



Lifting the Veil

Legacy and Transformation in Group Relations

AKRI Dialogues

Thursday, March 18, 2021 – Sunday, March 21, 2021



We are delighted to announce a call for proposals for the 2021 AKRI Dialogues. As previously noted, the Dialogues present an opportunity for people who have attended at least one Group Relations Conference and who want to explore, contribute and influence the discourse of the field of group relations research, understanding and application.

A short written abstract of your proposal is due by December 15, 2020 (final deadline!)

The selection committee will consider all proposals and the given time constraints and respond by December 20, 2020.

Following notification, accepted applicants will need to provide confirmation and any requested additional details by January 12, 2021.

Please send proposals to: admin@akriceinstitute.org

We invite you to consider the themes outlined below and contribute papers and presentations relevant to them:

1. Acknowledgement/Legacy

- What in AKRI's creation and history do we want to honor and carry forward?
- What aspects of AKRI's history and culture must we recognize, investigate and acknowledge that may have been damaging to some, even while benefiting others?
- What purpose(s) may have been served by the dynamics that have been operating in AKRI until now? Are those goals valid/appropriate in today's world?
- Legacy of relationships as the way to get hired and authorized.
- Legacy of cult of personality
- Legacy of the sense that there are not enough opportunities to work
- Is recognition and acknowledgement of the shadow disloyal to our history?
- History of how AKRI affiliates have used competition, blame and defensiveness in the service of ...what? The value and ramifications of re-affiliating and joining
- With respect to social identities, who have GRCs been intended for and why?
- How the historical narratives of social identities show up in the history of AKRI and GRCs

2. Integrity/Ethics

- What is happening to the Group Relations paradigm of learning and operation? Are we in alignment with it? If not, what is emerging?
- Are we lifting the veils to recognize and acknowledge our multiple identities, including our shadow parts? How could that help us understand how we participate in AKRI?
- Are we betraying our past when we change to stay relevant and be able to engage with the world?
- How do we integrate lifelong learning as part of GR, minimizing who represents the “Expert” and those “still learning” among AKRI’s membership? How does this view shape perceptions of generativity, succession, and new avenues of service within AKRI’s administrative structure?
- What are AKRI’s values? What is AKRI’s mission? What is AKRI’s purpose? Where or for what does AKRI stand? Can AKRI connect intellect and feeling to address these questions? How can GR theories and technology be employed to support shifts in the organization?
- Legacy of the idea that there are not enough opportunities to work.
- Perspectives on developing capacities to perform the mission of GR
- Perspectives on developing capacities to perform the work task of GR
- Use of GR to align historical narratives of social identities to support life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness for all humankind
- Possible hidden agendas and ethical dilemmas involved in marketing and recruiting membership for GR conferences
- What is the ethical framework that governs GR, and its handling of power, competition, and envy in AKRI?

3. Forgiveness:

- Grievances against the Group Relations community we have glossed over - can we name them and then forgive and let go?
- The function of blame and defensiveness in GR work
- Grief in relation to loss of privilege, white supremacy
- Shame regarding privilege
- Unspoken or “elephant in the room” tensions over past offenses/traumas within AKRI
- Significance of forgiveness in the context of GR; How might forgiveness of self and others create opportunities for new roles and competencies?
- Healing relationships between and among AKRI, its affiliates and other Group Relations-focused organizations
- What is the impact of an inability to forgive and what purpose does it serve for the organization?

4. Application/Hope/Moving Forward:

- Identifying new spaces and opportunities to apply Group Relations theories to the transformation of the broader society
- Engagement. New work to transform new spaces, Experimentation, openness, flexibility.
- New ways to apply GR and to incorporate it into new work. Remember home but build toward a new future.
- How is AKRI, as an organization, impacted by the broad societal changes currently taking place? What can we learn about ourselves by examining those changes and events?
- What should be AKRI’s relationship, if any, with other organizations such as GRI, ISPSO, OPUS, Tavistock, OFEK, CASSGO, Group Relations India, and TILT?

- What are other theories or practices (occupational or cultural) that compliment GR theories and practice that might allow/encourage AKRI to be more receptive and responsive to emerging trends/needs in society
- How does AKRI, as a leadership organization (if we agree that is part of its mandate), adapt to new learning while remaining true to its mission? What might facilitate its navigation through societal shifts and cultural change?
- How can Group Relations theories and technology help AKRI move from an individualistic mindset to a more global mindset
- What structures need to be implemented to integrate the affiliates with the umbrella organization of AKRI and for what purpose? And what would authorization look like?
- What could be accomplished if members from different GR affiliates collaborated with each other? What are the boundaries, authorities, roles, and tasks to encourage and support such collaboration? What are the projections or resistance to this process?
- Marketing plan for GR that could serve as a template for other industries (e.g. education, business, helping services)

5. Specific Applications

- If we apply to ourselves the GR knowledge that we have, what might we learn about systemic issues existing within AKRI? How might they reflect parallels in society?
- Application of GR to a marketing strategy... Does GR offer anything unique that would excite the crowds?
- Group Relations during the time of Pandemic: We are living as a global community in a time of tremendous suffering, connected in ways unimagined, by forces we cannot see. For perhaps the first time in history we have a growing sense of ourselves as a deeply connected, multi-faceted, multi-cultural community, bound together by common threads of illness and vulnerability. This offers an enormous opportunity to shift our collective consciousness and understanding of what it means to belong, to collaborate, to lead, and to follow. This is a time for AKRI to examine its place in the larger social network. How shall we proceed?
- The evolution of the GRC model: New paradigms, new designs, new ways of thinking about experiential learning, of using on-line platforms and other technologies, new ways of taking up our roles as directors, team leaders, consultants, administrators, and finding the place of concurrent social issues in our purpose and mission

Dialogues Planning Committee

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