



# VASGW

The Virginia Association  
for Specialists in Group Work

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Winter 2022

Volume 1

## President's Message

*Dear VASGW members:*

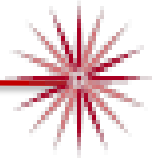
*I hope that you are all continuing to be well and safe during these unprecedented times. We have returned to in-person school and although challenges continue it is good to be back in-person.*

*We were able to hold our 2021 conference virtually. It was an immense success for a first virtual conference. We have however, decided to forego the usual conference for 2022 for several shorter Professional Development opportunities and hope to return to an in-person conference for 2023. We had our first PD on December 7 which highlighted running counseling groups in the virtual environment. We are hoping to have presentations in February, March and April or May so stay tuned.*

*The VASGW board has been continuing to work hard to redo our website and make it more interesting to view and to be able to house helpful resources. This is a work in progress, and we would welcome your ideas and suggestions. Please visit the site at <https://sites.google.com/view/vasgw/home>*

*I hope that you have a happy new year. Remember to take time to relax and practice self-care. Remember that you can't pour from an empty cup. If you have ideas or suggestions for the newsletter, website, Professional Development topic, or conference please don't hesitate to contact me.*

Regards,  
Dr. Terri Mason, President  
[tamason@fcps.edu](mailto:tamason@fcps.edu)



## GROUP WORK IN TODAY'S WORLD WEBINAR SERIES

Virginia Association of Specialists for Group Work (VASGW) sponsored its first “**Group Work in Today’s World**” series webinar, “**Facilitating Group Work During COVID-19: Perspectives from the Field**”, on **Tuesday, December 7, 2021**. This online seminar was a panel discussion.



**Tameka O. Grimes, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Counselor Education at Virginia Tech, moderated the online seminar. Dr. Grimes teaches the Group Counseling and School Counseling courses, as well as Practicum and Internship clinical courses. Her research explores professional identity construction of rural school counselors and school counselors’ roles in addressing racial inequities in students’ experiences in rural schools. She supports school counselors in developing comprehensive school counseling programs and implementing evidence-based practices. Dr. Grimes has published in journals both inside and outside of the counseling field.



**The panel members included:** **Connie Tomlin** - Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and a National Certified Counselor (NCC); **Christine Herbert** - an elementary school counselor; **Christian Heasley** - experienced college and crisis counselor and school-based outpatient therapist; and **Paul Delaughter** - a BASICS Counselor and Resident in Counseling.

This panel discussion offered attendees the opportunity to hear about the experiences of practicing school and clinical mental health counselors who facilitated groups during the COVID-19 pandemic. They shared their perspectives on the benefits and challenges of running these groups and offered practical tips for those seeking to run groups in their setting during this unique time.

The questions for the panelists centered on these seven areas: setting/clients, common client issues, barriers and challenges, counselors’ issues, opportunities/benefits for counselors, tips and insights, and confidentiality. What follows are the panelists’ experiences and descriptions.

### **Ah-Hah Moments shared by the panelists:**

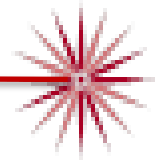
- **Settings/Clients-** Retirement home with senior citizens on COVID lock down (sheltering in single rooms with no outside contact except for medical caregivers), center with persons experiencing effects of detoxing from drug addiction, and K-12 students living in rural areas of Virginia and attending schools
- **Common Client Issues-** Need for community and connectivity, socialization and social skill development, anxiety, loneliness, fear, stress, senior citizens-social distancing, wearing masks, wheelchair/walkers hinder hearing/reading lips to participate, persons detoxing from drugs-COVID impedes treatment, recovery, and makes enforcing protocols difficult (such as, no sharing cigarettes)
- **Counseling Barriers/Challenges-** Rural settings, social distancing, access to clients, need for creative solutions by counselors, technology issues, buy-in from staff to support counseling, time constraints, limited opportunity to interact with client family members, confidentiality, varying degrees of internet

connectivity, counselor could only meet with grade level, ex: no Gr. 2-3 group, inexperience of counselors and clients with telecounseling

