

LISTENING TO THE UNCONSCIOUS IN SELF & GROUPS

An Online Workshop

22 - 25 June, 2022 (on Zoom)



The Seventh Workshop Offered By
GROUP RELATIONS INDIA

WHY DO WE NEED TO LISTEN TO THE UNCONSCIOUS?

Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.” - C.G. Jung

At every moment of our lives, whether we're awake or asleep, there is a process that we are not conscious of, that is beneath the surface, which is termed the unconscious. Unconscious processes within us are often aspects of ourselves, or our experiences, that we suppress and 'forget', as they cause us embarrassment or even pain. However, we expend a lot of psychic energy ensuring that these remain suppressed, resulting in limiting new possibilities and creative options for our personal development, and for our leadership.

We have a notion of ourselves as objective and rational beings, driven by logic and facts. When, in fact, each of us goes through life carrying a baggage, a load in the form of deeply held conclusions based on our personal history and cultural dictates. These, when not interrogated and worked with, may become irrelevant to current contexts and realities, and thus hinder our ability to make effective decisions and offer appropriate leadership.

A characteristic of unconscious processes is their almost involuntarily "pull" towards a pattern or habitual way of doing and being. Habitual assumptions that are left unexamined for their current relevance; roles that we end up taking on as a matter

of habit; unexamined beliefs about the world; embedded ideas about our own self-concept - each of these have deep roots in unconscious material. It is agreed across traditions - whether psychoanalytic or spiritual - that these unconscious patterns are set in place very early in our lives, and even if dysfunctional, continue to be defended. The defence itself being a process we are unaware of!

This unconscious 'not knowing' serves the purpose of avoiding exploration of questions such as: why is it that my interpersonal relationships follow an almost predictable path? Why is it that I decide too quickly, or procrastinate too much? What roles do I end up taking in groups? Do these roles serve the task or divert from the task and end up serving unconscious needs: my own, and collusively that of the group?

Similar to unconscious processes in the self, groups too have unconscious processes or dynamics of their own. This becomes evident when we see that groups that we are part of don't always behave according to 'plan'. Tasks don't get done as planned, and people get caught up in a lot of counterproductive processes. This often leads to frustration, emotional turbulence, break in relationships, and delays in task accomplishment.



Akin to our reluctance to know more about our own individual unconscious, we may not seem willing to recognize that there are unconscious processes at play at the level of the group. We may even wish to ignore them because surfacing these are likely to confront us with another set of realities and questions thereof that we prefer not to know, notwithstanding the cost to ourselves and our systems of this 'not knowing'. Encountering them may lead us to uncomfortable questions such as "how am I behaving in the group? Am I the one in charge, or does the group affect me in my role as member / leader / change agent? How can I understand the unconscious role I have taken up in the system that I am part of, and work in a manner that enables the group to focus on task?"

There are ways of becoming aware of, and of working with unconscious processes in self and in groups that are provided by pioneers in the psychoanalytic tradition such as Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, Carl Jung, and Wilfred Bion that inform the work in the workshop. The tradition of work on the unconscious that is called Group Relations is influenced by this as well as other streams such as systems thinking, socio-technical systems, (particularly the work of Eric Trist and A K Rice) as well as socio-analysis (work initiated by Gordon Lawrence and Alastair Bain).

Work on the unconscious and recognition of its impact however has had an extremely long history, and can be seen in thought and philosophy in the Indian sub-continent: the Upanishads, Buddhist and Jain philosophy, and in literature on Yoga, all of which have also influenced the practice of group relations work in India.

WHAT IS THIS WORKSHOP ABOUT?

The workshop is a learning event where we offer the opportunity to work with these frameworks in an experiential way, as well as engage with some of the concepts. The idea is to learn, derive one's own insights, and apply them to one's roles in "back-home" situations, both organizational and personal. The workshop will provide an opportunity to enhance the understanding of:

- Unconscious processes in individuals and how they impact the roles one takes up in groups and systems
- Unconscious processes in groups, and how the interplay of the group unconscious with the individual unconscious impacts the task in the 'here & now'
- Exploration of the implications of the above for one's roles in back-home systems

THE PRIMARY TASK OF THE WORKSHOP

By the term primary task, we mean the top priority task of a system that gives it meaning and purpose; that which must be engaged with meaningfully for the system to fulfil its objectives.

