**A. K. RICE INSTITUTE (AKRI)**

**for the Study of Social Systems**

**Training and Certification Program**

**July 2018**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE AKRI**

**TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

The A. K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems (AKRI) invites applications from those who wish to pursue training and certification as group relations conference

consultants. The application process and the training sequence are described below. (Please note that we regard this training process as useful to the practice of other important activities such as leadership, consultation, therapeutic work, community development, citizenship, and family membership.)

**Format of the Training**

The complete training process is competency-based and has several stages, including a preliminary phase involving working with a mentor and exposure to theoretical and applied reading and video materials, and a subsequent stage of competency development. It is designed to provide individuals opportunities to learn to practice and achieve the required competencies. This means that applicants may develop the competencies through a variety of approaches including, but not limited to, attendance at group relations conferences, classes, workshops, professional work in their fields, etc. Throughout the training, the achievement of the competencies will be assessed by the applicant, mentor, Training and Certification Committee members, and, in the final stage, by AKRI group relations conference directors and/or their designated training directors.

For applicants who believe that they may have already mastered the internal competencies necessary to become a consultant at group relations conferences, and who can provide documentation to support their assertion, there is a **Fast Track** single stage training process, described below. There is also an option for **Direct Certification** of those deeply experienced consultants who have practiced in group relations centers in the US or other countries as conference consultants/directors in the Tavistock tradition. This latter option requires the applicant to have had extensive experience as a team leader, director, and consultant in all aspects of conference life.

**Benefits of the Training**

The primary goal of this training process is to prepare those who want to practice consultation in group relations educational conferences through: (1) learning about the

conceptual framework underpinning this approach and (2) developing the skills to provide excellent consultation to participants who attend such conferences. The outcome

of successful completion of the training program will be certification to consult at any AKRI or Affiliate-sponsored conference.

In addition, AKRI’s premise is that the knowledge and skills acquired in the training program will prove valuable to anyone with a serious interest in understanding the many dynamics affecting the exercise of leadership and authority in groups and organizations. This training provides excellent preparation for a variety of work roles through mentored development of the competencies, the receipt of criteria-based feedback during training, and then assignment to a role as a Consultant Candidate in conferences. Those considering the training are likely to find there will be additional benefits, which broaden their effectiveness in their work lives.

**Three Step Training Process: The Full Training Program**

**(for Fast-Track and Direct Certification, see below)**

**Step 1 - Application Phase/Preliminary Competency Assessment**

A. Individuals applying for the full training program will submit a self-assessment on six initial competencies designed to indicate whether s/he has the observational skills that form the foundation for group relations consultation; for example,

 Demonstrates general curiosity about what is happening in the group as a whole.

 Demonstrates the ability to be reflective and self-examining.

B. The applicant will also submit a narrative statement describing her/his interest in the training and certification process and listing any previous group relations conference experience s/he has had.

*A fee of $300 is required with the submission of the initial application.*

C. Two professional colleagues, at least one of whom must be an AKRI Member in good standing, will also submit assessments of the applicant’s achievement of the preliminary competencies.

Applications will be screened by the Training and Certification Committee and the applicant will be informed about acceptance by email. Should the applicant not be accepted into training at this time, s/he will be given recommendations about what s/he can do to prepare to apply at another time.

*A second payment of $300 is required upon acceptance into training. This payment includes copies of each of three classic collections of group relations thinking and application, as well as access to the webinars described below.*

Before the Committee will review an application to join the T&C program, the applicant must be a Member in good standing of AKRI. The process for becoming a Member is described on the AKRI website at [www.akriceinstitute.org](http://www.akriceinstitute.org/), in the Membership section.

**Step 2 – Initial Training and Competency Development**

Included with the notification of acceptance will be information about obtaining a complete set of Group Relations Readers (vols. 1-3) and links to two group relations webinars. The purpose of the webinar sessions and the readers is to provide each trainee with a basic grounding in the theory, history and literature that describes the basis for group relations consultation in the Tavistock tradition. One of the webinars reviews the theoretical underpinnings of this work, the other offers an opportunity to observe and consider group dynamics in an ongoing small study group within a conference. Both videos should be discussed with the trainee's mentor.

