

AN INVITATION FROM GROUP RELATIONS AUSTRALIA: TO EXPERIENCED ORGANISATIONAL CONSULTANTS

With GRA's sponsorship, Mike Faris and Joanne Fitzgerald are establishing a **Consultants' Peer Learning Network CPLN** for those whose work involves them in the role of external consultant.

The idea is for the formation of a small group of **only 6 to 8 members** who are experienced external consultants to meet regularly with the intention of sharing, learning and challenging one another to further develop in their practice of socioanalytic consulting to client organisations. The aim is to create the environment for members of the group to explore the *known* of their work, in these *uncertain* times, within one's consulting practice.

Working together in a structured way, the group of consultants would work to reveal the processes, dynamics and influences that may be hindering any one or more members' work. Individuals would be challenged and supported to reflect on the dynamics with the client organisation, think differently about any presented piece of consulting, and to learn with and from other group members who are, and act as peers in each session. Greater understanding of the systems in which the consulting occurs – the client and consultant system; the consulting practice system; the CPLN system in the here & now – would assist in learning.

It is imagined that part of the formation of the group will include further exploration of each group member's desires in joining, preferences for learning approaches and the operating methodologies that will best serve members' needs.

GRA REPRESENTATIVES FOR THIS GROUP

Mike Faris and Joanne Fitzgerald are the two GRA members and representatives who will work as the *convening pair* for the purpose of establishing and containing this work on behalf of GRA, creating the conditions for the group to happen. As the initiator of this group, Joanne would take up the primary convenor role, at any time necessary. Within each *working session* Mike and Joanne will take up roles as members of the group, peers with other members.

METHODOLOGY

The membership of the group (up to 10 of us in total) would be consistent for the group of sessions to which each member would commit. Group meetings would then occur three-weekly for two (2) hours as a 'closed group', allowing a higher degree of trust, confidentiality and learning to be established. The eight (8) sessions are framed as:

1. One Preliminary Meeting to explore what each member has in mind for the group, for their own learning and what of other members/roles is in mind. **23rd March 2021 6.00pm Zoom**
2. Six *working sessions* in which various learning methodologies will be employed.
3. One final group meeting to review, reflect, consider future learning options, etc.

WORKING SESSIONS:

The framework envisaged for each of the **six** 3-weekly working sessions is:

- Check in – for each and all members
- The emergence of a presenter (or perhaps 2) for the evenings' work
- Establishment of the presenter's choice of approach and methodology for exploration and learning for the evening.*
- Reflection and closure.

* There are several meeting methodologies that exist to assist the learning of this group – the consulting skills model; 'consulting clinics'; plus one and observer methods; presentation and discussion – to name just a few. At each session 'presenter/s' would be identified who have to opportunity to deeply explore a current consulting challenge in their chosen methodology for the session.

In this way the group of experienced consultants is being supported to be *self-organising* in each of the working sessions.

PRACTICALITIES:

At this time group sessions (at least initially) in 2021 would be conducted on **Zoom**. The series of eight (8) sessions will **cost \$150 per person**, and will be invoiced to members who proceed with the group following the Preliminary CPLN Meeting.

The dates of the CPLN meetings, held 3-weekly on a **Tuesday** on **Zoom** and are:

1. Preliminary session: 23rd March 2021 6.00pm – 7.30pm
(no charge)
2. Working Sessions 1 – 6: 6.00pm – 8.00pm (\$150 for all 7 sessions)
13th April; 4th May; 25th May; 15th June; 6th July; 27th July
3. Reflection and Review session: 17th August 6.00pm – 8.00pm.

PARTICIPANTS

The convenors are interested in receiving responses to this invitation from members of the field who would describe themselves and their work as:

- Experienced consultants
- Working in the role as external consultant to client organisations
- Working with system psychodynamics wherever enabled
- Most likely in independent private practice.

As an experienced organisational consultant, you are invited to join us for the **Preliminary Session on March 23rd at 6.00pm – 7.30pm** to explore your interest in joining the learning group.

Please **RSVP** your attendance to this meeting - which is not a commitment to all 8 meetings – to Mike Faris. A zoom link will be sent to you. At this meeting a process to register your interest in joining the CPLN group will be outlined.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Convenors:

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