Context

This group relations conference, sponsored by the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, continues the series of conferences inaugurated in 1969 by the Professional Committee of the Tavistock Clinic, for the study of group and organisational processes. They are informed by psychoanalytic and systemic thinking and thus designed as experiential workshops offering no lectures or seminars but a variety of group configurations with specific tasks. These foster the exploration by participants (members and staff alike) of the ways in which the emotional life of a group impacts on its members’ capacity for learning from experience towards thoughtful, imaginative and efficient action.

Issues such as task, authority, accountability and leadership are open to consideration, as are the meanings, limitations and creative potential of taking up leadership and/or followership roles in a variety of settings. Insights can be usefully applied both to the field of work and to the social world.

The role and the mask

When joining an organisation or group one quickly finds oneself both taking up and being given a particular role in the script. These roles may be explicit (such as manager, employee, consultant, teacher, student, etc.) yet there also are under-the-surface roles (troublemaker, covert leader, saviour, etc.) determined by unconscious group dynamics which impact on the ability to act and work effectively with others. When is a role a necessary requisite for undertaking a task and when does it become shallow or hollow, like a mask? – at times funny but also frightening because it may feel that the mask has taken over the role and the person.

Furthermore, the conference offers the space to explore how in situations of uncertainty a group will lose the capacity to imaginatively engage the skills of its members towards addressing its task. Survival of the group then becomes its fundamental (although unnoticed) underlying preoccupation.

Psychoanalytic thinking enables us to understand the origin of such situations when considered as a defence against the anxieties that uncertainty may elicit, and a systemic perspective offers a view of the whole of a system, by considering its parts intrinsically related in multifaceted relationships rather than as isolated components.

The conference sets out to create a framework within which the conscious and unconscious patterning of these relations and interactions, and the processes that shape them, can be made available for reflection and exploration. Noticing the layers and the messy traces of emotions below the surface allows a deeper, richer understanding of our individuality within, and contribution to the lives of groups and organisations.

Conference aims

To experience and examine conscious and unconscious processes of group dynamics as they happen, in the exercise of role, authority and leadership.

A demanding experience

Group relations conferences provide opportunities for learning which may feel challenging to those who are in the midst of emotionally stressful situations. Attendance may not be advisable in such circumstances.

If you wish to discuss the suitability of the conference to your needs, please email or phone Carlos Sapochnik, Conference Director carlos@sapochnik.com +44 (0)20 8374 2230
Membership
Membership is open up to 72 participants who currently work or study at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, all Tavistock accredited courses elsewhere in the UK, the Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships, and the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. Thus, membership is taken up by trainee social workers, psychoanalytic psychotherapists, child & adolescent psychotherapists, systemic couple and family therapists, educational clinical psychologists, administrators, and organisational consultants.

Training group
The conference offers the opportunity for a group of up to eight members to work in experiential as well as consultative roles. In addition to the conference events, the group has its own separate schedule and events that address their specific needs. Training group applicants should have had previous membership experience of two group relations conferences of this kind. Application for places is on competitive bases. Early application is recommended.

Venue, dates, times
The conference will take place at the Tavistock Centre, 120 Belsize Lane, London, NW3 5BA from Monday 12 to Friday 16 December 2016.

Mon 12 (Registration 09.00–09.40) 09.45–18.30
Tue 13 09.30–18.30
Wed 14 09.30–18.30
Thu 15 09.30–18.30
Fri 16 09.30–16.15 (Farewell drink 16.15–16.45)

Please note that participants are required to attend all events in full – throughout the duration of the conference.

Registration
Prospective participants should apply by completing either the registration form at the end of this brochure as hard copy, or the electronic (Word) version, available from the Pre-conference Administrator

Naiara Labaca
+44 (0)20 8938 2584
NLabaca@TavistockConsulting.co.uk
Design and method
The conference is designed as a temporary organisation to assist experiential learning – that is, learning from the immediate experience of participation in, and reflection on, the events of the conference itself. The different activities are structured to explore the vicissitudes of delegating authority, tasks and roles, as well as the management of boundaries in relation to task, time and place. These will not remain static but will change and develop from event to event and through the week, as the organisation grapples with its own potential for transformation.

Conference plenaries
The Opening Plenary involves all members and staff. It introduces the conference and provides an opportunity for participants to share their expectations as they cross the boundary into the conference and reflect on what may have been left behind. The Closing Plenary offers an opportunity for reflection on the learning from the work done over the week, while studying the process of ending relationships.