If the trainee does not already have a mentor identified, he/she will receive assistance from the Training and Certification Committee to identify an appropriate mentor and negotiate an agreement with her/him. Mentors will be selected from a list of approved consultants who have indicated their availability and willingness to work with a new mentee. After completing the webinars, each trainee will be expected to have begun the first segment of competency assessment and development. Mentors donate a great deal of time to this effort and may receive a small stipend when the trainee is certified.

**This first aspect of training focuses on the development of introspective and intrapsychic skills needed by consultants to support good boundary work in their consultation to members of groups.**

The activities necessary for the applicant to develop the initial competencies may vary, depending on the applicant’s developmental needs. Crucial to the progress of the applicant is her/his narrative evidence of having thoughtfully considered the level of mastery s/he already has of a given competency vs. the degree of mastery s/he is striving for in group relations conference consulting, including specific examples.

Examples of the initial phase competencies include:

 Demonstrates the capacity to maintain role and task boundaries in the face of positive or negative responses from others.

 Demonstrates the ability to recognize that individuals “carry” or express some aspect of the experience of the group as a whole.

During this stage, the mentor will be in contact with the applicant as s/he develops these specialized competencies. At the point at which the applicant and her/his mentor believe s/he has met the initial competencies, the applicant will apply for Consultant Candidacy by submitting the Request for Advancement to Consultant Candidacy. This form consists of a second self-assessment with narrative descriptions of his/her learning with regard to each competency, along with documentation, including but not limited to specific examples that confirm his/her mastery of the competency. This does not mean that the trainee has “perfected” the competencies; rather, it means that the trainee has developed an understanding of each competency, can recognize its value, appropriately attempt its application, learn from whatever the outcome, and articulate that learning to others. The trainee’s mentor will submit a statement that includes the basis of the his/her assessment that the trainee has achieved mastery of the initial competencies.

Based on the assessment documentation for the initial competencies, the Training and Certification Committee will determine whether the applicant is ready to move to the practice phase of training. (If for some reason the applicant is not advanced to this stage of training, s/he will be given guidance on what else s/he needs to develop before reapplying for the practice phase.)

*A fee of $300 is required when the applicant is advanced to Consultant Candidacy.*

**Step 3: Practice Phase of Consultant Competency Development**

**This phase of training focuses on demonstration of the trainee’s mastery of the system-level competencies necessary to work in conference events, and be an effective work colleague with other staff.**

In this phase, the applicant will work in at least two group relations conferences as a Consultant Candidate in order to achieve and demonstrate mastery of system-level competencies.

Examples of these competencies, specifically focused on the skills related to conference consultation and leadership/followership work, include:

 Demonstrates the ability to follow those in leadership roles and to express differences in a responsible manner.

 Demonstrates the ability to examine how the dynamics of the staff group affect the conference as a whole.

This is the stage at which individuals who have been authorized for the Fast Track training and certification process will enter. The requirements for applying for the Fast Track are specified in the Fast-Track section of this Program Description, below.

When a trainee achieves Consultant Candidate status, s/he will begin to work with his/her mentor in continued preparation for the practice phase, and the trainee’s name will be placed on the list of Consultant Candidates eligible to be appointed to conference staff roles (other than administrative roles) by AKRI directors at AKRI-sponsored conferences.

If a Consultant Candidate is offered the opportunity to work in a staff role other than an administrative role at a group relations conference that is not AKRI-sponsored, such as a university group relations conference, the Consultant Candidate may request an exception to allow that work to count as one of his/her two conferences for certification purposes. That request should be submitted to the Training and Certification Committee in writing at akritc@yahoo.com **prior to the conference**.

**Request for Certification**

After at least two conference experiences, the Consultant Candidate will submit a request to be certified. This final assessment, titled Request for Certification, will require a narrative description of Step 3 learning from practicing these competencies in conference roles, an assessment of Step 3 competencies from two AKRI conference directors and/or an AKRI-sponsored consultant designated by the director to oversee training at the conference, and a supporting statement for certification from the mentor. Complete mastery of every Step 3 competency is not required for this final self-assessment; however, the Request for Certification should include the trainee’s plans to work on further mastery of competencies even after certification.

