



**Group Dynamics in
Therapy and Supervision**
REACHING THE UNCONSCIOUS

Edited by

Pertti Muurinen, Kaj J. Davidkin,
and Sinikka Vaara



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Pertti Muurinen
Chair of the Finnish Group Psychotherapy Association

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Leila Keski-Luopa, DSS (Tampere University), is a psychologist, psychoanalyst, group psychoanalyst, and training group psychoanalyst, supervisor, and organisational consultant. She was working as a psychologist in municipal psychiatry during the 1970s and 1980s. Since 1987 she has been working as a private practitioner. Her dissertation “Kohti kokonaisvaltaista työnohjauksen teoriaa” (“Towards a comprehensive theory of work supervision”) was written in 2018. She is the author of many articles and books (e.g. *Työnohjaus vai superviisaus?* (*Work Supervision or Super Wisdom?*)). She has worked as a consultant during the Tavistock conferences in Finland ten times.

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Kari Kurkela, PhD (Helsinki University), professor emeritus, is a training and supervising group psychoanalyst and psychotherapist. He also holds a degree as a concert pianist from the Sibelius Academy. As a professor, he has taught at the Sibelius Academy, the Art University, and other institutions across Finland, and has supervised numerous doctoral students. He has published two books and a variety of papers on topics such as psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, creativity, music performance, music education, and organisational dynamics. He has held several leadership roles, including vice rector at the Sibelius Academy and vice dean at the University of Arts Helsinki. Currently, he lives in the countryside reading, writing, and working part-time as a psychotherapist and supervisor.

Pertti Muurinen is a psychologist, psychoanalytic individual psychotherapist (advanced special level), group psychoanalyst and training group psychoanalyst, psychotherapist trainer in individual psychotherapy, and supervisor. He has the highest grade both in psychology and also in social psychology (group work line). He has been working as a private practitioner since 2000. Previously, he was working mainly in psychiatric hospitals and psychiatric outpatient clinics. He has been the chair of the Finnish Group Psychotherapy Association since 2017 and is the chair of its trainer training committee. He held the leadership role in two one-year-long training programmes, “Challenges of immediate management in the work group” organised by the Finnish Group Psychotherapy Association. He has been director for group therapist trainer training organised by the Association in cooperation with the University of Helsinki. He has worked as a trainer in many psychotherapist programmes organised by Therapeia Foundation. He has written about projective identification, transference and developmental illusion in psychotherapy, countertransference, leadership, geriatric psychiatry, and book reviews for works by Salman Akhtar and Vamik Volkan.

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Marja-Leena Roine is a psychologist, psychoanalyst, group psychoanalyst, and psychotherapy trainer working as a private practitioner. She is a training psychoanalyst both in individual and group psychotherapy. Her special interest is art psychotherapy. She has been working as a supervisor for individuals and groups. She was the chair of the Finnish Psychoanalytic Association some years ago. She has authored a report on the effectiveness of group psychotherapy and articles for the *Psykoterapia (Psychotherapy)* journal in Finland.

Ossi Takala is a psychiatric nurse and head nurse, individual psychotherapist, group psychotherapist (advanced special level), and group psychotherapist trainer. He has been working as a group therapist for children and adults since 1995. He has an extensive career in public health care, particularly in psychiatry. He has authored many articles especially for the *Psykoterapia (Psychotherapy)* journal in Finland.

Sinikka Vaara originally trained and worked as a nurse before studying art therapy at IATE, London, and visual arts at the Surrey Institute of Art & Design, University College, Farnham, which laid the foundation for her ongoing interest in art, creativity, phantasy, symbolisation, dreams, and the relationship between the unconscious and mental health, and interpersonal relationships. She continued studying fine art and art therapy at the University of Art and Design Helsinki, Finland, and completed training in psychoanalytic art therapy and became a licensed psychotherapist. She has maintained a private psychotherapy practice in Helsinki since 2007. Her long-term clinical supervision with experienced Finnish psychoanalysts and group analysts led her to delve deeper into group psychoanalysis. She is currently finalising advanced studies in group analysis. She also holds a BA degree in performing arts. Her background in both visual and performing arts is driven by an interdisciplinary interest in the human mind, unconscious processes, imagination, creativity, and the role of expressions and interactions in therapeutic and artistic group contexts.

Preface

Pertti Muurinen

In the 1990s, as a group psychoanalytic candidate, I wrote an article for a local newspaper about group psychotherapy with the title “There is power in a group for good and bad”. The Finnish Group Psychotherapy Association turned fifty in 2022, and this book celebrates the achievement of that milestone. I hope that this anniversary book expands on what that title was referring to, and especially what good can be achieved with psychoanalytic group psychotherapy and group work supervision.

The history of group psychotherapy in Finland is relatively young. The first therapy groups were born in counselling centres and psychiatric hospitals in the 1950s without a theoretical framework. Psychiatrists and psychologists then began to study the theory of group psychotherapy making use of the relevant literature. The basic work was S. H. Foulkes and E. J. Anthony’s 1957 book *Group Psychotherapy: The Psychoanalytic Approach*.

Already in the 1930s, music, art therapy, and group work requiring manual skills were used to calm patients. In the 1950s, groups meeting outside hospital wards began to operate. From the end of the 1950s, group activities were conducted by amateurs using the methods taught by Ryhmätyö ry (Groupwork Association).