Small study groups
This event offers the opportunity of participating in a group of 8–10 members. The task is to study face-to-face, interpersonal role relationships and group processes as they occur. A staff consultant is provided for each Small study group.

Large study group
This group comprises the membership of the conference including the training group. The objective here is to experience and learn about interpersonal relations in the setting of the whole membership. Staff, working in consulting roles, assist the task by offering observations about what they perceive may be happening in the ‘here-and-now’ of the group.

Review groups
The purpose of these groups is to review and reflect on the roles that participants may have taken up so far in the conference, and help to identify areas for further development. Members are allocated to a group of participants with a staff consultant as facilitator.

Intergroup event
This event offers an opportunity to participate in and to study relations between groups as they happen and, in particular, the problems of exercising authority while taking responsibility on behalf of others.

Members form groups among themselves for this purpose. Consultancy is provided by the staff and the training group and the event ends with a plenary review session.

Organisational event
The task of this event is to conceptualise the overall conference as a developing institution within a managed setting. The dynamics between groups in their interaction with one another, and between the membership and management, are some of the issues which may be explored in order to understand what sort of organisational culture is explicitly and implicitly in operation as constructed by members, consultants and management. Consultation from staff is available on request while the Management Group works in open sessions. The event concludes with a plenary review.

Application groups
These groups take place on the final day of the conference and have the same composition as the Review Groups. The task is to apply the learning derived from the experiences in the conference to participants’ current work issues. A staff member assists the discussion in the role of facilitator.
**Conference Roles**

**Member role**
The role of the members is to work to the task of each event. The events provide the opportunity to take up roles within groups and on behalf of groups. Members will be able to explore leadership, followership and representative roles and to study their relationship to authority, responsibility and change. There will also be opportunities to examine the roles offered to them consciously and unconsciously by others, as well as the roles they take for themselves and allocate to others.

**Training group role**
The role of training group member is to work to the task of each event in the roles that have been selected. The different events provide opportunities for working in, and learning from, member or consultant roles with staff and members. They will be able to experience leadership, followership, and representative roles and to study their relationship with authority, responsibility and change from their position as a subsystem within the conference. They will be able to study the roles offered to them both consciously and unconsciously, as well as the roles they themselves take up and allocate to others.

**Staff role**
Staff have specific roles throughout the conference as delegated by the director. Firstly, they act collectively as management. In so doing, they take responsibility for managing the boundaries of task, time and territory, so that members may work on the different activities and engage in the primary task of the conference.

Secondly, during the different events staff members take up roles as consultants, offering their perceptions of what is occurring, at both a conscious and unconscious level, and thus encourage learning about roles, authority, leadership and the doubts and anxieties evoked by change in a developing organisation.

Thirdly, during the Review and Applications groups they assist revision and application of the learning as facilitators of the reflections by the group.

Staff members meet periodically in their own sessions throughout the conference in order to exchange thoughts, feelings and hypotheses so that they can deepen their understanding of the organisation – and hence maximise the resources available to members.
Conference staff

DIRECTORATE

Carlos Sapochnik
Conference Director
Organisational consultant and researcher; Visiting Tutor, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust; Member, International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organisations (ISPSO); Associate member, Organisation for Promoting Understanding of Society (OPUS).

Maxine Dennis
Associate Conference Director
Consultant clinical psychologist, psychoanalyst and adult psychotherapist, Adult Department, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. She has directed and had staff roles on group relations conferences.

William Crouch
Associate Director for the Training Group
Psychoanalyst and Supervisor in private practice; former Consultant clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, Adult Department and Portman Clinic, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust.

Phillip Birch
Associate Director for Administration
Psychological Therapies Development Unit Project Manager, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. He is also a psychodynamic and DIT psychotherapist in private practice in South London.

CONSORTANTS

Samar Habl MD
Psychiatrist (four-year fellowship in psychoanalytic psychotherapy), Director of Psychopharmacology, Austen Riggs Center, Boston; Residency in psychiatry, Mayo Clinic; Staff member and Director of group relations conferences, former Board member, CSGSS (AK Rice Institute).

Gwen Hanrahan
Organisational consultant specialising in leadership development, group dynamics, and organisational culture and change. She works with clients from across different sectors, internationally and in the UK.

