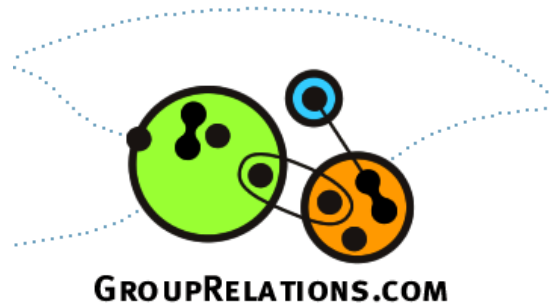


# Tripod Patchwork

## A Group Relations response to Covid-19



台灣團體關係

Group Relations Taiwan



This 3<sup>rd</sup> Patchwork from the Global Group Relations Council/Network/Collective/Forum emerges at the Equinox. It is a significant position in the changing circumstances of the global pandemic. USA is entering the election season and Israel is coming out of the trial of the Prime Minister after their 3<sup>rd</sup> election in 18 months. There have been migrant crises in India and economic collapses in Latin America and we are yet to experience the full impact of the aftermath of COVID-19 across the rest of the world.

The patches do not represent every member's contribution but they do harness the feelings of being inside and outside, and somewhat like the virus itself, somewhere on the boundary between the two. It could be experienced as a place of hypothesis and frustration, as articulated by the Group Relations Russia contribution.

We did note that the presence in absence of the Leicester Conference 2020 was striking. It evoked for us a taboo too hot to handle. In a year where many things went online due to lockdowns and hotel closures, the Leicester Conference took place, face to face. Not in Leicester, but in Bavaria Germany. Not with 80 people, but with 14 people. What does it mean for the founding seed of the group relations tradition to have changed in so many ways that could be seen to run counter to our dominant narratives about how things are done?

Issues such as ambivalence to authority, the experiences of blackness of skin in whiteness of thinking, creativity and tradition, envy and ambition can be found in the patches. There are explorations of the tension between risk, opportunity and possibilities and how different nations are responding to the virus. There seems to be an underlying mistrust about scientific thinking and the potential of science to improve lives. How do we hold the vaccine and its possibility for cure in mind? What is located in the Swedish experience in response to COVID-19, a nation that had no lockdown? We noticed that the colours of the Swedish flag were manifested in the video submission from Italy by an Italian opera group.

The clear ringing DING of the bell of the TAO emerged from one of the patches. Exploring the I-Ching Hexagram as a method of sense-making was inspired and profound. Above all, this set of patches seemed to speak to us about creativity and the capacity to work with the unformed and emergent with both curiosity and playfulness.

The patches have been put together in the form and order in which they were submitted. Giving readers access to the primary material in as raw a form and undigested a way as possible, leaving maximum room for the reader to construct, weave and braid the patches into a meaningful pattern that speaks to their context. In group relations tradition, we hope to ensure that the participant reader has maximum freedom to experience the patches with fresh eyes and ears. As you enter the patches, we invite you to notice what moves you, what speaks to you, what makes you fall silent?

By Arifana International & Tavistock Institute of Human Relations

## THE PATCHES

### CASSGO- America

The “new normal” has propelled us into the world of virtual group relations. Considerable anxiety accompanies the movement of our work in group relations into a virtual environment; our Large Study Group Consultation Training Program, which we hoped to conduct virtually in August, has been postponed, presumably due to our lack of experience with making this transition.

On the other hand, the virtual group relations conference that I directed for psychiatry chief residents was a resounding success. The forty-four members and twelve staff engaged in a remarkably intimate and authentic group relations conference experience as evaluated by a highly qualified conference staff which included four previous conference directors in addition to me. The conference schedule was identical to a face to face conference, which seems to debunk the idea that the immersion in a virtual experiential conference needs to be tempered to prevent “Zoom fatigue.”

Our next conference in China has probably also been affected by anxieties about working virtually. When we planned for a face to face conference, we included a research task to study both the experiences of members and staff. The consulting staff became concerned about being studied like “laboratory rats,” though much of the concern was projected onto how the members might react to research. We decided to offer a more modest conference size of fifty-five rather than the seventy members initially planned, to reduce the schedule from five days to four days and limit the research task to an internal study of staff dynamics without involving any study of individual member’s experiences.

