

# **Balancing Authority & Power In Fast Changing Societal and Natural Dynamics**

**A weekend experiential learning conference to  
explore group and organizational processes**

**Conference Director:**  
**Shahin Sakhi, M.D., Ph. D.**  
**Associate Conference Director:**  
**Ara Haroutiounian, M.S.**

January 28 through 30, 2011  
UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute  
760 Westwood Plaza  
Los Angeles, California 90024

Co-Sponsored by  
Grex:  
The West coast affiliate of A.K. Rice Institute  
&  
The UCLA Center for the Study of  
Organizational & Group Dynamics  
&  
A.K. Rice Institute  
For the Study of Social Systems

For more information contact:  
Skyler Jackson  
Conference Administrator  
skyler.jackson@gmail.com

Online registration:  
<http://akri.affiniscap.com/cde.cfm?event=332862>

**19 hrs of MCEP, CE, BBS and Credits available for Psychologists, LCSWs, MFCC/MFTs,  
and Nursing Contact Hours**

## Primary Task

The primary task of the conference is to **learn**, through processing here and now experience, how intra-group and inter-group dynamics influence group members and their functions, sub-groups and their functions, sub-grouping processes, and the development of group-as-a-whole dynamics. In accordance with the specific theme of this conference, we pay special attention to how we can improve group function by maintaining a balance between authority and power within ourselves in the context of changing societal and environmental forces.

## Subtask

The conference also functions as a training institution for group relations consultancy and those who are interested in enhancing their learning through taking up the staff role.

---

## Concepts and Methods

Wilfred Bion is one of original founders of what was later referred to as the Tavistock method of studying group dynamics and social systems. Bion developed his theory about group dynamics by applying psychoanalytic method to understand how groups can or cannot stay on task during stressful situations. According to Bion, groups, like dreams, have a manifest, overt aspect and a latent, covert aspect. The manifest aspect is the work group, a level of functioning at which members consciously pursue agreed-on objectives and work toward the completion of a task. Although group members have hidden agendas, they rely on internal and external controls to prevent these hidden agendas from emerging and interfering with the announced group task. They pool their irrational thinking and combine their skills to solve problems and make decisions.

Groups do not always function rationally or productively, nor are individual members necessarily aware of the internal and external controls they rely on to maintain the boundary between their announced intentions and their hidden agendas. The combined hidden agendas of group members constitute the latent aspect of group life, the basic assumption group. In contrast to the rational group, this group consists of unconscious wishes, fears, defenses, fantasies, impulses, and projections. The work group is focused away from itself, toward the task; the basic assumption group is focused inward, toward fantasy and a more primitive reality. Tension always exists between the two; it is balanced by various behavioral and psychological structures, including individual defense systems, ground rules, expectations, and group norms.

A group relations conference is an effective methodology for teaching group dynamics and increasing the awareness of group phenomenon that can be applied to any size group from very small to group phenomenon as large as society. This conference serves as a temporary educational institution in which members are participant observers who make meaning of the institution they co-create with the staff. The methodology of a model that is meant to be applicable to various size groups with various levels of complexities should be clear and simple. In this model we keep boundaries of time, place, task, role, and the context clear and constant. Conference experience takes place in small and large sized groups for members to use their reflective capacity on their here and now experience as their task to understand intra-group dynamics.

In addition, during the Institutional event (IE), members will be able to further their understanding of how individuals aggregate to form a group and how groups recruit individuals. Furthermore, the IE provides participants the opportunity to study inter-group dynamics, and how groups hold information about the institution-as-a-whole and in relation to their environment and society. Staff work is based on the concept that what emerges in the conference is reflective of the external environment around the conference.

---

## **Background (history)**

Psychoanalytic application to group experiential learning in order to better understand social complex systems and develop skills to help individuals and groups in their social function evolved from works of Wilfred Bion and later A. Kenneth Rice and Margaret Rioch and work of several others associated with the Tavistock Institute for Study of Human Relations in London in early 1950's. Their ideas about group relations, leadership and authority as well as a considerable body of theory and application, have grown out of this tradition and have found positive reception around the world. In the ensuing years, many innovations were made to this method of studying authority, leadership, organizational roles, and boundaries. In particular, this method has greatly informed a complex social systems approach to understanding and interpreting collective consciousness at local and global levels. These advances included new designs for "here and now" experiential learning. Some educational institutions even offer Master's and Ph.D. level training and coursework in this discipline.