- **Counselor Issues**- Reframing view of counseling, learning innovative technology skills, time
- **Opportunities/Benefits For Counselors**- Opened access to telecounseling, more access to students who had spent a year on Zoom, stretching counseling skills and moving out of comfort zone, improved advocacy skills, forced to re-evaluate presentations and listen to feedback from clients to improve student engagement
- **Tips/Insights**- Best resources are group members, group work gives participants a sense of community (we are all in this together), gives group members a sense of control, ownership, and autonomy, hybrid (Zoom & in person) groups are challenging, isolation of lockdowns can magnify feelings and situations, lack of social supports can cause addiction relapse
- **Confidentiality**-concerns can be dealt with in a waiting room or via phone, need to reinforce rules with clients and family members

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## SPOTLIGHT



### New Board Member



**Andrea Smith** is a native of Jamaica and was raised in Brooklyn and Syracuse, NY. She is a graduate of LeMoyne College in Syracuse, NY where she majored in Biology and minored in French and Chemistry. She attended SUNY HSC for 2 years before transferring to Fairfield University and earning a Master's degree in School Counseling. She began her career with FCPS as a counselor at Cooper MS. She then worked as a member of the DIT ITFasteam as a functional applications specialist. She has been a professional school counselor at TJHSST in Fairfax County Public Schools since 2002. As a former student at our sister school, Stuyvesant in NYC, she has an affinity for Sci/Tech students.

Ms. Smith enjoys raising tropical fish, singing in musical ensembles, and has been involved in International Folk Dance and other forms of dance since high school. She attended Brooklyn Conservatory of Music as a child and is a classically trained pianist and plays keyboards for the praise and worship team at her church and was involved with children's church at a historically black congregation for 12 years. She enjoys travel and her favorite locations have been Fiji and Cuba.

Ms. Smith joined VASGW during the pandemic membership day and is looking forward to learning more from the veteran board members.

*Welcome Andrea!*

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## MEMBERSHIP

Join the VASGW Group family! We are looking for new board members who are committed to enhancing group counseling skills among counseling professionals in public and private settings. All Board members must be current members of VCA and VASGW and have an interest in groups and group dynamics. For more information, contact Halina Banas-Jones, Secretary, [banasjonesh@earthlink.net](mailto:banasjonesh@earthlink.net)



### **GROUP WORK IN TODAY'S WORLD – WEBINAR SERIES**

<b>Sat., Feb. 5, 2022</b>	<b>Cultural Humility: The Power of Reflection and Embracing Difference</b> Dr. LaConda Fanning
<b>Tue., Mar. 1, 2022</b>	<b>Mindfulness: A Compassionate School Practice</b> Dr. Christine Mason
<b>Wed., Apr. 27, 2022</b>	<b>Online Group Therapy: Insights from the Literature and From Practice</b> Dr. Daphne Ingene & Dr. Christina Riebeling
<b>May TBA</b>	<b>Group Work in Schools</b> Dr. Terri Mason & Ms. Jamee Lyons



VIRGINIA COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION

**2021 Outstanding Member  
Award**

**Terri Mason, PhD**

**Margarita Martinez**

## *Looking Ahead*

ASGW Biennial Convention     Atlantic Beach, FL.  
“Group work Innovations in a Transforming World”  
February 17-20, 2022

VASGW Membership Meeting     Zoom  
June 7, 2022



## RESOURCES



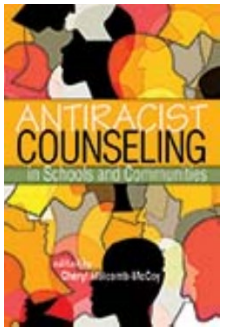
### [The Impact of Intersectionality and COVID-19 on African and Chinese American Adults](#), *ACA Publications*

A [special issue of \*Adultspan Journal\*](#) examines intersectionality and multiple forms of oppression on minoritized populations. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged communities of color in ways that are not experienced by white Americans. Two research articles explore the effects of discrimination and social determinants of health on African and Chinese American adults.

