

Authority, Relatedness, and the Unconscious in Groups and Social Systems



Group Relations Conference
Teachers College, Columbia University
April 28 – 30, 2023

Teachers College, Columbia University

TEACHERS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations

**THE
TAVISTOCK
INSTITUTE®**

Dear Prospective Member:

Although the sea changes of the past three years have often been dramatic, disorienting, and exceedingly difficult, we still have had to take care of our major life responsibilities such as getting up and going to work in the morning as well as tending to our family and social responsibilities and relationships. We continue to work, love, experience, contribute, and produce amidst intense turbulence and uncertainty. Indeed, society should and must continue to function. Yet, many of us sense we are fundamentally changed as we try to navigate our various systems and subsystems in this “new normal” that is life in 2023.

The constant explosion of technological advances means we can be connected to information, commerce, entertainment, work, and each other 24/7. Our responsibilities coupled with others’ expectations of us seem greater than ever before. Sometimes our jobs and relationships demand a kind of constant yoking even though we may receive no additional monetary compensation, acknowledgement, or appreciation. Is it any wonder many of us are quietly quitting or joining the great resignation? How can we be surprised there is a mental health crisis among nearly every age group in the United States? AI technology is growing ever more sophisticated and omnipresent, perhaps, in part, because the only way to thrive in the current world we have created is to be less human and more robotic. If we were all perfectly programmed machines perhaps the challenges of these times would be mundane. Yet, as beautifully flawed people we can engage in our society and with each other with excitement, energy, anxiety, insight, grief, hope, fear, love, – with the full and wondrous range of human emotion – if we choose.

Groups and group dynamics affect our sense of self, our connections and disconnections to each other and to the systems we create together. In the temporary experiential learning environment of this conference, we have the opportunity to experience in-vivo how unconscious processes affect how authority is formed and taken up within groups and social systems. We can study how the exercise of this authority affects our sense of relatedness to and within groups and social systems. Members may use this conference to explore the power of groups to motivate and to enervate, to wound and to heal, to inspire and to challenge. We can explore how to identify implicit social contracts (rules and norms), to understand group roles including the idea of “person-in-role.” We have the opportunity to study leadership, membership, individual and collective responsibility, working across boundaries, the interplay of social identity in every aspect of group life, the meaning we make of our actions, relationships, and systems-as-a-whole. At its best, this type of experiential learning enables us to develop new insights, perspectives, and actions we can bring to all the organizations we touch in our daily lives. As human beings we are not well-oiled machines, programmed to be bug-free, but we can be compassionate, capable, constant learners continuously working to understand who we are and what we can create together.

Teachers College, Columbia University

TEACHERS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations

**THE
TAVISTOCK
INSTITUTE®**

Conference Directorate:

Jonathan Rust

Director

Howard Friedman

Associate Director

Ramya Kumar

Director of Administration

Please note:

The GRC is an experiential learning conference and it is designed for members to learn about group and organizational processes. Experiential learning can be powerful, illuminating and also tiring and sometimes stressful. Self-learning often also occurs in the GRC, but the conference is not meant to be a clinical or therapeutic offering. If you are currently undergoing significant stress or managing a difficult personal situation you should forego attendance at this time.

Conference Design and Role of Staff:

The conference is designed as a temporary institution that is organized in a sequence of group and inter-group interactions that provide opportunities for learning. Staff manage the conference boundaries, but they do not manage people. Lectures and didactic presentations by staff are not part of the design. The staff's consultations will focus primarily on group-level phenomena rather than on individuals' behavior.

Primary Task:

The primary task is to study the inter-personal, group-as-a-whole, inter-group, and organizational dynamics as they occur in the here-and-now of the conference

You will have an opportunity to learn:

- Conscious and unconscious factors that shape participation in groups
- How authority is taken up and utilized in groups
- How group dynamics can influence our relationship to and our relatedness in groups
- What roles we take up in groups and why

Teachers College, Columbia University

TEACHERS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations

**THE
TAVISTOCK
INSTITUTE®**

Location

Teachers College, Columbia University
525 West 120th Street
New York, NY 10027

Schedule

9:00 am – 6:30 pm ET	Friday, April 28, 2023
9:00 am – 6:45 pm ET	Saturday, April 29, 2023
9:00 am – 5:45 pm ET	Sunday, April 30, 2023

Conference Registration

Registration takes place on Friday from 8:25 to 8:55 am.
There will be a reception on Sunday from 5:50 to 6:10 pm.

Meals and Lodging

Light refreshments will be available during breaks. Continental breakfast will be offered on Saturday and Sunday beginning at 8:15 am. Meals for lunch and dinner each day are the responsibility of the members.

The conference is non-residential. Once registered, recommendations for housing accommodations are provided upon request by contacting the administrative team at: teacherscollegeGRC@gmail.com.

Registration

All invited members must register by 12 Midnight (ET), Friday, March 24, 2023, using the following link: <https://form.jotform.com/220257173673153>.

Note: If you are not currently enrolled in the *Group Dynamics: A Systems Perspective* course at Teachers College, please email TCGroupRelationsConferences@gmail.com to be added to the public member wait list. You will be contacted on a first-come, first-served basis with information about how to register and submit payment. Conference registration is \$450, with modest discounts available for current students and for those working in the non-profit sector. Please note that spaces are limited; if you are not offered a spot in this GRC, you will be placed on a waitlist for the next available GRC.

Teachers College, Columbia University

TEACHERS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations

**THE
TAVISTOCK
INSTITUTE®**

Teachers College's COVID-19 Policies

The safety of the entire TC community continues to be a top priority. Individuals are expected to comply with all COVID policies in effect during the time of the conference. Currently these policies include: any individual accessing the TC campus must be fully vaccinated and boosted; as well as adhere to the mask guidelines. See [here](#) for more information on mask guidance while on TC campus.

Additional Questions?

If you have questions, please email: teacherscollegeGRC@gmail.com