

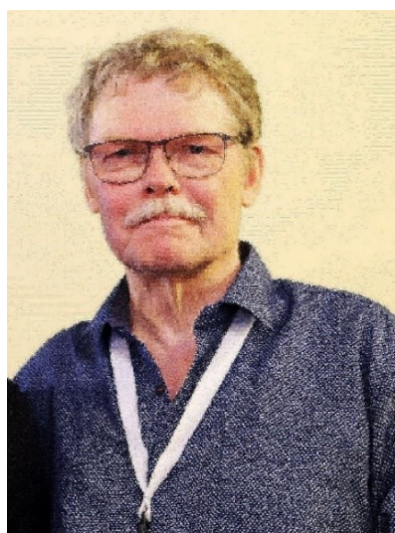
ABSTRACT BOOK

EGATIN STUDY DAYS IN AARHUS 26.-28.4 2024

Opening of the EGATIN Study Days



Marina Brinchi, Psychologist Psychotherapist. Group-Analyst. Chair of E.G.A.T.I.N. (European Group Analytic Training Network), Member of the Board of C.A.T.G. (Group Analytic Association) EGATIN founding Member; Trainer and Supervisor in Milan Group Analytic Psychotherapy Institute. Trainer and Supervisor in Turin Analytic Psychology and Psychotherapy Institute I.P.A.P. Cochair AMP (Psychodrama Mediterranean Association) IAGP and FEPTO Member. Trainer and Supervisor in Systemic and Relational Therapy IEFCoSTRe. She facilitates and leads group therapy nationally and internationally. Valle d'Aosta University Group Psychotherapy Contract Professor. Former Perugia University Psychology Contract Professor. Former Director of Mental Public Health Service. Member of the editorial board of *Psicobiettivo* magazine.



Kristian Valbak, M.D., Ph.D. is a consultant psychotherapist and group analyst working as a teacher and supervisor in the Mental Health Service. He is co-founder of IGA-Aarhus and teacher in the training in Aarhus. He is delegate, honorary member and former president of EGATIN

Abstract: Where are we?

Opening the study days by touching on Danish group culture and history

The big question: How do we maintain the capacity to contain emotional pain, to think and to hope.

The wish: Let's get ready to meet, reflect and recognize. Maybe we can listen and see ourselves and our work from different perspectives. We can also disagree, but we shall not forget to have a good time.

Welcome!

Presenters and presentations



Sigmund Karterud, MD, PhD is professor of psychiatry, formerly at the University of Oslo, and formerly head of The Norwegian Institute for Mentalization. He is trained in psychoanalytic psychotherapy, in particular self-psychology, group analysis and mentalization-based treatment (MBT). He is a former training group analyst at Institute of Group Analysis, Oslo and a member of Group Analytic Society (GAS). His PhD thesis, "Group processes in therapeutic communities" (1989), was an empirical study of Bion's basic assumption theory. He has published several books on self-psychology, day hospital treatment, MBT, personality, personality psychiatry and personality-focused psychotherapy. Also available in English is "Mentalization-based group therapy (MBT-G)" (Oxford University Press, 2015). Karterud maintains a private practice in Oslo for personality assessment, individual psychotherapy, group analysis, supervision and MBT training.

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Abstract: Theoretical and clinical challenges with applied group analysis

The greatest challenges with applied group analysis come from public mental health and psychiatric outpatient services. They concern the therapist's diminished control of boundary conditions, in particular treatment duration and group composition. The therapist must accept clients who are not optimal candidates for classical group analysis, i.e., with a range of symptom disorders, substance misuse and serious problems with psychosocial functioning. In short, various manifestations of personality disorders. How much personality problems can a group contain and still develop a group analytic discourse? This is a problem that has haunted group analysis from its inception. Today it is more acute than ever.