An additional acceptance of the “new normal” is evident in the planning of virtual conferences well in advance. We do not seem to expect to be able to hold face to face conferences in the near future.

I am still planning on directing a virtual conference for Russian colleagues next spring, and I have sent a proposal to OFEK for a virtual conference for Arabs and Israelis, who would otherwise not be able to attend a face to face conference even without the pandemic due to unstable and impermeable political boundaries.

### OPUS

Given there is no single thing that can be definitively called GR thinking, it’s useful to highlight just three GR phenomena, which I label *disorientation*, *differentiation*, and *dis-ease*.

**Disorientation:** GR experience provokes profound questions about personal and group identity. Questions such as “who am I?”, “who are you?”, “who are we?” “who are they?”, are part of the moment-by-moment traffic of group relating. And also the intersections of these different coordinates- how do me-ness, you-ness, we-ness and they-ness affect each other?

Measures taken to reduce the spread of COVID give rise to similar questions. With the folkways of normal human communication dammed up through lock down and social distancing, our

relatedness to each other is fundamentally changed. There are many stories to tell, of isolation, but also of spontaneous community building. The way in which GR experience allows us to lose and find ourselves is a template for thinking about these processes.

**Differentiation:** GR experience asks us to think about borders and boundaries. . The relentless attention to how these boundaries work helps us think about our authority and responsibility, and the fantasies we create about “otherness”. GR allows an exploration of how a system is structured, and why certain voices might be privileged or marginalised.

The COVID experience offers a plethora of potential “others” to blame (government, the young, the deep state, mask wearers/ non-mask wearers). It also lays bare some of the ways society is structured- witness the higher incidences of infection among BAME groups. The application of GR thinking gives us a greater understanding of how to make sense of this.

**Dis-ease:** The pandemic has been a profound caesura to people’s experience of the “normal”. We know some of the narratives (the grandparent unable to see their grandchildren, the burnt-out health worker, families wrestling with school closures) but there are many, many more-experiences both of trauma, and, sometimes, of being surprised by joy.

The most essential element of GR is people coming together, and the possibility of reaching an understanding of another’s experience. In the face of dis-ease, this is where renewal begins.

And COVID, of course, has impacted on GR practice, Our usual superstructure, of hotels and conference venues are closed. We have moved online. But we are discovering that this offers new opportunities. A greater reach; a simplicity to hosting; and perhaps most significantly, a lower barrier to entry through lower costs. If we are serious about “making a contribution”, we need to continually attend to how to make the GR experience accessible: How not to a club, but to be a mission.

## **Group Relations India**

Covid-19 cases in India are rising alarmingly and currently highest in the world despite low testing, schools remain shut, economic indices have plummeted, and the huge numbers of India’s poor are struggling to keep afloat. As a response to what must be huge anxieties that remain suppressed, the ‘craziness’ in society is unprecedented alongside a decimation of basic human values- *‘insaniyat’*- in public discourse.

The government rather than handle the crisis with competence and compassion, has abdicated its primary task, presenting a false choice between economic and health related survival. In collusion with a willing media, there is a propagation of narratives that manipulate and hijack the focus from issues of health, poverty, employment, to issues of retribution, war on its borders, and national pride. Under cover of COVID 19, laws are being passed that are undemocratic, unjust and unsustainable via processes of deceit, subverting all structures and options of dissent, free speech and human rights. Public institutions follow suit.

Citizens mirror this abdication, with people thronging public places without protection putting themselves and others at risk. Simply put BaM is the new order, with BaF at its heels. BaD is on display with dependence on gods and goddesses, as leaders are no longer dependable.

The large group is becoming increasingly difficult to get a handle on - moving, multiple, complex, and there is a desire to wish it away by retreating into smaller systems. The ray of hope is in of new forms of leadership and alternatives emerging at local levels where the view of the system as a whole leads to meaningful responses.

The conference directors of GRI's 2020 residential conference "Unpacking Hierarchy & Privilege: Leadership for Purpose and Potential", (scheduled for June, then postponed to November 2020) decided to cancel the conference. It seemed an important moment of reckoning with what it means to believe that GR is situated within its context. GR is informed by, and seeks to influence the context no doubt, but not, in our view, through a bypassing of it!