In the United States, the primary sponsor of "Tavistock" or "Group Relations" theory and practice is the A. K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems (AKRI) and its affiliate centers, of which Grex, a sponsor of this conference, is the West Coast affiliate.

---

## Purpose of this conference

The purpose of this conference is to improve our work and humanistic relationships as professionals, citizens, family members, in relation to our external environments, through maintaining a balance between authority and power.

We will use a group experiential learning method for furthering our understanding about various roles we take as members of diverse groups, how we gain authority, use power, how groups function, and the ways groups can affect their members. In addition, we use this conference to train those who want to gain the skills to work with people and organizations in any environment. These may include health care professionals in their work with patients and their families, managers or team members taking a leadership role, individuals interested in organizational consultation, or those in architecture and the arts and design. Though group relations conferences use similar methodologies and structure to provide opportunities for learning, each one uses a different theme to better study a particular aspect of group and organizational life. In this conference we pay special attention to the relationship between authority and power.

In this experiential learning event, we will have the opportunity to practice accessing and using the power that is generated through our own authority and examine the meaning of maintaining a balance between authority and power. Participants may also practice regaining a balance between power and authority by monitoring boundaries related to roles, task, time and place. Participants will be able to study the different ways formal and informal authorization influences individuals and groups as they explore the various roles they may take.

[Watch a video](#) of conference participants to hear about their experiences firsthand.

---

## Learning Objectives

- Learn about group dynamics from participation in groups that vary in size, structure, and task.
  - Observe the impact of individual characteristics such as race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, and age on authority and power.
  - Recognize personal and collective reactions to well defined authority and power dynamics within delineated boundaries.
  - Understand the difference between the stated task of a group and the task it actually appears to be pursuing.
  - Learn from experiences such as isolation, autonomy, affiliation, collaboration, conflict, delegation, and coalition building to improve leadership skills.
  - Identify underlying patterns of group interaction by forming groups, establishing governing structures and relating with other groups and the institution as a whole.
  - Apply conference learning to situations in their professional lives, family lives, Community arenas, and ecosystem.
  - Identify what it means to be a leader when authority is used to maintain one in role and on task by generating growth and authority in others.
  - Identify the authority within the role of followership and how authorization in role of follower is necessary part of authorization in role of leader.
  - Identify how groups and organizations could perform better when individuals and sub-groups are authorized to be reflective on their roles, tasks, and performances.
-

## **Conference Design**

The conference provides a variety of group events through which the primary task may be explored. These events are described below:

### **Plenary Events:**

Plenary events bring the entire institution together where members and staff may share expectations, reflections and explore processes of the conference as a whole and in its parts.

### **Small Study Group:**

Each member participates in a group of 7-12 individuals. The task of the Small Study Group is to study its own behavior as it emerges. The group is assisted with its task by one or more staff consultants.

### **Large Study Group:**

The entire membership meets together as a single group with the task of studying its own behavior as it happens. The Large Study Group is assisted with its task by a team of staff consultants.

### **Inter-Group Experience during Institutional Event (IE):**

Institutional Event: All members of the conference and the staff group participate in the Institutional Event in order to examine the evolving conference institution. Members may form themselves into groups of their own choosing and interact with other groups, including the staff, in the interest of their learning.

Opportunities are available to examine the processes of group formation and to consider the dilemmas inherent in representing, or exercising authority on behalf of, one's group. Members may request staff consultation during this event.

### **Role Analysis and Application Group:**

7-12 members meet with a staff consultant to explore the roles they have taken on during the conference; their experiences and observations; and how to apply this learning to outside organizational life.

---

## Role of Staff

The staff is part of the political and ideological context in which the conference occurs. Within the conference, the staff has at least two roles: 1) acting collectively as the management of the conference and 2) taking up specific roles such as director, administrator, and consultant. On the basis of their experience and reflective capacity, the staff formulates working hypotheses about what is happening from the perspective of group and systems processes.

The consulting staff's formal task is to direct their consultation to the group dynamics they come in contact with in their experience, even if the consultation or facilitation attempt starts from using the information that is provided by a particular member or a subgroup. Interpreting information from individual expression or interpersonal dynamics as a group dynamic offers everyone an opportunity to see broader organizational and social complexities more clearly in this experiential learning laboratory. This is achieved through reflecting and using our here and now experience as it is interacting with previous experiences at several levels including visceral, emotional, somatic, intellectual, personal, cultural, professional, and political.

