

Group Specialty Council Minutes, September 2025 Meeting

Date: 9/22/2025

Present: Gary Burlingame (AGPA Past-President), Leann Diederich (Secretary), Noelle Lefforge (President), Leo Leiderman (AGPA President-Elect), Darryl Pure (Chair, Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health), Michele Ribeiro (Div 49 President-Elect), Steve Van Wagoner (IBCGP Chair)

Absent: Misha Bogomaz (Treasurer; ABGP/ABPP President), Le'Marus Alston (Council Membership Organization from St. Elizabeth's Hospital), Lisa Stern (ABGP President), Joe Miles (Division 49 President), Kendra Jackson (ASGW Representative), Nina Brown (Past-President)

Agenda:

1. **Petition Renewal:** In August, Council met and approved the 1 year extensions that were submitted this year, and it will be reviewed next year. We reviewed the options for the petition (see CRSSPP letters and public comments in Appendix). We reviewed the comments that were submitted in the public comment period.
 - a. Dr. Lefforge discussed with APA's General Counsel our petition and noted that they weren't concerned about our petition. The letter that we write, would be available to Council Members, but won't be more broadly publicized from that. We discussed the consideration of making changes that reflect our dedication to our values while recognizing that a new review from CRSSPP could bring changes that we couldn't anticipate.
 - i. We can:
 1. Leave the petition how it is
 2. Write a letter in response to the public comments and committing to our intention in our future work in incorporation of those.
 3. Update the petition to include name changes to populations titles reflected on the public comment.
2. **Leadership:** We discussed potential additions to the Group Speciality Council of Dr. Paquin and Dr. Martin Kivlighan. We noted that in Division 49, Dr. Kivlinghan's position is working to continue to update the EBP webpage. We noted that we have funding for graduate students and they both might benefit from that. We also want to consider AGPA's Science to Service Task Force as contributing members to this work.
3. **Invoices:** We'll need to consider at an upcoming meeting invoicing our contributing members.

Next Meeting: November 24th at 1 pm Eastern (please note it's Monday of Thanksgiving week and we will still be meeting) If we don't have quorum we may be asking members to vote via email.

LINK:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81953133874?pwd=Q3zVbGSnwSolqaq2dzlKNYtsy4b4KL.1>

Meeting ID: 819 5313 3874

Passcode: 431551

Meeting ID: 819 5313 3874

Submitted By:

Leann T. Diederich, PhD (Secretary)

Appendix

From: Taylor, Jennifer <JeTaylor@apa.org>

Sent: Thursday, August 7, 2025 10:06 AM

To: Noelle Lefforge <Noelle.Lefforge@du.edu>

Cc: Knight-Griffin, Kristen <kknight-griffin@apa.org>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] CRSSPP Specialty Recognition Expiration in 2026

[External Email From]:
prvs=8314b62a8a=jetaylor@apa.org

Good morning, Dr. Lefforge

I hope you are doing well. I know you are aware, but as a formality, just a quick note to follow up on our earlier correspondence and to let you know that the APA Council of Representatives just wrapped up their August meeting, and they voted to approve an additional one-year extension on the recognition of Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy's specialty status. As such, the petition for Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy will now be reviewed in 2026. We will update [this website](#) accordingly.

As noted in our prior correspondence, in recognition of the work you have already dedicated to your petition, we will not be requiring you to submit a new petition for review in 2026, but we kindly ask that you provide me with the following information, as/if relevant, no later than **January 1, 2026**: 1) Notice of any changes to the petition that occurred between January 1, 2025, and January 1, 2026 (e.g., administrative/personnel changes). Please note that substantive changes would instead require submission of a new petition; and 2) Any response you wish to provide to CRSSPP regarding the public comments received for your current petition (for your convenience, I have attached the public comments). As a friendly reminder, amended petitions will not be considered following public comment.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to reach out!

Warmly,

Jennifer

Jennifer M. Taylor, Ph.D.

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Senior Director, Office of Continuing Education Sponsor Approval

Unified Applied, Education, Practice, and Science Team

American Psychological Association

750 First Street NE

Washington, DC 20002-4242

Well-Being Notice: Receiving this email outside of normal work hours? Managing work and life responsibilities is unique for everyone. I have sent this message at a time that works for me. Please respond at a time that works for you.