Proceeding with the conference seemed to us to be about our own ambition than about creating an opportunity for learning in inclusive and equitable ways. This would amount to an enactment of hierarchy and privilege rather than an unpacking of it as the theme asks of us. We believe that this stance acknowledges the socio-political, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of GR work.

## **Group Relations Australia**

Our reflections over the last few months are a reminder of the importance of mature political, social and organisational leadership during a crisis and the capacity to hold and contain the anxiety. New tensions emerge everywhere at this time and under conditions of chronic stress we are pushed and pulled into reactive, judgemental and primitive (paranoid/schizoid) thinking.

### **Leadership**

The global Coronavirus crisis has shown us a range of models of leadership, from the brash, reactive and unthinking, in Australia and internationally – to the more thoughtful and authentic, in our part of the world, especially Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister of New Zealand but unfortunately not too many more.

The Premier of Victoria, our home Australian State, has matured into his leadership role to become a containing presence, conducting daily news conferences, where he has had to tolerate not only the tensions of an entirely new role, but some blatantly political, immature and emotional questioning. His focus on the underlying concerns of different groups in the community and his steady thoughtful response – has been largely welcomed by the majority of citizens. A good enough leader.

### **Regressive behaviour**

We have had a series of government directed lockdowns generating the predictable splitting and a puerile level of debate symptomatic of a regressed state of mind – perhaps seen most clearly in framing not wearing a mask as a political gesture and a 'human right'.

Covid is also revealing pre-existing weaknesses in all our institutions - health care funding, confusion about state/national government authority, trust in our institutions, support of the

vulnerable and racial inequality to name a few. The challenge will be how do we respond to what has been made visible as we move into a post-covid time?

## **PCCA**

Looking back at the previous notes shows the unfolding of the drama: in the first "250 words from Tel-Aviv" the pistol was visible, by now, the third, act it fired: Covid 19 that seemed to be contained by the end of May has surged again to the measure that Israel occupies the second place of rate of infection following the USA.

Failed and self-absorbed leadership abdicated the interest in citizen's welfare for self-interest. Weekly demonstrations and civil unrest are a major force as we are entering a second lock-down. As I write it is unclear if the lock-down will be respected or will meet a civil disobedience.

Many people are at a stage of despair, having lost their jobs, their businesses, their pride. The lock-down coincide with the celebration of the Jewish New Year, so as to prevent family gathering and mass prayer. What a message for the New Year! The political abuse of the pandemic is to do away with democratic institutions.

From Tel- Aviv to PCCA:

PCCA held a Virtual Event during three Fridays in July. Here is a summary of what we learned through the Event:

- ❖ We learned about the shape of the trauma we are in: helplessness and dependency are preoccupying the psyche at this period. The pandemic has resulted in an ongoing powerful and traumatic paradoxical experience – what seems good may be bad; what is a source of life may be a source of death and vice versa. People's sense of what is real and what is true has been turned upside down. The capacity to make judgements is disturbed.
- ❖ Dreams brought up in the SDM were harsh and dark, eg: images of amputated legs, the decapitated head of a child, intergenerational murder.
- ❖ We learned about the depth of depression: a prevailing view of a gloomy future and a present marked by isolation. The need to maintain "*physical distancing*," dubbed '*social distancing*,' became a self-fulfilling prophecy as the physical distancing led to the internalization of social distancing – of distance from the Other as the carrier of danger . The recall of past connections and relationships underscores the present isolation and remoteness.
- ❖ The 'new (ab)normal' results in a superficial and emotionally constricted internal and social lukewarm experience.
- ❖ We learned about the prevalence and operation of both We-ness – the phantasy that 'we are all in this together', and Me-ness – 'I am taking care of myself,' not obligated, protected from others.

The phantasy that “we are all in this together” hides the differences in privilege, race, and economic development – among other factors – and masks the realization that we are in this in very different ways.

- ❖ We learned that it is difficult to trust our own experience and about our doubts whether we can trust our leaders. We are in a new and insecure world. The sense of security built on past, familiar or established structures, may not be suitable in the future, leaving us feeling caught between the old and the new, the past and the future, and full of anxiety.
- ❖ We learned about intergenerational tensions – there is no place for everyone, one generation is endangering the other. Co-existence is challenged: the possibility that the adult generation can be helpful and guiding for the younger generation is attacked or does not exist in the psyche at the moment.
- ❖ We learned that the 'Covid state of mind' is a compliant state of mind: abdicating personal authority and automatically accepting external authority (e.g., a given interpretation is experienced as a dictate and a command).