The Training and Certification Committee will decide on certification, and the applicant will be notified of certification, or given advice on how to further pursue developing the

competencies required at this stage.

*A final fee of $300 must accompany the request for certification*.

**Fast Track**

A. In order to apply for Fast Track, an applicant must have at least three group relations experiences. These must include at least two conferences attended as a member. The third experience can be another conference, (participating in any role, such as administrator, member, or staff), or coursework, or some other GR training experience. Individuals applying for the Fast Track will submit a self-assessment on thirteen competencies designed to indicate whether s/he has the skills in observation and use of personal experience which form the foundation for group relations consultation and sufficient knowledge and experience to conceptualize and articulate about group dynamics. Examples of these competencies include:

 Demonstrates an understanding of how elements of one’s own identity and history affect one’s work as well as calling forth particular fantasies and projections from others in the context of groups.

 Demonstrates the courage to speak what is felt to be unspeakable in the particular work context as long as it relates to the task of the group at hand.

B. The applicant will also submit a narrative statement describing her/his interest in the training and certification process and listing any previous group relations conference experience s/he has had.

*An application fee of $300 is required at this time.*

C. Two professional colleagues, at least one of whom must be an AKRI Member in good standing, will also submit assessments of the applicant’s achievement of the necessary competencies.

Applications will be screened by the Training and Certification Committee, and the applicant will be informed about acceptance by email. Should the applicant not be accepted into the Fast Track training, s/he will be given recommendations to apply for the Full Training Program or about what s/he can do to prepare to apply to the Fast Track at another time.

*A fee of $300 is required upon acceptance into training. This payment includes copies of each of three classic collections of group relations thinking and application, as well as access to the webinars described below.*

Before the Committee will review an application to join the T&C program, the applicant must be a Member in good standing of AKRI. The process for becoming a Member is described on the AKRI website at [www.akriceinstitute.org](http://www.akriceinstitute.org/), in the Membership section.

The successful Fast Track applicant will be offered the readers and given access to view the small group training video and the group relations theory seminars, but viewing the videos is optional for advancement to consultant candidacy. The applicant may complete the narratives with or without a mentor but the Fast Track applicant **must** have an identified mentor at the time of advancing to consultant candidacy. On acceptance into Fast Track and after identifying and meeting with the mentor, the mentor will endorse the applicant’s readiness to serve as a Consultant Candidate in conferences before the applicant is eligible to serve in that role.

**Direct Certification**

Individuals who have extensive experience as a staff consultant and director of group relations conferences and who wish to be considered for immediate acceptance as an AKRI-certified consultant can apply for Direct Certification. The applicant should submit a detailed description of her/his cumulative groups relations experience, two letters in support of immediate certification from qualified, certified AKRI members, and $100 fee.

**Cost of the Training Program**

**Please note that the fees structure below represents a $300 reduction in the overall cost of the training program, effective June 15, 2014. This reduction is to support trainees to attend the variety of training programs in Small Group, Large Group, Institutional Event, and Application Group consulting being offered by AKRI’s Affiliates and sponsored by authorized entities.**

Applicants will submit $300 with their initial application for training. After that, those entering the Training Program at the first level will pay $300 upon acceptance into training, and another $300 upon moving from the initial phase of training to the practice phase (Consultant Candidacy). A final $300 will be required when the applicant requests certification. Thus, for individuals entering the full program, the total cost of the Training Program will be $1200.

Individuals accepted to the Fast Track will be responsible for the initial training fee of $300, and then an additional $300 upon being accepted into Consultant Candidacy. A final $300 will be required when the applicant requests certification. Thus, for individuals entering the Fast Track program, the total cost of the Training Program will be $900. These fees cover the cost of training program, administrative costs incurred by AKRI in supporting the training process, and providing mentors with a modest honorarium in recognition of their contributions.

Individuals who are accepted for full certification based on extensive experience will be required to pay a fee of $100 to cover the review and administrative costs incurred in assessing and reviewing the application.

All fees are subject to change over time, but will not impact those already accepted into the program on a specific fee schedule.

**How to Apply**

Inquiries or a request for an application form for the training program may be submitted to akritc@yahoo.com. The application form is also available for downloading on the AKRI website, [www.akriceinstitute.org](http://www.akriceinstitute.org/).