WHAT IS A GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCE?
THE LEICESTER CONFERENCE

“Changing culture depends upon effective leadership. But are we confident that our leaders know how to create a sense of purpose and direction? How to win ownership for that vision from a critical mass of their people? And then how to inspire them to believe they can achieve? Because that’s the task of leadership. That is what makes leadership different from management.”
Former Permanent Secretary, Department for Education and Employment, UK

A Group Relations conference is an educational event which is based on learning through experience – the design has been developed by pioneers from the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (TIHR) for nearly 70 years. We believe that strategic and structural dynamics of organisations can be studied and understood and the knowledge acquired and applied by working through the conscious and unconscious dynamics of leadership and management in organisations. We believe that our conference promotes the integration of intellectual capacity and emotional intelligence so producing leaders who have creative visionary potential, enabling them to work more effectively at helping their employees/colleagues/clients and themselves to adapt to and take on future roles.

- The conference is an accelerated immersive learning experience. It is designed to enable participants to understand, in greater depth, the factors behind the exercise of effective leadership and followership and to develop further their own leadership capacities and the leadership potential of others, by generating management goodwill and employee “buy-in” and understanding and working with their own and their organisation’s resistance to change.

- It is a ‘real time’ learning laboratory in the form of a series of reflective spaces where participants can analyse their leadership styles and experiment creatively in expanding their repertoire of leadership skills. Together with conference staff, they critically examine different models of organisational functioning and appraise their leadership performance.

WHO IS THE CONFERENCE FOR?

Are you:

- wanting long-term inspiration, stimulation, motivation?
- a change agent needing a space to reflect and challenge yourself in a world-class learning environment?
- wondering which path to take?            - newly appointed?
- wanting, considering or taking a promotion? - feeling constrained or lacklustre in your role?

For anyone who is interested in how they and their groups / teams / organisations can work better: participants are business professionals, entrepreneurs, managers, executives, CEOs, MBA alumni, researchers, administrators, HR professionals, activists, academics, students, consultants, facilitators, therapists, trainers, clinicians, service providers, story-tellers, decision-makers etc. From the worlds of business, government and local authorities, public services, the arts, law, media, consultancy and the armed forces, emergency services, education, finance and politics, NGOs, co-operatives, health services and social care, justice, religious orders, community groups, lobby groups, agenda-based activisms, trade unions, associations and environmental organisations, etc. Participants come from all sectors, levels, career stages and backgrounds and from all over the world (see lists further on).
WHY ATTEND?

What differentiates Tavistock approaches from others is the emphasis we place on unconscious dynamics, including defences against anxiety in individual, group, organisational and societal processes. That is, to go beneath the surface of tensions and conflicts in order that deeper fears and aspirations are worked through and people feel that they are adding value to and having more ownership of the groups they work with, their organisations and the communities that they serve and are part of.

We believe that this is key to what makes Group Relations conferences influential and unique in the world of leadership training and this is what people say they come to us for. Paying attention to the potential of the minds of staff gives an organisation that extra competitive edge needed to survive and thrive in today’s turbulent economic climate. The Group Relations conference, as an experiential event, provides a space in which to reflect on the life of the organisation and your various roles within it.

Benefits for organisations include:

- improved strategic thinking;
- more effective management based on understanding people as individuals, as members of groups, organisations and the wider society in a context; and
- increasing capacity to lead, innovate and influence change in an evolving context.

LEADERSHIP TODAY

- The nature of work and the organisations through which work is carried out have changed and continue to change at an incredible rate. It can no longer be taken for granted that leaders and managers share the same vision for their organisation.
- Hierarchies in some sectors are beginning to disappear and in their place there are matrices and temporary work teams which are held together by immediate, often short-term aims. New leadership and management capabilities in this context are crucial for future success.
- We are now on the verge of the ‘thinking organisation’. The greatest assets of any organisation are the psychological and emotional capacities of the organisation’s major role holders and the clear role relationships between them.
- Leadership is about anticipating new realities and management is about working out how to implement this vision. Leadership in these circumstances has to find new ways to excite managers and staff.
- Leadership is about forging and sustaining a complex network of partnerships between other sections, departments and branches of an organisation internally and also externally with other organisations: locally, nationally and internationally. The global village is here.