To sum up: It was an important and meaningful Event for many who participated, providing a moment of getting together in a time of social distancing.

We learned that we are hardly all in the same sea, surely not in the same boat – as we have local circumstances that make for a quite different experience.

We learned about the sense of deep isolation and loneliness, of being 'dis-membered', of a vision of a dysphoric future.

We learned about the different defenses mobilized at this unique time: taking shelter in "as if" privileges and Me-ness, closing up and rejecting the outreached hand of the Other.

GR tools, in their PCCA application provided an adequate setting, even when moved to the Virtual space.

### **Arifana International: Sweden**

So, here we are, in the “new normal.”

The number of people who are severely ill by Covid 19 has fallen drastically in Sweden, which is the good news. There are still many persons who are tested positive, but those numbers are diminishing as well. For quite a few days now, we have had zero casualties.

That is so good.

So, why still this unrest, this nervous energy in the air? We are all waiting for the vaccine – but can we trust it? I hear many voices saying “I will never test the first edition of the vaccine, I’m sure it won’t work...”

In Sweden we have not had a lock-down like in other countries. Were we “right?” More than 5.000 persons have died in a population of about 10 million. Is that “right?”

The different phases of this pandemic in the different parts of the world are almost impossible to understand. In so many countries it is still raging, in a second wave, and in Sweden we are in some sort of frozen calm. Or is it an illusion? And in due course a second wave will shake Sweden as well?

As for Arifana, we are in a reconstruction phase regarding the annual Conference TOLC, Transformation: Organization, Leadership, Creativity. There is a new venue booked, the staff is ready and the new dates are set; a year from now, so we can be sure to make it happen.

The virtual Conference that we offered, found too few members to be realized. Conclusions could be that our energy wasn't big enough. Or that the longing for a Conference IRL was too big... On the other hand, there have been so many virtual Conferences these past months, so there were plenty of opportunities for those who desired it.

To be continued...

## **Group Relations International**

“The new now”

We are trying to come to grips with living in the “here-and-now” and how anxiety provoking this is. Everything is constantly changing. The desire to go back to what was and the fantasy that we live in a “new normal” serves to deny the fluidity of the current moment. COVID-19 is not the only thing that's raging, so are wildfires, storms, and people – more and less contained.

### Trust and Safety

Irrationality is raging as well, fed by an uncontained, uncertain environment. In this “new now” questions of trust and safety apply to all levels of analysis. Can I trust this person not to have COVID? Can we trust to travel from X to X depending on travel advisories? Who do we trust when we get conflicting and contradictory messages? Can I trust my own judgement in who to trust?

### Task and Purpose

Collectively, it appears we are not only fighting about competing tasks, but we may have lost the purpose beyond the task. What is sacred?

### Hope

Many local initiatives to make the world a better place. Collaboration, creativity, grassroots initiatives, reaching out outside, energy for making things happen.

GRI has offered international virtual events: Group Relations, Race Relations, Applications; Small Study Group Training and has been involved in organizing a virtual GR conference.



## **Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust**

*What can Group Relations speak to us about COVID-19 from our part of the world?'*

A big question. What's 'our part of the world?' The Tavistock Clinic, or London? Or the UK, or Europe – or not... What's 'COVID-19?' It's so many things now – the virus and its impact on so many bodies, and lockdown, and masks and bankruptcy and working from home and graphs in the newspapers. And even, 'what's Group Relations?' The events themselves? The model, the learning, the community, the kinds of processes that can take place within a GRC's 'temporary organisation' or within our permanent ones...? All of these things keep moving and changing, and the ongoing uncertainty of who we are to each other and what 'COVID-19' actually is feels exhausting at times.

Our two recent GRC's reflect this uncertainty; one online and one (last week) face to face – maybe the last opportunity for a while in this NHS Trust for GRC members to meet in this way with the restrictions we face as winter approaches. One consistent theme throughout the July 'virtual' GRC was the sense of loss and deprivation felt as a result of the pandemic. There was a sense of rushing towards premature solutions in an attempt to avoid the pain of loss. Members seemed to appreciate our organising this GRC and talked about their reservations prior to it. However, the closing plenary suggested this was tempered with what they felt they had gained.