From: Knight-Griffin, Kristen <kknight-griffin@apa.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 4:04 PM
To: Noelle Lefforge <Noelle.Lefforge@du.edu>
Cc: Taylor, Jennifer <JeTaylor@apa.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Reminder: CRSSPP Specialty Recognition Expiration in 2025

[External Email From]: prvs=317448cda5=kknight-griffin@apa.org

Hi Noelle,

I hope you're having a good week. Thank you for your patience in awaiting our follow-up.

Thank you again for taking the time to submit your petition to the American Psychological Association (APA) for review by the Commission for the Recognition of Specialties and Subs specialties in Professional Psychology (CRSSPP). Public comments received for your petition have been compiled and are attached to this email for your reference. At this time, you will not be asked to provide a response to public comments, and we ask that you read the below information carefully.

We are aware of the evolving political and legal landscape and understand that there may currently be challenges in navigating adherence to applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding "illegal DEI" while also adhering specifically to [Criterion III: Diversity of the Principles for the Recognition of Specialties](#). In recognition of this, CRSSPP is recommending to the APA Council of Representatives (Council) that the Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy specialty be granted a one-year extension of its status as an APA-recognized specialty in professional psychology. A one-year extension granted by Council would allow your specialty to maintain its APA recognition status for one year, with CRSSPP's anticipated review of your materials in Spring 2026 (see below). We appreciate your understanding that this is a preliminary notification, and we will contact you regarding Council's decision following its meeting in August 2025.

Because CRSSPP is recommending a one-year extension of recognition, it will not be reviewing the submitted petition, related public comments, or responses to public comments from petitioners at its upcoming Spring 2025 meeting. Pending Council approval of a one-year extension of recognition, it is anticipated that your petition, as submitted, along with the associated public comments and any response you may wish to provide will be reviewed by CRSSPP in Spring 2026. In recognition of the work you have already dedicated to your petition, we will not be requiring you to submit a new petition for review in 2026, but we kindly ask that you provide Dr. Jennifer Taylor with the following information, as/if relevant, no later than **January 1, 2026**: 1) Notice of any changes to the petition that occurred between January 1, 2025, and January 1, 2026 (e.g., administrative/personnel changes). Please note that substantive changes would instead require submission of a new petition; and 2) Any response you wish to provide to CRSSPP regarding the public comments received for your current petition. As a friendly reminder, amended petitions will not be considered following public comment.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. We appreciate the work involved in the submission of a petition and CRSSPP does not take these matters lightly. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Dr. Jennifer Taylor and/or Kristen Knight-Griffin.

Kind regards,

Kristen

Kristen E. Knight-Griffin, MPS

Pronouns: She/Her

Associate Director, CE Sponsor Approval, Education Directorate

American Psychological Association

750 First Street NE, Washington DC 20002-4242

kknight-griffin@apa.org

[Please consider the environment before printing this email.](#)

Public Comment – Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy Specialty Renewal Petition, 2025

Name/Group	Comment
Michele Ribeiro on behalf of Group: Div 49 CoR Rep	Group psychotherapy and group psychology is a specialty that advances the field of psychology in important ways and on multiple levels (intra-personal, interpersonal, institutional, structural). This document highlights the value of continuing to elevate group as a specialty to increase research, training and scholarship in advancing treatment and solutions for some of the most complicated problems of today to include (inter-group conflict management, health and well-being in the workplace, inter-cultural dialogue, and the management of loneliness through social anxiety group work, to name a few). In my role as CoR representative for Division 49, and as a health service practicing psychologist facilitating groups in the workplace, I am in full support of this petition on group as a specialty. Field of Study: Group Psychotherapy
David Cox on behalf of Group: American Board of Professional Psychology	The American Board of Professional Psychology supports the continued recognition of Group Psychology and Psychotherapy as a specialty.