THE PRIMARY TASK

To study the development and exercise of authority, role and organisation, through the inter-personal, inter-group and institutional relations that develop within the conference and its wider context.
METHOD

- The Group Relations conference uses experiential learning (learning through experience) on the grounds that learning is more substantial and lasts longer if all one’s senses and faculties are involved: through embodying the conference member role. This learning is based on proven Tavistock and other theories.

- Hence the conference emphasises the emotional engagement that comes about through active participation in the events of the conference whilst encouraging subsequent intellectual study through reading and/or attending another course, programme or conference.

- In addition, the conference includes the study of the role of leadership in developing future leadership potential for organisations from amongst existing staff/employees.

- The ratio of staff consultants to participants is high, about 1 : 5

PHILOSOPHY

- The strategic and structural dynamics of organisations can be studied and understood and the knowledge used.

- The conference aims to produce leaders with creative visionary potential, who are also sensitive to the personal and career ambitions of their managers and employees.

- The conference is unique in elaborating the conscious and unconscious dynamics of leadership and management in organisations.

- The conference facilitates integration of intellectual capacity and emotional intelligence, two major areas of human functioning, thereby enabling leaders to work more efficiently at helping their managers to adapt to future roles.

- The conference demonstrates how to enable staff/employees to work towards the same vision, modelling leadership, making the theory live.

- The conference is intensive and allows participants to examine and question the nature of their multiple roles as leader/influential follower and the place of their organisation in its evolving context.

VALUES

- Group Relations conferences provide learning opportunities for a new generation of leaders and managers who seek to improve their skills in developing a vision and fostering creativity in new kinds of collaborative networks.

- Group Relations conferences help participants link technology and teams to bring out the best in people, mobilising co-operative inter-dependency and creating collaborative sustainability.

- They always deal with a dilemma: how to build organisations and teams and ensure in the process that all the different views will be heard.

- They help participants to explore the tension between taking risks / being accountable.

- Group Relations conferences help people to manage themselves well; to know about and integrate their feelings, values and beliefs with their intellect so as to maximise their own and their organisation’s effectiveness.
“I learned that tensions are inevitable in organisations and certain group behaviours, eg the tendency to form silos, seem to exacerbate these tensions. Encouragement by conference staff to reach out across boundaries and be curious about what was happening in other silos, was a useful way of improving understanding and relationships.”

Detective Chief Superintendent, Metropolitan Police, UK

“...at the end of the Conference I regretted finding it so late in my life / career though I reflect that I behaved at Leicester as that younger me…. I feel richer emotionally and professionally”

Managing Director, Accadence, Singapore

“Overall the conference was the most significant personal professional event I have attended”

Vice President, HR Volvo Car Corporation, Sweden

“The conference helped me to express myself in plain words, instead of professional language, as an extremely powerful tool of communication.”

Nurse, NHS, UK

“Another aspect was the strengthening of my mindfulness through the Yoga Event, which helped me to find better connection to my inner core”

Leadership Development Consultant, Bernd Lunglmayr Führungs & Organisations Beratung, Austria

“I was fascinated to observe how groups were unwittingly affected by their environments, despite their best efforts to prevent that”

Manager, University Customised Programmes Australia

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Managing Partner, Transcendix, India

“The opportunities to understand others through meaningful interaction both within and outside of the conference was the best learning experience I have had.”

Managing Director, Accadence, Singapore

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CEO in Public Housing, UK
“a process that started in the Conference and that now is making me re-consider all aspects of my professional, personal and social life”

People & Change Leader, PwC and President, SOLE, Italy

“The quality of the staff and the dynamic combination of groups – with different tasks within the conference as a temporary organisation – provided great scope for concrete and direct learning... I especially valued the opportunity to discover emotional links between professional and personal life experiences”

Head of Unit, Directorate, General Education and Culture, European Commission, Brussels

“...Two weeks at Leicester had an amazing influence on me I was exhausted, but I learned so much from my group experiences, especially that abstract thinking is a big improvement on my concrete ways of thinking and communicating.”

Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Iran

“I have never learned as much about organisations as whole systems as I did at the Leicester conference”

Director, Corporate Business Development, USA

“Leicester has made me think a lot more about what [organisational life] means ... and how we all respond to this and create this atmosphere – what is externally induced and what comes from us and how people exercise their leadership and authority including of course myself”

Deputy Chief Executive, NHS UK

“I love the organisation of the conference and the physical space ... the buildings and the gardens are fabulous! I think so much of the work of learning relies on re/membering new experiences, their physicality and re/calling their sensory-ness”

Managing Partner, Williams O'Connell Associates, Canada

“I would like to acknowledge the wonderful design that is the Leicester Conference, its tried and tested history ... providing containment and modelling authority as I and all of us experimented and grappled with ours. I certainly gained enormously and learned almost at a cellular level. I also had a whole lot of fun with other mischief makers!”

CEO, Southside Partnership, Ireland

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CEO, Southside Partnership, Ireland
Some of the ROLES which participants have in their organisations:

**AHRC Fellow**, Wimbledon College of Art, UK; **Archdeacon**, The Diocese of Leicester, UK; **Architect**, Emcon AS, Denmark; **Assistant Director**, Roffey Park Institute, UK; **Assistant Programmes Manager**, Sir Ratan Tata Trust, India; **Associate Director of Development**, NHS Tayside, UK; **Associate Professor of Management**, EDHEC Business School, France; **Attorney**, Abourezk Law Firm, USA; **Author**, books, plays, tv scripts, Sweden; **Between jobs**, Independent, UK; **Bishop** of Leicester, UK; **Board Member**, Aega Saneamento, Brazil; **Change Manager**, GlaxoSmithKline, Singapore; **Chief**, Department of Behavioural Health, Blanchfield Hospital, USA; **Chief Editor and Programs Director**, IDC Radio, EDC Herzliya, Israel; **Clinical Psychologist and Organisational Consultant**, InTraining, Argentina; **Coach and Facilitator**, Bridge & Enrich, The Netherlands; **Co-Director**, Group Analytic Practice, self-employed, Ireland; **Consultant Psychiatrist**, King Khalid University Hospital, Saudi Arabia; **Corporate Controller**, TNO, The Netherlands; **Chief Director**, Business Performance Coaching Australia Pty Ltd, Australia; **Chief Executive**, NHS Education for Scotland, UK; **Chief Scientist**, U4EA Technologies Ltd, UK; **Dance Artist & Facilitator**, Scotland; **Dean of Studies**, Peking University, China; **Deputy Director**, Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen UR, The Netherlands; **Director**, Maersk Drilling, Denmark; **Director**, Department of Oncology, Azienda Ospedaliera della Provincia di Lodi, Italy; **Director of Press / Media Relations**, Diocese of Ely, UK; **Doctoral Candidate**, The George Washington University, USA; **Educational Consultant**, HR, Central