As in a GRC, we are seeing the system as a 'fractal', with repeated experiences of responses from central government echoing and being mirrored in interactions closer to home; in our own organisation or our own individual way of responding. So a GRC director finds themselves responding to 'Covid'-related decisions in the same way as a political leader; and as managers we are struggling to consult or to tolerate knowing how hard our decisions hit others.

There is a boundarilessness that feels dangerously close, all the time. When will this end? Is there a horizon? Are we moving forward or just drifting, out in space while simultaneously feeling the restrictions of not being able to travel, not being able to touch? In the UK there is the ongoing pain of being part of a nation that shows care by clapping, as if care was a show rather than hard work – and that this is a place where some can break rules with impunity while others suffer for it.

## **Metanoia/FINOD**

After the peaceful summer the second wave of covid19 is here in Finland. This time those who get sick are the younger ones. Even the numbers of those infected are quite modest Covid19 still divides us in two: those who are very cautious and to those who are risk takers.

There is other separation being realized in Finland. Fins seem to think the homeland as safe place and other nations being some way polluted. The face mask has become the symbol of that separation. So practical thing as the mask is, it some howe seems fins are avoiding the use of mask. Mask has become the symbol of shame and stigma of covid19.

Covid19 has changed the way we think of work life and howe it should be organized. We are in the middle between of ongoing change. There is no way back to normal as it used to be before Covid19 and same time new ways are just in merge. Remote connections has become normal way

to communicate with each other. Face to face connections are under the continuing evaluation: when and for what reason we should meet face to face? Many people talk seriously about this phenomenon being in the middle of change which is not fully understood.

Both Metanoia Institute and FINOD are part of this development. We are continuing seeking ways to work with virtual connections and looking lighter and agile ways to organize training and gatherings around group relation thinking. Either it is because agile ways to work or because of covid19, virtual gatherings collecting more people than live conventions, we had before covid19 appeared.

## **IL NODO**

Here in Italy we're now at the beginning of the scholastic year and the anxiety for the learning of young generations is full of turbulence and uncertainty

One open question is How the young generations are supported in coping with the effect of the traumatic impact of the covid 19. Another one is how can we face up on the fear of the financial situation; a data is that in Italy in this covid19 time 600000 workers have lost their jobs (expecially young people and/or women)

From these datas it seems so important now dedicate energies to redesign and rethink to the training and 1. create containers to better cope with the social trauma in which we are all immersed meanwhile it's going on and 2. develop new, resilient and creative forms of adaptation

Franca's poetry :

*The summer is over*

*Looking for a feeble rhythm of safety as uncertainties,*

*fear of a foreseeable breakdown is lurking behind the corner.*

*children go to school,*

*unemployment is on the rise,*

*waves of the virus are expected.*

*'normality' gone,*

*loss to be comprehended,*

*the law of change, coexistence and adaptation slowly piercing a thick layer of denial ,*

*a mourning process slowly to be started.*

*Beauty will save humanity?*

*and the earth we live in?*

Franca Fubini and me we had the opportunity to be present at the performance at the Greek Theatre of Syracuse on August 2020 - a very short [video](#). Beyond the wonderful spectacle was so interesting the effort of creative adaptation to the new covid19 reality putting the spectators on the traditional stage and the performers on the audience so changing the point of view and perspective

Il Nodo Group Italy is navigating between face to face events and online ones; an application of GRC, Learning from Action, will take place in presence next October. For Italians only: the present situation is an interesting obstacle to international events, unless they are online; the next module of the Social Dreaming training will be hosted via zoom in September, in fact it would have been difficult for the international participants to travel; a Reflective Citizenship event is taking place (19/09) in a sport centre where social distancing can be maintained.

## **Tavistock Institute China**

Invisible and To Be Seen

Tavistock method is to deal with those under sea level (Iceberg theory) which we call unconscious. Let invisible to be seen, it's the way to acquire knowledge.

China now is to be seen by its rapid development in economic and lately Covid-19. In Chinese Taoist culture, says the Tao - Universal truth can be related, but the related truth is not Universal. That is to say unconscious (Tao) there is nothing to explain, this is exactly the difficulties we are facing right now when we hope to bring Tavistock method into Chinese Organizations.