The lecture will discuss the theoretical and clinical challenges with this state of affairs. We should remember Foulkes slogan about group analysis as "ego-training in action". What does that mean in modern times when the ego is dead? It will be argued that group analysis has failed in replacing ego with the self. During the 1990-ties Malcolm Pines was a spokesperson for this replacement but did not succeed. In our times the self will be conceptualized with resources from modern theories of evolution, primary emotions, attachment, mentalizing and personality development in dialogue with a philosophy of the self that also provide us with a robust concept of the group self. These perspectives turn our attention from the group as object (Nitsun) towards the group as subject, towards the "we"; towards group analysis as a common project that unites the group members. However, the more vulnerable and fragmented, the more problems the group members will have with cooperating. The analyst might be faced with groups that are too chaotic, too hostile, being divided in subgroups, too confronting and offensive, or too flat and dependent and devoid of vitality. In short, being entangled in immature stages of group development and far from a level of discourse that deserves the label group-analytic.

How can the therapist under such conditions promote the necessary building of trust and group development? He/she should be more active than the classical group analyst. But in what way? Firstly he/she should be more pedagogic in the initial stages of group development. But above all, he/she should be more alert to the vicissitudes of insults and disappointments, to what Kohut conceptualized as self-object failures, later being phrased as therapeutic ruptures, during group

interactions. A high-level analytic group works with such phenomena “by itself”, assisted by the analyst (“trust the group”). A group which is stuck in earlier phases of group development needs more assistance from the therapist. How can this be done without resorting to individual therapy in groups?

New Book (review)

‘Group Analysis: A Modern Synthesis’ (Routledge 2024) outlines how clinical group analysis can re-establish itself as a leading paradigm for group psychotherapy.

Sigmund Karterud explains how the focus of group analysis and its applications can be expanded by stronger emphasis on the philosophy and psychology of the self. The book is divided into four parts, with part one reconsidering the historical roots of group analysis through its founder S. H. Foulkes and part two demonstrating how the fields of evolution, primary emotions, attachment, mentalizing, personality theory and personality disorders can be integrated with group analysis. Part three develops a philosophy of the self that includes a group self which accounts for the wholeness of groups, and part four illustrates how these concepts can inform the practice of group analysis through a series of clinical vignettes addressing the major challenges which face the clinician.

‘Group Analysis: A Modern Synthesis’ will be essential reading for all group psychotherapists in practice and in training. It will also appeal to students of group analytic psychotherapy’.



[Ole K. Østergård](#) is an Associate Professor and in charge of the University Clinic at the Department of Communication and Psychology, Aalborg University. He teaches at IGA-Aarhus, and is a certified trainer in Operationalized Psychodynamic Diagnosis.

[Abstract: Who are Short-Term Group Analytic Psychotherapy for? A Study of Students](#)

Mental well-being and mental health are some of the biggest challenges in society today. According to the National Health Profile from the Danish Health Authority (2021), one in three young women and one in five young men aged 16-24 report poor mental health, which also affects university students. Modified or focused short-term group analytic psychotherapy might be an effective treatment for this group of highly distressed students struggling with relational difficulties and mental health issues. The presentation will give treatment guidelines and results from focused short-term group analytic psychotherapy, including 66 student clients in nine groups. The interview-based Operationalized Psychodynamic Diagnosis (OPD) was used to assess

psychological mindedness and personality structure before group treatment and to formulate individual treatment foci for each client. The results showed large improvements in symptoms and interpersonal and social functioning at post-treatment and 1-year follow-up. However, student clients with lower levels of personality functioning and psychological mindedness benefited less from the treatment compared to students with higher levels of functioning. In conclusion, short term group analytic psychotherapy seems to be a good and valuable treatment option for highly distressed student clients. Moreover, the group analyst can use 'psychological mindedness' and 'personality structure' to select suitable clients for these short-term groups.



[Ljiljana Moro](#), MD, psychiatrist, retired university professor, and former head of the Clinic for Psychiatry in Rijeka, Croatia. She is trained group analyst and psychoanalytic psychotherapist. As a founding member of IGA Zagreb (1988), she continues to contribute as a dedicated teacher.

[Abstract: Group Analytic Training in Times of War and Peace - What has Group Analysis given me?](#)

'Psycho-analytic virtue lies not in the number of theories an analyst can command but the minimum number with which he can meet any contingency he is likely to meet' (W.R.Bion).

