

Titre – Title

*Échos de la francophonie: Réflexions critiques et innovations dans les recherches et les pratiques en travail social de groupe*

(Franchophone Echos: Critical Reflections and Innovations in Groupwork Research and Practice)

Introduction /preface

The first writings on groupwork in French go back to the 1940's and 50s, notably with the publication of the book « *Groupes et service social* » (Groups and Social Work) by Simone Paré. Since then, writings about groupwork are published regularly in the French language but rarely cross linguistic borders. In 2017, at the Groupwork Camp held in Québec and organized by the Francophone Chapter of the International Association for Social Work with Groups (IASWG), the idea arose to publish a francophone edition in an anglophone journal. This came in response to a desire to make the contributions of the francophone community to groupwork known to a larger public. The journal *Groupwork* accepted to produce this special number. The call for contributions, extended to the international francophone groupwork network, allowed us to recruit 15 authors who contributed to the writing of seven articles and to a book review.

In this special edition, the reader will learn of the desire of the authors to bear witness to the strength of groupwork within the French-speaking world. This vigor is illustrated in three ways throughout this special edition by 1) the innovative character of groupwork 2) the deepening of understandings of concepts in order to mobilize them in practice and beyond and 3) the rigor of documenting practices through research.

The articles of Chesnay, of Lateigne & Iancu, and of Éthier, Marcoux, Lauzer, Carbonneau, & Beaulieu bring the reader to question traditional ways of conceiving practices in groupwork and explore new horizons. As such, Chesnay's « *Pour une pratique inclusive de la diversité en travail social de groupe : repères théoriques et méthodologiques* » (“For an Inclusive Practice of Diversity in Groupwork : Theoretical and Methodological benchmarks”) brings a critical reflection of the traditional understanding of diversity in groupwork, which is often limited to group composition. Drawing on the work of Pelech, Basso, Lee et Gandarilla (2016), Chesnay examines

the concept of diversity through structural and anti-oppressive lenses, bringing us to consider diversity as an element of inclusion in groups. The author also outlines practical principles and exposes current limits of knowledge on this subject.

In their article « *Collaboration interprofessionnelle au carrefour du travail social de groupe et de l'intervention familiale : analyse théorique de l'évolution de pratiques menant à des services intégrés au Nouveau-Brunswick* » (“Interprofessional Collaboration at the Crossroads of Groupwork and Family Intervention: a Theoretical Analysis of the Evolution of Practices Leading to Integrated Services in New Brunswick”), Lanteigne and Iancu present an original theoretical perspective of interprofessional collaboration with families in New Brunswick. This article has the strength of reconciling this practice with groupwork principles. It distinguishes itself through the elaboration of new hybrid-models of the practice of interprofessional collaboration and highlights the multiple forms of collaboration during intervention.

The article of Éthier and his colleagues « *Le groupe SEMA : un groupe « philo-éducatif » innovateur pour partager son expérience morale comme proche aidant* » (“The SEMA Group: an Innovative “Philo-Educational” Group for Sharing Moral Experience as a Caregiver”) presents a new way of discussing the reality of caregivers through groupwork. The authors propose a seven-process model for the construction of moral responsibility among caregivers, resulting in a group programme that invites members on an ethical reflection of their role. The authors connect this model with more traditional models of educational and ethical-deliberation groups as well as communities of philosophical research.

Four other articles present research contributions to the advancement of practices in group social work; these articles aim to document and systematize practise-based group interventions. In their article « *Nous sommes de jeunes aidants et nous existons* » : *un groupe d'aide mutuelle pour faire sortir de l'ombre les jeunes proches aidants* » (“We are Youth Caregivers and We Exist: a Mutual-Aid Group to Bring Young Caregivers Out of the Shadows”), Côté and Éthier describe the results of a mutual-aid group for young caregivers. After highlighting the lack of knowledge about caregiving among youth, the article outlines the main benefits of this experience for youth, the strength of mutual aid, the group as an agent of change as well as the challenges for groupwork with an unrecognized population.

The article by Gargano « *Les facteurs d'aide : pour une meilleure compréhension des éléments-clés de l'intervention en contexte de nature et d'aventure* » (“Therapeutic Factors: for a Better Understanding of the Key Elements of Outdoor Intervention ”) discusses outdoor intervention; a practice that, despite its increase in popularity and the recognition of its positive psychosocial effects, has been the subject of few studies. The objective of this article is to identify the group processes and therapeutic factors and connect them with key elements of outdoor intervention. The results illustrate the relevance of this practice from a groupwork perspective.

Two research articles attest to the richness of groupwork with fathers. The article by Bizot, Bisson, Roy and Attard « *Pères en mouvement, hommes en changement : Parcours d'hommes au sein de groupes pour pères* » (“Fathers in Movement, Men Changing, Journeys of Men in a Group for Fathers”) describes the experience of fathers in a support group wishing to actively engage in the education towards their children. This article explores the fathers’ motivation to join the group, the impacts of group process on their participation, the highlights of their experience within the group and the positive effects of the group on their relationships with others and themselves. Furthermore, in « *Travail de groupe avec des hommes et aide mutuelle : l'exemple d'un service pour des pères séparés ayant des difficultés d'accès à leurs enfants* » (“Groupwork with Men and Mutual Aid: the Example of a Service for Separated Fathers Having Difficulty Accessing their Children”), Deslauriers and Berteau discuss the importance given to mutual-aid by the participants throughout their journeys. It also highlights the value of open groups which, according to the participants, allowed them to participate without constraints and freely share their realities as separated fathers.

The final contribution is Julie Noël’s book review of *Théories et modèles d'intervention en service social de groupe* (Theory and Models in Groupwork) by Roy and Lindsay (2017). The first appearance of its kind in French, this book is a successful overview of the main theories

and models of group social work. Noël hopes this book be a forerunner for other works of its kind that will further contribute to the ongoing development of knowledge and practice in group work.