Staff is chosen for their ability to maintain an intense and reflective focus on the primary task. Staff development and training during the conference further supports that focus.

As part of the conference design, the way in which the staff exercises leadership and authority, as individuals and as a group, is available for study.

---

## **Conference Staff**

### **Conference Director**

**Shahin Sakhi, MD, PhD** - Clinical faculty, Semel Institute, UCLA Psychiatry department; President, Grex; Psychiatrist, Educator, and consultant.

### **Associate Conference Director**

**Ara Haroutiounian, MS** - Principal, AHA! Solutions: Team Performance; Associate Clinical Professor, UCLA Sepulveda Psychiatry Training Program; Faculty, University of Phoenix; Board Member Grex; Co-Founder/Director, Axia Learning, Inc.

### **Conference Administrator**

**Skyler Jackson, BA** – Associate Director, ENCOMPASS; Clinical Project Coordinator, CSULA; Teacher, Los Angeles County High School for the Arts

### **Associate Conference Administrator**

**Ana Lilia Morales, MFTI** – Children's Therapist, Amanecer Community Counseling Services

### **Consulting Staff**

**Terry K. Davis, MEd** - Consultant, Peridox Center & Institute, Cincinnati, Ohio

### **Ara Haroutiounian, MS**

**Vivian Gold, PhD** - Clinical and Consulting Psychologist; Associate Clinical Professor, UCLA Dept. of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Science; Medical Staff VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System.

**Jack W. Lampl III** – President, A.K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems; credentialed Mediator; Video Producer; Visual Artist; Board Member GREX.

**Carl C. Mack, Jr., PhD** - Program Director and Principal Lecturer, Marshall Goldsmith School of Management, Organizational Psychology Division, Alliant International University, Sacramento, California; Principal Consultant, ABUYA WORKS, Davis, California; Member, A. K. Rice Institute and GREX; Member, Sacramento Area Organization Development Network, Sacramento, CA; Member, (National) Organization Development Network, South Orange, NJ; and a retired Public School Superintendent.

**Larry Malcus, PhD** - Clinical Psychologist, Veterans Affairs, Palo Alto Health Care System; Faculty (Group Psychotherapy) San Mateo County Residency Training Program; Board of Directors, GREX; Associate, AKRI; Fellow, American Group Psychotherapy Association.

**Dario Nardi, PhD** - Lecturer and Academic Counselor, UCLA Human Complex Systems degree program; Member and Past Conference Chair, International Association of Psychological Type; Recipient, UCLA Copenhaver Award for Innovative Use of Technology in the Classroom; Adjunct Faculty, Interstrength Associates; Lead Researcher, HCS Social Neuroscience Lab; also, Organizational Consultant, International Speaker, and Author.

**Jaime J. Romo, EdD** – Organizational Consultant; author; Policy committee co-chair for California Council on Teacher Education; CTE liaison with Californians Together.

### **Shahin Sakhi, MD, PhD**

**Tracy Wallach, PhD** - Independent Organizational Development and Leadership Consultant, Brookline MA; Doctoral Fellow, PERG (Program Evaluation and Research Group), Lesley University; Adjunct Faculty, College of Management, University of Massachusetts, Boston; Past President, Center for the Study of Groups and Social Systems (Boston Affiliate, A.K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems); Past Board Member, AKRI.



## **CONFERENCE INFORMATION**

### **ATTENDANCE**

This conference is designed as an integrated experience, so participants should plan to attend all events. It is important to note that, while experiential learning such as that available in this conference can be enriching, it can also be stressful at times. Therefore, individuals who are ill or experiencing a period of significant personal difficulty may wish to forego attendance at this time.

### **REGISTRATION AND CONFERENCE HOURS**

Friday, January 28, 2011

Registration: 3:00 PM - 3:55 PM

Conference Hours:

Friday January 28: 4:00 PM - 7:45 PM

Saturday January 29: 8:15 AM - 8:00 PM

Sunday January 30: 8:15 AM - 5:00 PM

A more detailed schedule will be provided upon registration.

### **LOCATION/TRAVEL/ACCOMMODATIONS**

The conference will be held at UCLA, Neuropsychiatric Institute and Hospital, Los Angeles, California. Participants from out of town will need to make their own arrangements for transportation and accommodations. A list of local hotels and transportation services is provided.

