therapy Australia /Psychotherapy / Training and Education

**"I am beginning to have more clarity in my role since the conference.
I feel I have been a little more freed up to speak when I think it's worthwhile,
I have also been thinking about my work and organisation differently."**

Sarah Clemens, Human Resources Advisor, Health sector

***"The bigger suitcase for me is really about holding that space open for new learning
(about myself first and then others),
and trusting in the process that what emerges through real uncertainty
will be more valuable than if I intervened and imposed structure too soon."***

James Yorston, General Manager, Melbourne Business School Executive Education