The primary task of this workshop is to explore how our unconscious patterns shape our personality, and how this in turn impacts the roles we take up in groups and systems that we belong to.

We will work towards this primary task through a combination of reflection & insight-generation, here & now experiences, and application of conceptual frameworks.

METHODOLOGY

A range of learning events such as River of Life, Small Study Group, Plenaries, Interactive Concept Sessions, and Reflection and Application Group will be used.

The workshop is primarily experiential, where learning is through experiencing, reflecting on one's experience, and deriving insights thereof.

FOR WHOM IS THE WORKSHOP MEANT

This workshop invites as members anyone to whom this task and methodology seem appealing. Past participants have been from corporate organizations, development and other not-for-profit sectors, health care systems, trade unions, educational institutions, and also those with no particular paid working role.

This kind of learning asks of members the capacity to be open to reflecting on one's experience, both past and present, and to encounter one's resistance to exploring one's experience instead of neatly labelling them on the basis of the past, which may well include cultural prescriptions and proscriptions.

The workshop can accommodate up to 24 members. Applications will be accepted on a first-come-first-served basis.

THE STAFF

The staff of the workshop will be in roles such as director, administrator and consultant. Collectively they form the management of the workshop and manage the boundaries of task, time and workspaces.

Workshop Director: Ganesh Anantharaman

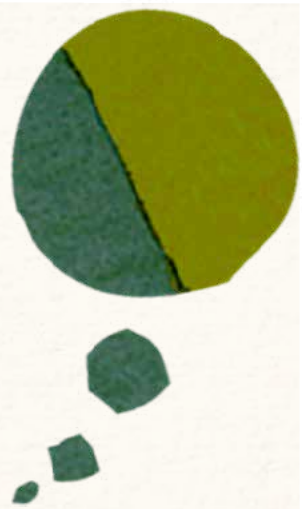
Workshop Administrator: Chandan Shamnani


Consultants: Ganesh Anantharaman, Rosemary Viswanath, Sunitha Lal, Swathi Seshadri, Vartika Jaini, and Yash Kaul.

STAFF PROFILES

Chandan Shamnani is an OD consultant and consults with organizations on leadership and change. A post graduate in HR and OD from Delhi University, he worked in the corporate sector for fifteen years in L& D and internal consulting roles before starting on his own. An associate member of GRI, his first encounter with GR work was through Listening to the Unconscious workshop in 2014.

Ganesh Anantharaman, M. Phil. (Mumbai University); Associate Member and Member of Programmes Committee, Group Relations India. Ganesh consults to corporate organizations on Leadership and Culture. He has staffed several conferences in various roles since 2003, including that of Director in the 2021 GRI (online) Conference. He is also a psychoanalyst-in-training in the Lacanian orientation.





Rosemary Viswanath, Organization Consultant, Managing Trustee, Group Relations India. Has been on staff of group relations conferences in India and internationally since 1987 and directed several since 2003. Consults on developing leadership, organizational strategy and change processes with a range of systems. Also, deeply interested in Buddhist philosophy and practice in the contemporary world.

Sunitha Lal is CHRO at Ather Energy and has more than twenty-five years of experience in the space of organizational development and people practices. She has participated in GR conferences and workshops as a member and staff since 2015 and is an Associate Member of Group Relations India. She is a strong proponent of the oral tradition of storytelling and is the author of the book 'Dotting the Blemish and Other Stories', a collection of short stories about women's lives embedded in patriarchy.

Swathi Seshadri, M.Com. (Mumbai University), M.A. in Social Work (TISS), Striving for social justice, equity and equality through her work in rural and urban spaces, have been Swathi's primary work for the past 23 years. Since 2017 she has been exploring how systems are influenced by unconscious processes, through the group relations framework, which she hopes will aid her endeavour towards seeking social justice.

Vartika Jaini, B.A (Hons) Economics (Delhi University), PGDRM (Institute of Rural Management Anand) is a rural development professional and a group relations practitioner. She runs a startup focused on accelerating impact in tribal pockets of central India. She has been in roles of member and staff in group relations

conferences since 2010. Vartika is an Associate of Group Relations India.