In Chinese ancient history, the Book of Changes (I Ching) make unconscious manifest through divination. This morning, I made a divination, asked about "how would be the development of Tavistock's method in China?" Following is the content of the hexagrams: "Ding" – It's made up of two hexagrams with wind below and fire above, wind underneath makes fire stronger, the symbolism meaning is creation.

Ding is an ancient cooking vessel and an important sacrificial vessel for God. It is a container with high casting cost, most made by brass or bronze. The implication of the remark is that the gentleman should be dignified and upright when he sees the Ding (tripod) and become the pillar of the state, based on their own (centered, with self-authorization), having weight and having a great bearing. It's a prosper hexagrams about power.

There are six lines in hexagram, which give us six inspirations according to the characteristics of the Ding:

- 1) Discard the old things, clean the tripod, and make new food; The casting of the tripod is one mold one tripod, each time is different, so it is a new creation, and the starting point of each reform and renewal should be right.
- 2) When the tripod was full of food (fully prepared), my enemy suddenly became ill, and I stopped to attack, which was a good thing.
- 3) Do not carry the leftover food, do things light, update at any time.
- 4) If the Ding has a broken leg, it can't stand any longer. If the team works together and everyone makes the effort, the Ding will be stable.
- 5) The ears of the tripod and the weight of the tripod are gilded. It means that those who have made contributions to the country and the nation will be given enough dignity.
- 6) The weight to carry the Ding should be made of jade, it's no longer for carrying the Ding, but to be given the honor and dignity in the history.

To sum up is to say that a country should advance, dare to remove the old shade, dare to innovate; In the process of re-innovation, first we need to understand the purpose, second we need to understand the way, and third we need to give warriors dignity and honor, so that we, as a giant (Ding), can forge ahead with the efforts of all.

I regard this remark as the guidance and reminder of heaven to our cause of TIC.

### **Group Relations Taiwan**

Group relations speak to us about COVID-19 in Taiwan in terms of how our internal political conflicts affect our government's Covid-19 management. Our government continues to do a great job in keeping people safe from Covid-19. There has not been evidence of community transmission in recent months. However, the pro-China political camp, with strong business tie with China and often align their views with China against Taiwan's best interest, continues to challenge and even rebel against our government's COVID-19 recommendations for its political and business gains. If not for a strong leadership and support from Taiwanese people, and for understanding the importance of having a clear boundary with China, our government would not have such a success in containing COVID-19 today.

### **OFEK**

The new Hebrew Year is about to begin. Rosh- Hashana is our holiday. COVID-19 feels out of control. It will influence our ability to celebrate. We all lost our trust in our leaders. OFEK members did not meet each other face to face for many months. There is a very lively online learning activities in the Organization. Lately, there is violent apparition from members directing towards the board members and founders, after the decision to propose our next international conference. It seems like the frustration in our country is crossing the boundaries into our organization.

We will try to continue our primary task and create new containers to digest the Beta elements in our GR community.

### **Lithuanian Group Relations Society**

#### Reflection

As we reflect on current situation and pandemics, we are constantly observing polarities emerging in our experiences, stories and themes: being insider in the society - being someone from outside who is experiencing the society, talking about the virus being integrated into our lives - at the same time discussing the stigmatization of those who are infected, being relaxed in the country - at the same time shutting the borders and managing country boundary while having one of the most strict entering criteria in Europe, supporting strive for independency of our neighbour – Belarus – building the live chains of people connecting two nations symbolically - at the same time having no conceptual discussion why we are shutting ourselves from the movement from the rest of European countries, shutting from those, who treated as ,infected'. We say we got used to the news about pandemic, we feel safer - but we still emphasize in national statistics, how many cases

were ,brought in' by someone who have returned from other countries (the ones who got it inside are unfortunate. The ones who brought it – are guilty).

So even though consciously we want to believe in ,integration', data emerging from reflections still indicates we are splitting. And trying to make sense of everything we observe, so that it makes us feel safer. We lived in phantasy (or short glimpse of reality) that summer „save it all' – we can travel again, we can mingle around (with masks on!) while not keeping social distance, as if sun, sea and summer breeze would empower us to believe that we will have weddings, classmates' meetings, gatherings, christenings and family holidays.