The first article examines [historical and structural racism faced by African Americans identified as descendants of Africans enslaved in the United States](#) (DAEUS), their experiences growing up in the Jim Crow era, their distrust and avoidance of the medical field after a lifetime of legalized racism in the health care system, and the resultant long-term health consequences of being denied care. COVID-19's risks for people with preexisting conditions have disproportionately affected older DAEUS individuals.

In the second article, [Chinese American adults' depression is found to be linked to COVID-19-related discrimination](#) in the form of anti-Asian rhetoric, physical attacks and violent hate incidents since the start of the pandemic. The study found that Chinese American men ages 35–54 experienced the highest rates of COVID-19-related discrimination and depression.

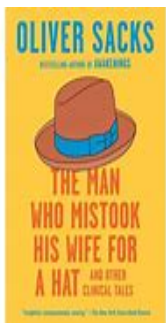
*Note:* Full-text content from *ADULTSPAN Journal* is free to [Association for Adult Development and Aging](#) members by logging into the [ACA website](#), and is available on a pay-per-view basis to nonmembers.



### **Antiracist Counseling in Schools and Communities**

Edited by Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy

This book builds on social justice and multicultural counseling research and operationalizes what counselors need to know and do to combat systemic racism. Readers will learn how to define an antiracist approach to their work and behavior; proactively address racial incidents in schools; create college and career readiness systems for students of color; and apply antiracist perspectives to K-12 counseling practice, counselor professional development, school-family-community partnerships, counselor training programs, and counseling supervision. Practical appendixes include a professional development tool for critical self-reflection and an antiracist syllabus review protocol.



“One of the great clinical writers of the twentieth century” (*The New York Times*) recounts the case histories of patients lost in the bizarre, inescapable world of neurological disorders. Oliver Sacks’s *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* tells the stories of individuals afflicted with fantastic perceptual and intellectual aberrations: patients who have lost their memories and with them the greater part of their pasts; patients no longer able to recognize people and common objects; patients stricken with violent tics and grimaces or who shout involuntary obscenities; patients whose limbs have become alien; patients who have been dismissed as retarded yet are gifted with uncanny artistic or mathematical talents.

If inconceivably strange, these brilliant tales remain, in Dr. Sacks's splendid and sympathetic telling, deeply human. They are studies of life struggling against incredible adversity, and they enable us to enter the world of the neurologically impaired to imagine with our hearts what it must be to live and feel as they do. A great healer, Sacks never loses sight of medicine's ultimate responsibility: "the suffering, afflicted, fighting human subject."

## After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools

In collaboration with the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, AFSP offers *After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools* to help schools respond in the aftermath of a suicide death.

### [View and download After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools](#)

This newly revised resource (2018) provides information for school administrators and other school staff who wish to implement a coordinated response to the suicide. The toolkit provides information on how best to communicate and support the school community and manage the crisis response. Also found in the toolkit is information on helping students cope, communicating with parents, collaborating with the community, and engaging external resources for support.

While designed primarily for school personnel, the toolkit also contains useful guidance for parents and communities.

The newly updated Second Edition includes:

- Revised information on topics such as social media, memorialization, and contagion
- Updated resource lists
- A new tool to help decide how to appropriately remember and honor a student without contributing to additional emotional trauma or suicide risk
- Examples of how diverse communities have addressed specific issues in responding to a suicide

## Ten Strategies to Intentionally Use Group Work to Transform Hate, Facilitate Courageous Conversations, and Enhance Community Building

Lorraine J. Guth, Amy Nitza, Brittany L. Pollard, Ana Puig, Christian D. Chan, Hopeton Bailey,  
Approved by ASGW Executive Board on October 27, 2018 & Anneliese A. Singh

Group workers can utilize these methods and resources to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion among group members in all types of groups and in various settings.

[ASGW-Ten-Strategies\\_english.pdf](#)  
[ASGW-Ten-Strategies\\_spanish.pdf](#)