Kelsey Bradshaw on behalf of Group: Sharp Healthcare Doctoral Internship	The ongoing recognition of group therapy as a specialty area is important, especially to highlight the needs and benefits of this form of intervention. In my doctoral training, I had very little training and experience in group therapy. However, while on internship, I developed these skills quickly. Group therapy is crucial in more acute settings such as residential, inpatient, IOP, and PHP. There is plenty of research on the benefits and it is something we all get some exposure to. Continuing to keep it as a specialty allows for advancing and highlighting the importance of training and use of this modality.
Leonardo Leiderman on behalf of Group: American Group Psychotherapy Association	Leonardo M. Leiderman, PsyD, ABPP, FAACP, President-Elect of the American Group Psychotherapy Association strongly endorses this comprehensive and compelling petition which recognizes the ensuring and continued recognition of group psychology and group psychotherapy within the field of psychology.
Dr. Mikhail Bogomaz	I full support the petition to renew Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy as a specialty. This is crucial for our field.
Patricia Daza	As a training director for interns and postdoctoral fellows, I strongly support the continued recognition as a specialty in professional psychology for Group Psychology and Psychotherapy. Unfortunately, we are seeing a decrease in training in both psychoeducational and process groups in doctoral programs. Groups are a strong and cost- effective way to reach many clients in need of treatment, particularly in inpatient settings

	(where I work).
Tanya Burrwell on behalf of Group: Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity	Response from CSOGD to the APA Specialty Group Psychology Renewal: The Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity (CSOGD) appreciates the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the APA Specialty Group Psychology Renewal. We fully support the renewal. However, we would like to offer the following recommendations to further enhance inclusivity and representation: 1. Terminology Update: We encourage the use of the term LGBTQIAA2S or, at a minimum, the addition of “2S” to acknowledge the Indigenous origins of diverse gender identities and Two-Spirit communities. This change would align with APA’s commitment to inclusivity and cultural competence. 2. Inclusion of Research on LGBTQIAA2S Group Therapy: On page 8, under “Public Need: Addressing the Mental Health Crisis,” we recommend incorporating research on the crises facing LGBTQIAA2S youth and effectiveness of group therapy. Specifically, studies such as A Qualitative Study of the LGBTQ+ Youth Affirmative Mindfulness Program for Sexual and Gender Minority Youth (Iacono et al.) and Examining the Utility of Group Counseling for LGBTQ+ Young Adults in the Coming Out Process (Ali & Lambie) provide valuable insights into the benefits of group therapy in fostering mental health and well-being. 3. Revision of Group Categorization: On page 72, rather than categorizing LGBTQ+ affirming groups under the broader heading of “theme groups,” we suggest creating a category titled “Identity Affirming Groups.” This category could include LGBTQIAA2S, disability, and

	polyamorous or non-monogamous relationship groups as examples, ensuring a more inclusive and affirming framework. Addition of Gender Affirming CE Course
Elizabeth Weiner	I approve of and support having group psychology as a specialty. Group psychology requires specialized training to achieve competence. It is a specialized area of study that is not covered in all graduate programs, internships or postdoctoral residencies. It requires the practitioner to seek out additional education and training.

Tanya Burrwell on behalf of Group: Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA)	Purpose: promote, serve and protect the interests of Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy as a specialty in professional psychology. Criterion II. Public Need: Group Psychology to Address Societal Issues - American's well-being is also being negatively impacted by major societal issues. For example, the January 6 insurrection was related to increases in mental health symptoms that were unexpected immediately after the event (Das et al., 2023). A special issue of Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice offered explanation of the insurrection and related events with implications for preventing future events and alleviating social tensions that follow such events (Jackson & Hinsz, 2022). <i>CEMA is interested in the purpose and rationale underlying this article and the arguments presented regarding mental health. Additionally, CEMA seeks to understand how the omission of the public needs of marginalized identities, along with the issues of microaggressions, racism, sexism, classism, and ableism, has been influenced by social issues and its impact on mental health.</i> - To accurately gauge the constantly evolving public need, the Group Specialty Council engages in monitoring, networking, collaboration, and research. <i>CEMA suggests possible collaborations with Division 45 and Division 35</i> - Division 49 launched its Institute in 2022
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CEMA is curious to understand how the institution ensures inclusivity and representation of diverse backgrounds and perspectives within its executive board, participant base, and marketing.

Criterion III. Diversity

CEMA appreciates the detailed information provided on the specialty's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly the specific training, research, assessment, continuing education, and research initiatives (AGPAConnect 2024, cultural adaptations to group interventions and treatments, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee. CEMA is also interested in how ongoing political shifts may influence the accessibility and implementation of these resources. For example, DEI funds through the AGPA Foundation

Criterion IX. Effectiveness

Consideration of incorporating studies demonstrating the efficacy of group psychotherapy

with Black/African American adult and youth populations and racial trauma.