We say we need to live on, we want to fly, travel again. We even have an idea, that maybe we have already had virus before it all started? The idea of secrets and of unknown creeps in – secrets are owned by other Countries. Also one owned by us. Secret that pandemic made us to face – our own vulnerability. Do we feel like wanting to keep the secret that help-seeking professionals were looking weak and vulnerable?

It is safer to self-isolate when you feel vulnerable. We say we want to jump on planes again. We say we integrate as much as we can. We believe we are quite good at. We keep boundaries strict – as if we want to be pure. We manage and change the rules, we keep ourselves busy. We share lots of personal stories, though we do not share the feelings related to them. We tell them like fairy tales, as if that would be normal to be saved from virus by accident, to rush madly out of the country, not to see your family as planned. It feels as if we met Little Red Riding Hood in the forest while picking the mushrooms and it is no surprise.

How is the virus changing our container?  
Well.. second wave is coming...

## **AKRI**

In the months since the last patchwork, the experience of the Covid-era in the US has changed dramatically. The murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis—along with the earlier murders of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, and the ongoing disproportional impact of the pandemic on the black community--ignited the fire of a Black Lives Matter uprising across the country. While the mass demonstrations and civil disobedience have largely subsided, the sense of fracture and division remain, with violence erupting most recently in Kenosha and Portland. Meanwhile, I'm writing under skies white with smoke from wildfires, even though I'm on the east coast, 3000 miles from the western fires. All of this seems like a fitting backdrop for Trump's reelection campaign.

For AKRI, the intensity of the national dialogue on race brought added energy, conflict and learning to our biweekly Zoom membership meeting. Attendance at these meetings reached new heights as the membership discussed issues of race in things like conference staffing, leadership elections and roles, and resource allocation. In this context, AKRI hosted its first Zoom candidates' forum and held a highly contested election, with six candidates running for two Board seats. We plan to continue a series of Zoom membership meetings through the US presidential election in November.

At times, all of this has been energizing and engaging, and it represents a potentially transformative moment in AKRI's history. Yet it has also proven exhausting, and the relentless presence of disease, hatred, distrust, rage, and uncertainty has left us all frayed.

## **Tavistock Institute of Human Relations**

BART has never been so important.

1. How do we locate our Boundaries internally as well as externally?
2. What does Authority mean in a world that is increasingly atomised and individualised – where everyone is an entrepreneur?
3. When the person take primacy as the means of engagement, how do we work with the concept of “person in role” in the Artificial Intelligence-driven technological systems?
4. The Primary Task and its associated sentient system can open up new ways to navigate the hyperturbulent, vortical environment and what it means for being human

The forces of dependency are alive and well, caused in part by the shifting patterns of guidance and advice from governments about Covid-19 and its impact on travel and the economy. Fiscal stimulus responses from all governments have resulted in Trillions of national currency being pumped into the employers and banking systems to avoid a total collapse of the global economy. Simultaneously, the ripples of the unequal impact of covid-19 and the Black Lives Matter campaign is making itself felt in the old and new world. Many are mobilised to explore the role of colonial powers and the forces of organised capital and the propaganda used to achieve their purposes.

The narratives of gender and leadership have been gaining traction, and yet we are yet to understand the nature of the body's biology and how it affects our thinking and feeling. Perhaps there was some validity to the early eugenics like thinkers, like Marie Stopes, that there is a “something” in the body that shapes the development and manifestation of character.

The digital agenda has meant that despite the use of the terms social distancing, we are more and more connected through online platforms, and are finding that they can provide emotional, vital experiences that are impactful on our psyche and body in unexpected ways.

Perhaps there is an opportunity for us to encounter ourselves and what it means to be human in new ways. As more and more work is done online, we have to work harder to locate the boundaries of our nations and what meanings the countries we inhabit retain in the digital world with its alternative construction of boundaries.

As this group continues to explore issues of inclusion and exclusion, representation and role, we can share our experiences with others who are engaged in the same struggles.