Group psychotherapy has its roots in Finland in the same decades as psychoanalysis. In the 1960s, the development of psychoanalysis in Finland was influenced by psychiatrists and psychologists who had returned from studying abroad. Dr Henrik Carpelan returned from Geneva in 1964. He had been an observer in psychotherapy groups and studied together with people from the Tavistock Clinic in London. Carpelan had familiarised himself with Bion's theory formation and had also become familiar with Melanie Klein's theories. At the beginning of the 1970s, a group of twenty professionals interested in group phenomena gathered at the Therapeia Foundation.

The Finnish Group Psychotherapy Association was founded in the spring of 1972. The association's activities were conducted by people trained by the Finnish Psychoanalytic Association and the Therapeia Foundation, who had attended Henrik Carpelan's seminars. Training in psychoanalytic group psychotherapy was also begun. At first, the training was a supplemental course based on the previously acquired individual psychotherapy training. People who had completed, or were about to complete, individual psychotherapy training could apply for the course. Their own "training analysis" was an absolute requirement. The initially two-year course was extended to three years, which was the norm for a long time afterwards.

In 1984, the then medical board in Finland published guideline no. 117, which defined what psychotherapy means and what is required of the training. The psychotherapy courses at that time were classified either as "special level" or "advanced special level" courses. Four training programmes were deemed to meet the criteria for an advanced special level, and one of these was the training of the Finnish Group Psychotherapy Association, which later became the group psychoanalysis training. The association's first children's group psychotherapy training started as a special level training in 1994, and became an advanced level training in the autumn of 2002.

The Finnish Group Psychotherapy Association is a member of two international organisations, the International Association of Group Psychotherapy, and the European Federation of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy.

This book is divided into three parts. The first part is called "Theoretical background of psychoanalytic group psychotherapy". In the first chapter of the volume, "Thoughts on groups: The idea of the

group in Wilfred R. Bion's late seminars", Veli Matti Helminen examines these seminars and their contribution to group psychotherapy. His purpose is to investigate how Bion incorporates ideas and reflections related to group dynamics in the later stages of his thinking.

Esko Klemelä, in his chapter, "The destruction of thoughts: Combining Wilfred R. Bion's two clusters of ideas", is also interested in drawing from Bion's late seminars and believes that there is still much to be learnt from them. Esko had previously studied Bion and in 2020 authored the book, *Bion—the Psychoanalyst of the Unknown*.

The third chapter in the first part, "Psychodynamic containing in group therapy", is by R. D. Hinshelwood. It addresses the important concept of containing anxiety, guilt, and conflict, and its failure. The features of a successful containing culture and a failing one are explored in group work.

The second part of the book is called "Psychoanalytic group psychotherapy in practice". In the first chapter of this section, "Experiential learning in psychoanalytic group psychotherapy: Case report on a four-year group process", Kaj J. Davidkin describes the functioning of his psychotherapy group, the group psychoanalyst's thinking, counter-transference, and interventions, and combines theory and practice in analytical group psychotherapy. The chapter explores the content of the group psychotherapy session and what the group members and also the group therapist can get from the group experience.

Ossi Takala in his chapter, "The swing of emotions: Thoughts on sharing emotions in group psychotherapy", reflects the importance of emotions and the experiential side in group psychotherapy. As the title suggests, Ossi's intention is to use the theoretical background of the training given by the association in a versatile way and to apply it himself.

Marja-Leena Roine's chapter, "The group therapist's psychoanalytic attitude in art psychotherapy groups", gives an overview of art psychotherapy groups and their history in Finland. Marja-Leena calls for an increase in the teaching of art group psychotherapy in group psychotherapy training as well as a corresponding increase in the teaching of group therapy in art psychotherapy curricula.

Esa Pursiainen in his chapter, "Attachment relationships, epistemic trust, and group psychotherapy", examines how different attachment relationship styles can become visible in group psychotherapy.

The perspective starts from a slightly different theoretical framework than the association has been used to and offers a refreshingly distinct perspective.

The third part of the book is called “Towards work communities and society”. Over several decades, many members of the association have had experience in working with work groups and organisations as consultants and work supervisors. Jouko Lönnqvist, Harri Hyypä, and Pekka Järvinen can be mentioned by name. In the 1990s and 2000s, the association had longer organisational psychology training programmes. In 2013 and again in 2015, a one-year-long programme, “Challenges of immediate management in the work group”, was organised. The first chapter of the third part, Pertti Muurinen’s “The different challenges of leadership and the expectations of the manager”, is related to this aforementioned training programme. The association tried to support the managers in their often stressful work and to give perspectives that could be used to move forward. Pertti’s chapter highlights how psychoanalytic aspects can be considered in practical front-line work.

Kari Kurkela’s chapter, “Feelings and actions in an organisation: A group psychoanalytic perspective”, like Ossi Takala’s, examines emotions, but at the level of organisations and aiming for a new theory formation. The starting point is Henry Ezriel’s approach and the phenomena defined as organisational culture. Kari also tries to define the concept “organisational mind”.

In Leila Keski-Luopa’s chapter, “Identities under pressure in postmodern society”, the perspective expands to society and the state of society. The approach is almost sociological and gives us food for thought about the kind of times and society we live in now. Leila has extensive experience in organisational consulting in addition to having worked as a psychoanalyst and group psychoanalyst.

I hope that the contributions in the book expand the reader’s views and interest in the various group phenomena in our society.