Region, Center for Competency Development, Denmark; **Executive Director**, Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, UK; **Finance Analyst**, Viacom Media Networks, UK; **Founder / CEO**, ADHD Foundation of Trinidad and Tobago; **Freelance Consultant**, Financial planning & risk evaluation, Israel; **General Manager**, Big Land Company SRL, Romania; **Gestalt Therapist**, SARL WeyZe Advisors, France; **GP - General Practitioner** medicine, Yare Valley Medical Practice, UK; **Headmaster**, Instituto Ballester Deutscher Schule, Argentina; **Head of Activity**, County Council of Jämtland, Sweden; **Head of Business Development**, DACH Hub, Zurich Gruppe, Germany; **Head of Force Leadership Directorate**, Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable, Staff Officer, Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, UK; **Head of HR**, Swedbank, Lithuania; **Head of Regulatory Compliance**, Barclays Africa, UAE; **Head of Special Collections and Research**, The Wellcome Trust, UK; **HR Director**, Pernod Ricard, South Korea; **IDEAS Programme Director**, Welsh Assembly Government, UK; **Industry Sales Manager Europe**, Novozymes, France; **International Climate Campaigner**, Friends of the Earth, UK; **Law Student**, University of Baltimore School of Law, USA, **Lean Academy Manager**, H Lundbeck A/S, Denmark; **Managing Director**, Accadence, Singapore; **Managing Director**, The Metanoia Institute, Finland; **Marketing Manager**, Grupo Supermercados Wong, Peru; **Methodologist**, Ustredie prac, socialnych veci a rodiny, Slovakia; **Network Coordinator/Trainer**, De Professionele Mens, The Netherlands; **Nurse**, NHS, UK; **Organisational Development Consultant**, Investec Specialist Bank, UK; **Professor**, IMD, Switzerland; **Professor for Organizational Behaviour**, University of Applied Science / School of Business, Switzerland; **Programme Director**, Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands; **Program Manager**, Ashoka, Germany; **Project Manager**, Leadership Centre for Local Government, UK; **Project Manager**, Novo Nordisk, Denmark; **Research Fellow**, School of Arts & Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India; **Regional Director**, The National Trust, UK; **Retired**, USA; **Senior Manager**, Deloitte Learning, South Africa; **Senior Vice President**, Learning & Performance, Nomura Bank, UK; **South West Area Lead for Offending Behaviour Programmes**, HM Prison Service, UK; **Staff Chaplain**, Ministry of Defence, The Netherlands; **Student**, Universidad Peruana de Ciencias, Peru; **Talent Officer**, Vivaki India; **Teacher**, Summerhill School, UK; **Transition Manager**, Alliander NV, The Netherlands; **Unemployed**, South Africa; **Vicar**, Holy Trinity, UK; **Vice President**, St Vincent De Paul Society, Palestine; **Vice President for Academic Affairs (Registrar)**, Dublin City University, Ireland; **Volunteer International Arts Manager**, Escape Artists, UK; **Zonal Secretary**, Total/Pengasann, Nigeria...
Some of the ORGANISATIONS from which participants have come:

Management Development; Switzerland; Curtin University of Technology, Australia; CapGemini Consulting, UK; H S Amager Hospital, Denmark: Ankerhus A/S, Denmark; Change Management Associates Ltd, UK; Portiuncula Hospital, County Galway, Eire; London Borough of Hounslow, UK: Lambeth PCT, UK: Austen Riggs Center, USA; Work: AITC; Italy; Metropolitan Police, UK; Hopeworks, USA; Henderson Hospital Services, UK: Mind, UK; Manchester Art Gallery, UK; The Development Center, USA: Roskilde University, Denmark, Fincantieri SpA, Italy; University of the West of England, UK; VECU, The Netherlands; Northern School of Child & Adolescent Psychotherapy, UK; Hackney Learning Trust, UK: The Children’s Society, UK: Vision-Act, Switzerland; ABN AMRO Bank, The Netherlands; Swiss Re, Switzerland; Aalborg University, Denmark; Central Manchester Children’s Hospitals NHS Trust, UK; Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, UK; York Refrigeration, Denmark; Vilnius University, Lithuania; Max Delbrück Centre for Molecular Medicine, Germany; Visa Europe, UK; King’s Fund, UK; Praesternes Efteruddannelse, Denmark; National University of Ireland, Ireland: University of Quebec, Canada; University of Cape Town, South Africa; Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust, UK; NCVO, UK; Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vietnam; Twizler / PB Group, UK; Aarhus Amt, Denmark; Zurich RE, Switzerland; DaimlerChrysler, Germany; Community Health Sheffield NHS Trust, UK; Jyske Bank, Denmark; Vejle County, Denmark; London Borough of Islington Social Services, UK; Fysn Amt, Denmark; City of Vantaa, Finland; SLAM NHS Trust, UK; Schering AG, Germany; Students Exploring Marriage Trust, UK; Tel Aviv University, Israel; Institut Catala de la Salut, DAP L’Hospitalet, Spain; New York University, USA; Clinica Psichiatria Universita Di Catania, Italy; IMD International, Switzerland; Behandlingshemmet Egervang, Denmark; Bulgarian Institute of Human Relations, Bulgaria; Royal Free Hospital, UK; De Galan and Voigt, The Netherlands; University of South Africa; CMG Telecommunications, Ireland; Karolinska Institutet, Sweden; MODUL Service AB (IKEA), Sweden; Post Danmark, Denmark; INSEAD, France; C/O/N/E/C/T, Austria; Pfizer Ltd, UK; VECU Organisatiebegeleiding, The Netherlands; RHR International, Hungary; Shell Oil International, The Netherlands; St Columban’s Missionary Society, Ireland; TESI Spa, Italy; Al-Mada Assoc. for Arts Based Community Development, Palestine; Guardian Newspaper, UK; Ernst & Young, The Netherlands; Familiecentret, Denmark; Holzhauser & Partner, Germany; Suffolk County Council, UK; RMIT – Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia; Sc gfa-ro consultanta impex SRL, Romania; Ustredie prace, socialnych veci a rodiny, Slovakia; Seattle University, USA; Emcon AS, Denmark; Prism Softtech Pvt Ltd; India; Foster Care Associates, Scotland; Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel; Metso Minerals (Tampere) Oy, Finland; Deloitte Consulting, Chile; SAKSHI Human Rights Watch, India; Nuon, The Netherlands; U4EA Technologies Ltd, UK; Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector, UK; Novozymes, France; Institute of Management Development and Research (IMDR), India; Humber Mental Health NHS Teaching Trust, UK; AFF at The Norwegian School of Economics, Norway; Dr. Ingrids Hospital, Greenland; Welsh Assembly Government, Wales; T.E.A.M. bvba, Belgium; Nat. Area-based Development Program, Columbia University, USA; Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development, Afghanistan; UAB Sanofi-Aventis Lietuva, Lithuania; Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen University Hospital, Denmark; Prison Services, Israel; Roskilde University, Denmark; Tampere University of Technology, Finland: TAKS (Tax/Custom Authorities), Faroe Islands; HR, Region Midtjylland, Denmark; Zain, Kuwait; Cranfield University, UK; GTZ (German Agency for Technical Cooperation), Mali; Wide Eye Pictures Ltd, UK; Royal Hobart Hospital, Tasmania; University of Pretoria, South Africa; Barclays Africa; Escape Artists, UK; Ministry of Defence, The Netherlands; Healthcare Commission, UK; National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights, India; IKEA, France; Investec Specialist Bank, UK; INSEAD, United Arab Emirates; GlaxoSmithKline, Singapore; Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, UK; Center of Psychological and Sociological Research, Cuba; Universidad Peruana de Ciencias, Peru; Apple Computer Inc, Ireland; Dr Hauschka Skin Care Inc, USA; University of Nicosia, Cyprus; Leadership Centre for Local Government, UK; Leviosa Business School, India; Maersk Drilling, Denmark; Solaris Nutrition, Brazil; Sulzer Pumps Asia Pacific, China; B&K Change, Argentina; Covenant University, Nigeria; Centre for Development Innovation, The Netherlands; Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, Iran; City University of Hong Kong; King Khalid University Hospital, Saudi Arabia; The ADHD Foundation of Trinidad & Tobago; Pernod Ricard, S Korea; Glia Leadership Consulting, Malaysia ...
# AN EXAMPLE OF A LEICESTER CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Selected people from your organisation can attend the annual 14-day Leicester conference, residential.

