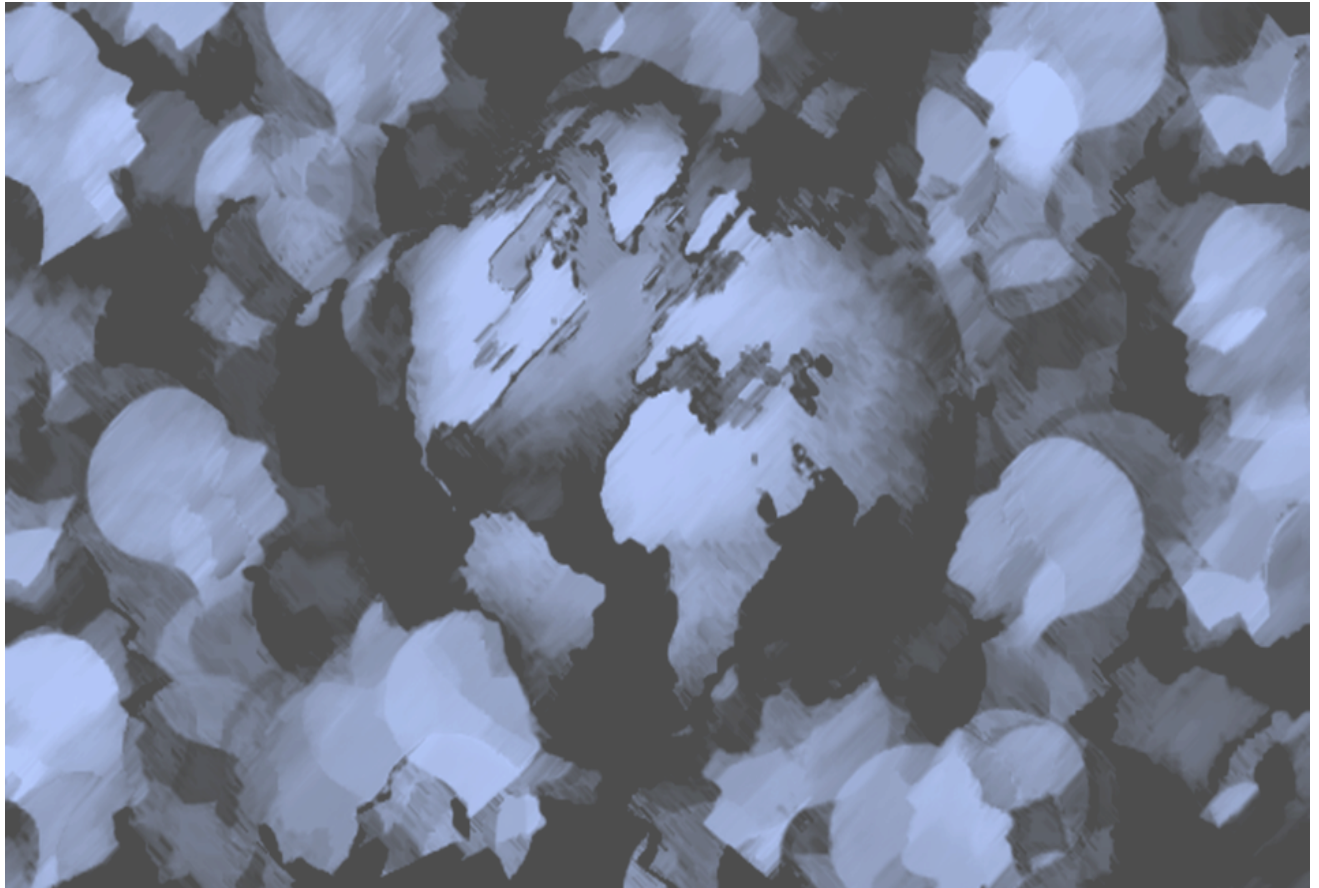


Hopeful Citizenship: Authority, Identity, Othering and Belonging



Fall 2025 Group Relations Conference
Teachers College, Columbia University, NY
November 21-23, 2025

This event is co-sponsored by Teachers College, Columbia University & The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations

TEACHERS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

THE
TAVISTOCK
INSTITUTE
OF HUMAN
RELATIONS

Dear prospective member:

This year's theme draws from Ed Shapiro's reflections on citizenship as a relational and psychological process, not just a legal or political status. In organizations and communities alike, active citizenship calls for engaging with authority, negotiating identity, and co-creating meaning. It is a call to participate, to speak, and to listen—even when the structures around us feel broken or unresponsive.

The weekend will provide opportunities to consider what we represent to one another, and how those representations can both connect and alienate. In this context, belonging becomes a practice—not a given—and authority a relational process rather than a fixed role.

What does it mean to belong in a group where others see us differently from how we see ourselves? How do our roles and identities shape our perception of authority? In what ways can listening for “how the other is right” shift group dynamics? What gets in the way of seeing others as part of “us”? What does hopeful citizenship look like in today's organizations and communities?

This group relations conference (GRC) will offer conference participants many opportunities to examine these questions and more that emerge from the conference theme and from our collective work. Conference staff and members will engage in the shared work of exploring our ubiquitous unconscious group processes and dynamics as they evolve in the here-and-now of the weekend.

Conference Directorate

Eliat Aram
Conference Director

Sasha Wells
Associate Director, Administration

Ishita Mishra & Lamya Razzou
The Administrative Team

Primary Task:

The primary task is to study the inter-personal, group-as-a-whole, inter-group, and organizational dynamics as they occur in the here-and-now of the conference

You will have an opportunity to learn:

- Conscious and unconscious factors that shape participation in groups
- What roles we take up in groups and why
- How our own behavior shifts when we assume leadership
- How we relate to authority
- How aspects of our social identity influence role, leadership, and authority

Conference Design and Role of Staff:

The conference is designed as a temporary institution that is organized in a sequence of group and inter-group interactions that provide opportunities for learning. Staff manage the conference boundaries, but they do not manage people. Lectures and didactic presentations by staff are not part of the design. The staff's consultations will focus primarily on group-level phenomena rather than on individuals' behavior.

Please note:

This conference is available to all students of Teachers College, Columbia University and other Columbia-affiliated schools, as well as any interested and willing members of the public. In order to preserve the integrity of the group dynamics, applicants should plan to attend all events. Those who know in advance that they may miss any significant portion of the conference are asked to forego attendance at this time. The GRC is an experiential learning conference and it is designed for members to learn about group and organizational processes. Experiential learning can be powerful, illuminating and also tiring and sometimes stressful. Self-learning often also occurs in the GRC, but the conference is not meant to be a clinical or therapeutic offering. If you are currently undergoing significant stress or managing a difficult personal situation you should forego attendance at this time.

Location:

Teachers College, Columbia University
525 West 120th Street
New York, New York, 10027

Conference Times:

9:15 am – 7:30 pm Friday, November 21, 2025
9:00 am – 7:30 pm Saturday, November 22, 2025
9:00 am – 5:45 pm Sunday, November 23, 2025

*Registration takes place on Friday from 9:15 to 9:45 am.
There will be a reception on Sunday from 5:00 to 5:45 pm.*

Meals and Lodging:

Light refreshments and hot beverages will be made available each morning in the Member Lounge. Members are responsible for securing their own meals during the lunch breaks.

The conference is non-residential. Recommendations for housing accommodations are provided upon request by contacting the administrative team.

Registration:

To secure your spot in the conference, please complete your [online registration](#) by 11:59 PM ET October 31, 2025.

If you have questions, please email the Administrative Team:
teacherscollegeGRC@gmail.com