In this presentation I will explore our developmental journey in group analysis in Croatia. In federal Yugoslavia group analysis served as a vital connection to the professional world, alleviating our sense of isolation. In peacetime, group analytic training facilitated learning, experience exchange and socialization. This knowledge will later help us understand what was happening to us during the Homeland War (1990-1995). Group analysis and group analytic training are different in peace and wartime context. During war, the focus shifted from treating individuals in the groups, to understanding relationships within and between the large groups (republics) and newly-formed groups (groups of soldiers, displaced persons, refugees...). It was necessary to help newly-formed groups and their members in adapting to dramatic external changes. Human thinking is driven by the need to know the reality of who we are and what is happening in our lives. The emotional toll of wartime situation prompted us to reflect on our experiences and gradually adapt to it. The evolution of the Institute for Group Analysis in Zagreb mirrored these changes, transitioning from being a part of a larger clinical institution to an independent entity. As a founding member actively

involved in Croatia's group analysis development, I've witnessed its benefits for personal growth. Learning and training are pivotal in adapting to external traumatic events, just as psychotherapy is crucial for treating internal psychological states caused by traumatic experiences.



Farhad Dalal is a psychotherapist and Group Analyst in private practice in Devon. He is a Training Group Analyst and supervisor for the Institute of Group Analysis, London. He is trying (but failing) to retire. In part because since 2020, he finds himself convening a group psychotherapy training in India. He also has a small supervision practice. He has published many papers and four books to date, the most recent being a critique of CBT. Currently he is preoccupied with the notion of psychotherapy as a practice in interpersonal ethics.

www.dalal.org.uk

Abstract: Disruptions from the Periphery - From EGATIN to IGATIN?

The cardinal values, beliefs and conventions of all manner of discourses and institutions (including that of group analysis) are thought to be scientific and rational, and so constitute the 'gold standard'. It is expected that all trainings should conform to, and aspire to, the same gold standard. EGATIN is positioned as the custodian of 'true' group analysis, with the authority to determine what trainings are required to do. This is how it seems from the vantage point of the center.

But things look different from the perspective of the periphery; these perspectives inevitably question and disrupt the established order of things. The center is likely to characterize perspectives from the periphery as irrational and so dismiss them; and if not irrational, then certainly as inferior to the established gold standard.

In this talk I put forward the view that the established norms and beliefs are not straightforwardly 'rational', because they also function as markers of inclusion and exclusion. In other words, the rationales are to some degree rationalizations. I will argue that the field of group analysis is as much an ideological and political field as a psychological one, in which differing values and ideologies compete with each other for the high ground.

I will discuss some of the ways in which these tensions and themes played out during (and after) the time of Covid and the global lockdown.



Lene Hjort, MD, Ph.D., Child and adolescent psychiatrist. Trainee at IGA Aarhus. Working in the in-patient department for children, adolescents, and adults with severe eating disorders and in the outpatient Group Analytic Treatment Programme at Aarhus University Hospital Psychiatry Branch.

Abstract: Recognizing Disruption in the Group Matrix

The most common versions of the fairy tale "Sleeping Beauty" emphasize the prolonged sleep of the heroine. However, the English, German, and Danish names for the fairy tale (Briar Rose, Dornröschen, and Tornerose) highlight both the heroine and the thorns protecting her as she sleeps. Overwhelmed by the sudden experience of bleeding, the adolescent princess falls into a deep sleep, shielded against all suitors by an impenetrable wall of thorns. Leaving the security of childhood, one must learn to understand and master both the inner and outer worlds. The central theme is that what may seem like a period of death-like passivity at the end of childhood is a time of quiet growth and preparation for physical, psychological, and sexual maturity. The group conductor aims to provide a secure space for the group to communicate and explore both the inner and outer worlds. The group circle, dynamic administration, organizational anchoring, foundation and dynamic matrices contribute to the wall of thorns that surrounds the analytic group on its journey to maturity.

