

**Group Relations in America 2010 and beyond:  
Developing a Resurgency Strategy – call for Papers and Participation**

Join a Symposium for Inquiry and Analysis of Society and its Institutions

**October 7 – 10, 2010**

Sponsored by the A.K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems at the Cenacle, Chicago Illinois

**Resurgency:** a rising again into life, activity, or prominence.

**40 Years of AKRI – Where we are today**

The A.K. Rice Institute celebrates its 40th year since being established in 1970 as the central organization for the study and practice of group relations in the United States. Group relations-based thought and practice has had a global impact within numerous sectors since its inception in Britain more than 60 years ago. The agenda will include the opportunity to assess the current status of the organizations that represent Group Relations in the US and abroad while asking ourselves such questions as:

- Are group relations organizations in an “eclipse” in a cycle of death, change, and rebirth in which some struggle to survive while others gather momentum?
- Is the group relations model in need of re-visioning?
- How is the actual practice of group relations different from the organizations that contain it?
- How do we stay connected while structural shifts and changes promote disconnection?

**Invitation to Participate – a Search for Innovation**

This Symposium will revisit and revitalize a theoretical framework that synthesizes psychoanalytic and socio-technical systems thinking, one which addresses relatedness of society, its institutions, and the experiences of groups and individuals. The Symposium title, *Group Relations in America 2010 and beyond: Developing a Resurgency Strategy* signifies a passionate desire to see group relations survive and thrive in the US and abroad, healthy in its institutional bases and in its dissemination in many domains.

Approaches to this inquiry at the Symposium will include presentations of current research, dialogue, developments in the social sciences, application work using group relations, experiential sessions, and individual and group reflections. Of special significance is innovation in all these areas.

The Symposium planning committee invites participation by anyone who has attended or been influenced by experience with group relations conferences, educational programs, consultations, or any activity primarily engaged in examining unconscious aspects of individual and group life. We are interested in inquiry in the pursuit of effective and conscious endeavors in the world of business, education, research, religion, international relations, information technology, social science, and all other human enterprises, which lend themselves to serious examination for the sake of thoughtful choices for action.

**Submission Guidelines**

- 1) Please submit a face sheet that includes title of the proposed project, name (s) of presenters, professional affiliations, telephone and fax numbers and email addresses.
- 2) A brief, 1-2 page description of your proposed presentation, workshop, or panel. Include the names of others included in the specific proposal such as panel members and workshop participants.
- 3) Any audiovisual needs you will have.

**Schedule for Proposal Submission**

Proposals should be sent by email (in the body of the message or as a Word .doc attachment) by **April 1, 2010** to: Mary Colton akriceinst@aol.com

**Additional questions to consider going forward**

- a. What lens does group relations thinking offer leaders and followers so they can understand and navigate the rapidly evolving environment in which our institutions struggle to survive and succeed with their missions?
- b. How is the practice of group relations thinking currently manifested in the world? What new individual approaches, organizations and groups are forming to represent the principles and operational models of group relations thinking?
- c. The growth of technology based communication and decision-making brings with it enormous challenges to our sense of connectedness, ability to experience and correctly interpret affect and to manage boundaries of time and space. What understanding can Group Relations bring to this ubiquitous use of technology that has both positive and negative potentials?
- d. Are there other methodologies and or organizations doing systemic work with whom the group relations community might partner?
- e. What does the future hold for group relations in the world? What is our task and our role?
- f. Is leadership itself in danger, at risk of becoming a “poisoned chalice?” How can leadership and followership evolve beyond the cycles of idealization, conflict, corruption and ineffectiveness whereby a lack of authorization is replaced by one dimensional cults of personality?

**Request for Proposals**

The planners invite you to reflect on these or additional questions and issues that you are uniquely qualified to address. This gathering will consist of colleagues and fellow practitioners of group relations, social sciences and other methodologies based on awareness of unconscious process, and the challenges of authority, leadership, and followership in tumultuous times.

We envision a mix of contributions: keynotes, panels, papers, workshops, poster sessions, experiential events, and opportunities for innovation, engagement, reflection and contemplation.

The selection of Chicago as the site of the 40th Anniversary Symposium situates us at the physical center of a successful Presidential campaign for a leader whose election was by no means a foregone conclusion. Now, more than a year beyond an election which brought joy to many and disappointment to others, uncertainty and conflict continues to surface on all sides of the political and economic debates in the US and around the world.

Impressive evidence exists that the capacity to move forward in the face of immense complexity, competition, paradox and the unknown and unknowable will be the measure of effective leadership going forward. For many in our field, group relations work has helped to cultivate these very skills. Our intention for this symposium is to offer our work to a wider community of practitioners, scholars, students, leaders and followers.

We invite you to join us in this enterprise.