Kathy Harrington
Principal lecturer, consultant, researcher in learning, teaching and professional development in Higher Education; Visiting tutor, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust; Associate and Conference Committee member, Organisation for Promoting Understanding of Society (OPUS).

Lydia Hartland-Rowe
Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist; Course Lead/Senior Liaison Tutor, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust; Cohort Director, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Programme, NHS Leadership Academy; Associate Member, Organisation for Promoting Understanding of Society (OPUS).

Julian Lousada
Psychoanalyst in private practice; former Clinical Director, Adult Department, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust; former Chair, British Psychoanalytic Council. Has directed and worked on many group relations conferences, nationally and internationally.

Mary B. McRae Ed.D
Associate Professor, Department of Applied Psychology, New York University; Private Practice, Organisational Consultant; Fellow, AK Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems; Scholarly work: group and organisational dynamics in a multicultural world.

Dr Mellini Mahadevan
Consultant Psychiatrist, East London NHS Foundation Trust. She has trained in general psychiatry and psychoanalytic psychotherapy and worked on several group relations conferences in the UK.

Ian Paton
Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist who has a specialist interest in group work with children, adolescents and adults. He has worked in therapeutic communities, Open Door and the Tavistock Clinic and has a private practice. Ian teaches on M7 and M34.

Karen Tanner
Consultant Social Worker and Associate Dean, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. Karen is an experienced clinician–trainer particularly interested in providing consultancy and support to social workers working with complex situations.

Simon Tucker
An experienced manager, and Organisational Consultant. A Visiting Professor at Moscow University as well as a Doctoral supervisor and Associate Organising Tutor on Masters and Doctorate programmes in Organisational Consultancy and Strategic Leadership.
ROLE, MASK, AND PERSON IN GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

A five-day non-residential group relations conference at the Tavistock Centre, 120 Belsize Lane, London NW3 5BA

Fees

Students/Trainees
If included in course fees No charge
Otherwise £650

Trust staff
If sponsored by Trust No charge
Otherwise £650

Training group £880

The closing date for applications is 12 noon Monday 7 November 2016.

Early booking is recommended.

To book a place please fill in this form and return by post as hard copy, or email a request for a Word version, complete on screen, and email it to the Conference Administrator

Kara Florish
Tavistock Centre
120 Belsize Lane, London NW3 5BA
+44 (0)20 8938 2289
KFlorish@Tavi-Port.nhs.uk

Application/registration form

- Student/trainee member
- Staff member
- Training group member

Please tick one and complete in full in BLOCK letters. Items indicated with an asterisk (*) will appear in the handbook.

TITLE

FORENAMES (*)

SURNAME(S) (*)

GENDER DATE OF BIRTH

HOME ADDRESS

POSTCODE

TELEPHONE
work
home
mobile

E-MAIL

EMERGENCY CONTACT (next of kin)

EMPLOYING INSTITUTION (*)

CURRENT WORK TITLE (*)

DISCIPLINE

MAIN ROLE(S)

If you are a student/trainee at the Trust indicate

COURSE CODE

COURSE NAME

COURSE YEAR
TRAINING

Please give details of any training undertaken (including any group relations experience) that may be relevant to the conference, giving name of institution and dates.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Please tick one

☑ The conference fee is covered by my course arrangements. (Please check with your Course Director)

☑ The conference fee is not covered by my course (or Trust employment) arrangements and I enclose payment for £650.

☑ Please invoice me for the fee of £650. Invoice Address:

☐ The fee will be fully/partly covered by the following funds/sponsor (please give full details including invoice address and contact details).

☐ I am employed by the Trust and sponsored by my Department. Please give details.

☐ I enclose payment of the Training group member fee of £880.

☐ Please invoice me for the Training group member fee of £880. Invoice Address:

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust follows an equal opportunities policy in all its practice and teaching. All applicants will be considered on the basis of suitability for this conference irrespective of disability, gender, age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, or social class. The information you provide will be treated as confidential.

Please discuss any special needs with the Pre-conference Administrator.

DECLARATION

I commit myself to attending the whole conference programme from Monday 12 – Friday 16 December 2016.

SIGNATURE

DATE

Please return the completed form to the Pre-conference Administrator to the address shown in the previous page, keeping a copy for your reference.

Cheques should be made payable to the ‘Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust’.

Cancellation Charges

Between 8–12 weeks notice 25%
Between 2–8 weeks notice 50%
Less than 2 weeks notice 100%