## **BLAC**

The Black Leadership and Authority Collective (BLAC) can be said to have its origins, much as with Group Relations Global Council, at the most recent Belgirate meeting. Yet, such an origin story would only be partially true. In reality the express direct study of “Black Authority” began through

a conference entitled *Authority and Identity: An African American Experience* sponsored by the Washington-Baltimore Center in 1995. As far as we know, it was first group relations conference ever to be conducted with an entire staff who identified as being of African descent. Work on Black Authority continued unabated obliquely through conferences at Columbia University, New York University, University of San Diego and Morgan State University in the United States as well as those that were launched the Caribbean where Black directors were at the helm. The all Black staff conference made its return 20 years later as the *On the Matter of Black Lives* conference sponsored by Group Relations International. The series continued as *Black Authority in the Post-Obama Era* this year, the final face-to-face group relations conference held in the United States before restrictions on large gatherings were imposed throughout most of the nation.

The Black Leadership and Authority Collective that emerged from Belgrate as well as the most recent conference meets monthly, has presented its work in a well-attended national forum, and will be offering additional experiential learning opportunities informed by group relations.

Three months ago, there was a written request for identification of BLAC into GRGC. There was no response. Recently another group was admitted and welcomed. This group has a rich linkage and history to the group relations tradition. While the ease of instituting the implicit inclusion criteria for such an organization is understandable, there is the larger question of what are the unconscious considerations that influence inclusion in this patchwork. Our hypothesis is rather simple one: Blackness and the corresponding authority represents an experience that is ambivalently held; recognized, integrated and welcomed into the group relations world only when blackness is embodied in roles imbued, authorized and steeped in a history of whiteness and the corresponding dominance discourse.

It seems that, with the exception of the most recent addition, Tavistock name, or nationality and internationality are seen as part of the boundary of what constitutes membership. It could be that affinity based in other forms of identity have no place in this quilt. Yet, amid a world where those of darker hue are more often than not denigrated and receive projections as the wretched of the earth, where in the United States Black skin is associated with a disproportionate likelihood of death from the novel coronavirus, where systemic racism contributes to chronic injustice with compounded consequences, then the fundamental question is whether this offering of Black Authority as one piece of patch can be held in the work of global group relations.

## **CASSGO- China**

Sorry for the late, hopefully these words can be lucky enough to be included.

With it comes into September, university students come back to the campus, till now, all students of different grades, comes back to the campus.

We had the Opening Ceremony for freshmen this morning in our football field, 3,000 students with teachers all showed with masks. Long time no see such situations, all seems come back as before.

Meantime, it is different, news with people made suicide surrounded, even nearly my university. I did crisis intervention these days, even feel heavy and exhausted myself.

The world looks familiar and strange at the same time. Something new is showing up, with strong dynamics. A lot of leaders changed, together with lots of employees. Organizations become turbulent, I can sense some innovations are giving birth to.

For GRC in China, we cancelled the large study group consultant training in Guangzhou, because the lack of confidence of doing this kind of training online. I wonder whether the trust issue between staff composed of Americans and Chinese also play a role under COVID-19 pandemic and the trade war between USA and China.

A big conflict also happened in the staff meeting for 2020 GRC in Shenyang, which was changed into a virtual one. From the surface, it is related to the research issue, underneath, it is related to the trust and competition. The power struggle between US and China, among Chinese, and maybe among Americans. Who can be the observers, who can keep the data, how will the data be studied, how will be the members participating the GRC with observers around, all these questions just blocked the staff.

It is also turbulent the whole world, many countries begin to reorganize their connections with other countries. The world organization structure is under reconstruction. COVID-19 is a trigger, what is being triggered by it?

### **Group Relations Russia**

As this document goes over all the possible deadlines, GR Russia as an organization reflected on the dynamic mentioned and produced some hypothesis as a reflection of country dynamics:

1. Fear of expressing the thoughts not to be poisoned or put into the jail, feeling of paranoia
2. Dependency on those who are in authority position
3. The feeling of hopelessness
4. The bigger split in the society and search for guilty

Although there are a part of borders are opened for Russians to travel, which are mostly holiday destinations (Turkey, Africa, Maldives), the majority, including Europe and America, are closed. The sense in the air “they opened the borders shortly to lock us later on again”. Which comes with the sense of manipulation from authorities.

People are in the expectation of the “second wave” of COVID, trying to be ready emotionally and physically to be put into the quarantine again, which happens in some small communes (some classes at school, kindergartens and at some offices).

The uncertainty in the future, brings organizations, which already revisited their strategies and made huge redundancy, into high level of anxiety.

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<sup>i</sup> An urdu word which means humanity