Yash Kaul, BITS Pilani – Pilani and IIM Kozhikode Alumni. Twenty-four years of experience in medical device and pharmaceutical industry. Currently working as Vice President - South APAC with ICU Medical. Associated with Group Relations in various roles since 2014. Been on staff on GRCs and Workshops offered by GRI. Passionate about practicing GR as a way of life in organizations, especially in corporates.

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Dates and time slots

June 22-25, 2022. The workshop begins with a short session for welcoming members at 1540 IST on Wednesday, June 22, followed by the opening plenary starting at 1600. It closes at 2200 IST on Saturday, June 25. Workshop events happen between 1600 and 2200 IST on all 4 days. The detailed schedule and description of events would be sent to members of the workshop.

Platform

This workshop will happen on Zoom. The link to join will be sent to members closer to the date.

Workshop fee

The workshop fee is INR 25000 for those residing in India and USD 400 for those residing outside India. In addition, Goods and Services Tax (GST) of 18% is applicable. For those residing outside India, do check with us for eligibility conditions under which GST may be waived.

Bursaries

GRI is committed to ensuring that group relations work is accessible to a wide membership, which has enabled people from a range of economic and work sectors and representing many other important diversities to attend. We believe that this diversity in membership contributes to the opportunities for learning for all members. We are particularly committed to make group relations opportunities available to those in the social justice and development sectors, such as small, under-resourced NGOs, community-based organisations, and movements.

Those seeking bursary are required to write to us at the time of applying giving the reason for, and the amount of bursary they seek. We will revert to you on the amount we can offer based on the total number of requests made, the relative merits of the case, and the number of full-paying applicants we get. It would help us to decide on all bursary requests if those seeking a bursary write to us latest by Wednesday, June 15.

We also offer the option of paying the fee in two instalments for those members who would like to avail this option, citing their reasons for doing so.

How to apply

To apply for membership of the workshop, you would need to fill in the online application form [HERE](#). Kindly note that invoicing and GST details in the application form are required by us to fulfil statutory compliances.

Once your application is accepted by us, we'll separately initiate with you on email the process for your fee transfer.

Kindly note that the last date for receipt of applications is Wednesday, June 15, 2022.

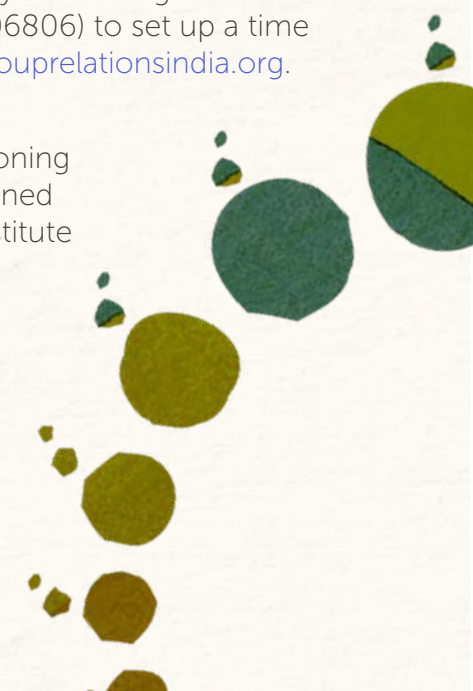
Refund policy

Refund after deducting 25% towards administrative expenses will be made to those who withdraw on or before June 15, 2022. For withdrawals after that, refunds will not be possible, but we do consider the option of holding a part of your fee towards participation in a future GRI event.

Speak to us!

For further discussions, and to assist your decision about the workshop, we would be happy to speak to you. Message Chandan (+91 9923005526) or Ganesh (+91 9886406806) to set up a time for a conversation. Or email us at: lttuc@grourelationsindia.org.

If you are living through particular personal difficulties, we suggest you consider postponing your participation, as the workshop is designed as a learning environment and is not a substitute for personal therapy or counselling.





About Group Relations India

Group Relations India (GRI) was founded in 2013 with the vision of an institution that is committed exclusively to group relations methodology, and of making the potential of this methodology available to members from a wide section of Indian society, having different representations and interests.

It is conceived of as a 'home for GR' in India.

For more information, please visit www.grouprelationsindia.org.