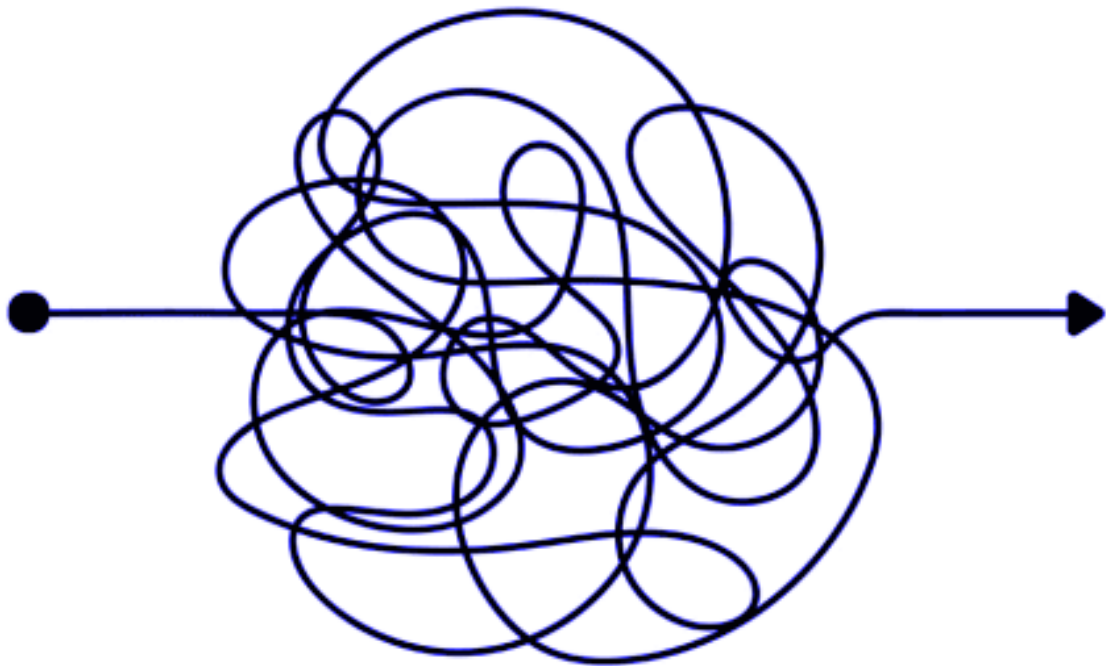


# Authority, Role, and Boundaries: Navigating the Unconscious and The Complexities of the "Back to Normal"



## Fall 2022 Group Relations Conference\*

Teachers College, Columbia University, NY

*November 18-20, 2022*

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

**TEACHERS COLLEGE**  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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## Dear prospective member:

The first boundary we experience, from birth, is the boundary of our skin. Our skin silhouettes us to know, experientially and pre-verbally, where our bodies begin and end, what makes ‘me’ and what is therefore ‘not me’.

The skin is semi-permeable. It helps us manage what comes through it and what does not. For example, it allows sunlight and warmth in, it allows touch. It can get hurt and bruised but is there to provide a line of defense too. As we grow and move around in our world, we encounter various systems and their boundaries. Some are too rigid and some are too fluid.

These last couple of years have challenged our senses and boundary management in new ways. Whilst contact, warmth of the other, and touch were removed, the digital has provided a new way to cross, and to bridge, physical boundaries. We have developed new ways to find intimacy, and to navigate the world, and, just as we thought we mastered a “new normal”, we found ourselves called “back to” the old/other “normal.” How do we navigate the fluidity of transitions back and forth, and what is normal anyway?!

In a GRC, the boundaries of Time, Territory and Task (also known as the three Ts) provide us with the conference skin. Within this we can explore - members and staff together - in different roles, the complexities of being, and living in our new context. How do we take up our roles and find our authority in a world which often feels almost too fluid to navigate? The longing for contact, warmth, and in-person connection, which we had to suppress can now be also overwhelming, and we might also long for the days when we didn’t have to run around so much, navigating traffic jams, and being with people in 3D, where we may not have the screen protecting us from each other.

Within the safe skin of the GRC, we can study together what change means, what impact we have on others and they on us. We can get in touch with our unconscious behaviors and motivations and find our compassion for them. We can learn to reconnect with ourselves, and with our colleagues, in re-freshed ways, where we can articulate our authority- and become the authors of our own - and shared - narratives.

## Directorate:

**Eliat Aram**

*Conference Director*

**Jean Sohn**

*Associate Director of Administration*

**Mo Khan and Angelica Leon**

*The Administrative Team*

## Primary Task

The primary task is to study the intra- and inter-personal, 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 120<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, New York, 10027

### Schedule

Friday,	November 18, 2022	9:15 AM - 7:30 PM
Saturday,	November 19, 2022	9:00 AM - 7:30 PM
Sunday,	November 20, 2022	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 made available each morning in the Member Lounge. Members are responsible for securing their own meals during the lunch breaks.

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

### 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. If you are going through any particular difficult times and are not sure whether or not to attend this year, we are happy to talk this through with you via email or, when possible, by phone.

To reserve a spot in the conference you must register by October 31st using the following link: <https://form.jotform.com/70415341585151>

If you have questions, please email the administrative team at:  
[teacherscollegeGRC@gmail.com](mailto:teacherscollegeGRC@gmail.com)

## **COVID-19 Health & Safety Requirements**

For public members, please note that you will need to present a government-issued ID and proof of vaccination and be fully boosted in order to enter the TC campus. The Teachers College campus is “Mask Mindful,” which means that masks are optional but welcomed.