A continuous and predominantly peaceful democratic development has taken place in Denmark since the abolition of autocracy in 1849. In Denmark and other Nordic countries, a range of civil and political movements reached a peak as the welfare state was envisioned in the 1960s and 1970s—a state model characterized by the redistribution of wealth and taxpayers collectively paying for education, health care, and social services. High levels of interpersonal trust in society correlate with high levels of trust in public institutions, low levels of income inequality, and low corruption. However, globalization has increased labour market exclusion processes, leaving large groups marginalized in society. Investments in healthcare lagged behind, followed by climate changes, the refugee crisis, the Covid pandemic, and war in Europe—disruptions never imagined.

The outpatient group analytic group, based at Aarhus University Hospitals Psychiatry Department, met for the first time in September 2020, during the Covid pandemic. Exploring the relational histories of the group members and overcoming difficulties in relating to each other and the group have been at the forefront of the group's work. Group members voiced their struggles to participate in the labour market and their experiences with inadequate and incoherent hospital and social services. Group members felt left behind and excluded from the society. However, both the conductor and group members failed to connect these processes in the group to the corresponding larger social phenomena. External threats like climate changes, war in Ukraine, and the Middle East have not been openly discussed in the group, as if they were unable to permeate the wall of thorns surrounding the "sleeping" group. Various perspectives on the group's expression of disruption in the matrix will be explored in the presentation.



[Linn Therese Stormby-Szöllösi](#), authorized clinical psychologist, soon to be a specialist in psychotherapy, trainee at IGA Aarhus, working in an adult outpatient psychiatric clinic in Rønne with individuals suffering from severe personality disorders. The clinic is part of the psychiatric hospital of Randers, one of the regional hospitals in Midtjylland.



[Charlotte Sleimann](#), Special educated nurse in psychiatry. Master in learning processes, organization and leadership. I am a trainee at IGA Aarhus in my 2. Year. I have worked for over 20 years at a clinic in the Region, with out-patients suffering from personality disorders, the last 7 years especially with youth groups.

[Abstract: Stand by me - Navigating Disruptive Anger in Co-therapeutic Work with a Youth Group](#)

This presentation will explore our co-therapeutic work with a group of young individuals (18-28 years old) suffering from personality disorders, where disruptive anger posed a threat to the group's safety. We will explore the advantages and disadvantages of co-therapy in the context of our experiences.

The group is slow-open once weekly group in an outpatient psychiatric clinic in public hospital psychiatry in Denmark. Over its 7-year existence, the group has undergone various shifts in the leadership and setting. Initially conducted by a co-therapeutic couple, it later transitioned to a single therapist, who, on short notice, ceased working with the group. In March 2023, we assumed the role of co-therapists, gradually transitioning from a supportive to a therapeutic group approach.

Upon taking over, the group consisted of five members—four women and one man. Subsequently, two more members joined. Each member carries a personal history marked by unstable and disrupted primary relations. None of the members are currently employed or pursuing education, and most experience social isolation from their peers, although some live with their partners.

Representing the "Z-generation," these young individuals grapple with societal and psychological pressures to excel and optimize their resources for self-realization. The prevalent belief that "you can do anything if you want it enough" dominates their reality. Faced with the culture of perfection and self-realization promoted by the social media, they need to navigate their development by finding their own way. Internally, the group contends with an undercurrent of rivalry, intensified by external social factors that promote the ideal of the perfect and unique individual.

Internally in our group there is an undertone of rivalry. The group members' ability to maintain stable intimate relationships is generally low. It is a very difficult task for the group to meet, stay by each other's side and be together as a "we". Notably, a female member is carrying significant yet toxic anger on behalf of the whole group. A case vignette presented illustrates the challenges of managing the disruptive anger in the group. It is a difficult task, that the co-therapeutic couple has been facing in the group. Fortunately, we are two standing together.

Drawing on Birgitte Grønvall's (2002) metaphor of co-therapy as a musical duet, the success of a co-therapy depends on the compatibility of co-therapists and the time and space invested in the development of co-therapeutic relationship.