### **REFRESHMENTS AND MEALS**

Refreshments will be provided on Friday afternoon, Saturday and Sunday mornings and in the afternoons. There will be breaks scheduled for lunch on Saturday and Sunday. Meals are not included but a list of nearby restaurants will be provided.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

In order to support members' freedom to experiment in whatever ways they believe will best facilitate their learning, staff members will not report the behavior of any individual member to anyone outside the conference without the member's authorization. Members are encouraged to maintain the same degree of confidentiality.

### **POST-CONFERENCE APPLICATION SEMINARS**

A post-conference application seminar will be available for those who want to focus on applying their conference learning to their outside group relations or are interested in consultancy training. The seminars provide members a means to further explore their conference experience. They also offer historical and theoretical knowledge about group dynamics. The seminars are structured as follows: One 90-minute session per week for four weeks. Those who are interested can choose their own instructor among the available staff and meet based on a mutually agreed upon time and place or via telecommunication. Members who participate in post conference application seminar will receive a certificate of attendance in a 3-day group relations conference from Grex and receive one year free Grex membership.

### **GREX CONSULTATION TRAINING**

As mentioned in the brochure, this conference functions as a training facility.

Trainees will participate as staff and each trainee is assigned to one experienced staff to work with. In addition, all trainees will work with the director of the conference during the conference. Participation in the post-conference application seminar is mandatory for trainees if they wish to receive a certificate of completion of 3-day group relations conference training from Grex. Interested applicants should contact the Conference Director for a short interview. Previous experience in group experiential learning is required.

### **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

Applications will be accepted through January 22, 2011, after which applications will be accepted on a case-by-case basis based on availability.

## CONFERENCE FEES

Individual Membership	\$350.00	
GreX and/or ARKI Members	\$325.00	
Group Discounts (3 or more members registering together) Please list other members registering with you:	\$300.00 each	
<b>UCLA Fees</b>		
UCLA Psychiatry faculty, staff, employee	\$150.00	
UCLA Psychiatry Residents, psychology PhD candidates, fellows	\$100.00	
<b>Non-UCLA Psychiatry Residents and Fellows</b>	\$150.00	
<b>Student Fees</b>	\$100.00	
<b>Other Fees</b>		
Post-Conference Application Seminar Fees (Optional; includes 1 year GreX Membership) Fee is waived for UCLA Psychiatry Residents and does not include GreX membership	\$120.00	
GreX Consultancy Training (Please contact Conference Administration prior to applying)	\$470.00	
<b>Donations to GreX</b>		
<b>Total</b>		

## REFUNDS

If an application is withdrawn prior to Friday, January 14, 2011, the applicant's fee, minus a \$50 processing fee, will be refunded. Thereafter, no refunds will be made.



**MEMBER INFORMATION**

**Register Online:** <http://akri.affiniscape.com/cde.cfm?event=332862>

*Name			
Email:		Phone:	
Mailing Address:			
<p><b>* Denotes information to be circulated to conference members</b> The extent to which members wish to be identified by various aspects of their identity will help to clarify the formation of small groups, and will influence the extent to which these groups are recognized as reflecting society at large. Your responses are optional. The information below will not be circulated to conference members.</p>			
<b>Other Personal Information (Optional):</b>			
Title:		Organizational Affiliation:	
Previous ARKI/Group Relations Conference experience (if any):			

**PAYMENT INFORMATION**

<b>Total amount you are paying:</b>			
Please include documentation for discounts			
<b>Methods of Payment:</b>			
Checks or Money Orders: Payable to <b>GREX</b> Mail application to: Skyler Jackson Conference Administrator 530 S. Lake Ave. #346 Pasadena, CA 91101			
Credit/Debit Cards:	<input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> American Express		
Name on Card:			
Card Number:			
Expiration Date:		Security Code:	
Card holder's Signature:			

I have read this brochure and hereby apply for membership to the January 2011 Conference. I understand that this application constitutes a contract between The UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute, the UCLA CSOGD, Grex, and me, and that my application authorizes these organizations to conduct the conference in the manner described. My conference payment accompanies this application or I have made other arrangements with the Conference Administrator. I understand and agree to all administrative policies stated in this brochure and acknowledge that an administrative fee of \$50 will be retained if my application is withdrawn prior to or on January 14, 2011 and that no refund will be issued after that date.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact:	<b>Skyler Jackson</b> <b>Conference Administrator</b>	Email:	skyler.jackson@gmail.com
----------	--	--------	--------------------------