Or a shorter Group Relations conference can be tailored to the requirements of your organisation (1 - 5 days), in-house, non-residential.

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See Key on next page
The conference opens and closes in plenary sessions involving all parts of the conference. The plenaries further the process of crossing the boundary into and out of the conference and each event. The final conference closing plenary also allows for studying the process of ending relationships.

| Plenaries: | The conference opens and closes in plenary sessions involving all parts of the conference. The plenaries further the process of crossing the boundary into and out of the conference and each event. The final conference closing plenary also allows for studying the process of ending relationships. |
| SSG: Small Study Groups | Each Small Study Group consists of up to 12 participants working with 1 consultant. Its primary task is to learn about the dynamics of small groups and the formation of leadership and followership relationships as they happen in the group. It is an experiential 'here-and-now' event in which the behaviour of the group is placed under a high resolution microscope and the group has the opportunity to study its own behaviour as it happens, with the help of consultancy. The rationale for this is that learning, understanding and knowledge lead to change. |
| LSG: Large Study Group | The Large Study Group comprises the whole conference membership working together with 2-4 consultants. The primary task of this event is to provide opportunities for studying the dynamics of large groups and the processes of cohesion and fragmentation, myth-making and reality-testing as they happen in the group, through the exploration of the myths, beliefs, assumptions, identities and dreams that emerge. This is an experiential 'here-and-now' event in which the behaviour of the group is placed under a high resolution microscope and the group has the opportunity to study its own behaviour as it happens. |
| ERE: Embodying Role Event | The Embodying Role Event involves all parts of the conference and is an experiential 'here and now' event where everyone collectively can develop mindfulness: an awareness of internal states and feelings, allowing them to have greater access to embody their creative, intellectual and emotional selves. It is an opportunity to experience how mind / body / spirit are interwoven and how calm energy can be generated to feel and think more clearly. Each session ends with Yoga Nidra or lucid sleep which is one of the deepest possible states of relaxation whilst still maintaining consciousness. |
| IGE: Inter-Group Event | The Inter-Group Event is an opportunity for participants to learn about the processes and relationships that form between different groups when they are engaged on a common task. Especially relevant will be learning how to take up representative roles and negotiating and carrying authority on behalf of others. This is an event that combines experiential ‘here-and-now’ learning with action learning, i.e. the putting into action, within the conference, sets of relationships between groups that derive from the experiential learning of the conference. |
| WSE: Whole System Event | The Whole System Event involves all parts of the conference – groups formed by the participants and groups formed by the staff - in learning about relationships between parts and wholes; managing differentials of power and influence; how to keep the whole system in mind when one is working in part of it, especially when the system is large and complex and often unknowable. The event involves ‘here-and-now’ experiential learning. |
| RAG: Review & Application Groups | Review and Application Groups provide opportunities for participants to review and reflect on their experiences of the day and how they are taking up their different roles in the conference. Towards the latter half of the conference, these sessions will focus on application - how the participants hope to transfer their conference learning into their back-home organisations. This is a bridging exercise between the individual’s conference learning and post-conference organisational behavioural practice and has ‘here-and-now’ and ‘now-and-then’ aspects to it. The application sessions may include Role Analysis where participants have the opportunity to work with a staff consultant and an active audience. The focal question is: what are we learning in the conference (‘here-and-now’) that can be applied to our roles in our organisations (‘now-and-then’)? |
The Institute’s Group Relations Programme has **COLLABORATIVE LINKS**

with organisations around the world which run Group Relations conferences based on our Leicester model:
The Institute is a not-for-profit organisation which applies social science to contemporary issues and problems.

It was formally founded as a registered charity in 1947 although its work started before the War, together with the Tavistock Clinic.

The Institute is engaged with evaluation and action research, organisational development and change consultancy, executive coaching and professional development, all in service of supporting sustainable change and ongoing learning.

Our staff work creatively with people involved in innovative activities, working across boundaries or in difficult situations. We combine research and analytical skills with practical help in devising solutions and in following through to implementation and are particularly known for our capacity to work with issues that are otherwise hidden, and sometimes unconscious.

Our other professional development opportunities include the Certificate in Dynamics at Board Level; the Certificate in Coaching for Leadership and Professional Development and the Certificate in Supervision for Coaching & Consultancy; the P3C Practitioner Certificate in Consulting and Change; the Dynamics of Evaluation; the Certificate in the Dynamics of Peace and a portfolio of Group Relations tailored events.

Our Group Relations Programme designs, directs and staffs programmes for other organisations – eg: companies, industrial concerns, educational institutions, professional associations, voluntary bodies and community organisations etc.