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Building Resilience to Cope with Adverse Childhood Experiences by Sudha Gutti

We live in a world where more and more the stressors of daily living are increasing and it is becoming difficult to shield young children from them. If the right childhood experience is not given to them, they will grow up to be adults that lack coping skills to work through traumas.

Childhood trauma is used to describe negative events that are emotionally painful and that overwhelm a person's ability to cope. The traumas that have the greatest psychological consequences include childhood abuse and neglect. Child abuse can occur in many contexts including homes, schools, churches, foster care, justice systems, and workplaces. Traumatic childhood events include abuse, neglect, witnessing crime, parental conflict, mental illness, and substance abuse. Often referred to as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), these types of events create dangerous levels of stress and result in long term negative effects impacting emotional, mental, and physical health.

Dr. Francine Shapiro introduced the concept of large-T trauma and small-t trauma in the year 1997, which has gained currency over the years. Large-T traumas are those we commonly associate with PTSD such as rape, witnessing a murder, natural disasters, and war-time atrocities. Small-t traumas represent adverse life experiences that do not ordinarily gualify someone for a PTSD diagnosis; yet, they still merit clinical attention because they can be wounding, and therefore, traumatic. Some common examples of these small-t traumas include racial or ethnic discrimination, verbal abuse, cyber-bullying, surviving divorce, experiencing a medical crisis, spiritual abuse, emotional blackmail, or losing a pet. These adverse life experiences can be just as valid and clinically significant as the kinds of trauma that we more commonly associate with PTSD. Sufferers of trauma may develop emotional disturbances such as extreme anxiety, anger, sadness, survivor's guilt, or PTSD. They may experience ongoing problems with sleep or physical pain, encounter turbulence in their personal and professional relationships, and feel a diminished sense of self-worth due to the overwhelming amount of stress. The accumulation of the small traumas erodes an individual's self-image. Beliefs such as 'I am unimportant, insignificant, 'I can't trust myself or others' start getting entrenched. Destructive behaviors during early teens like fighting with parents, skipping classes, smoking weed off the school property, etc. can be seen. And of course, they have a longer term emotional, mental, and physical impact throughout the life of the individual.

The most significant aspect of being able to cope with trauma is resilience. Building 'resilience' in children will minimize the risk or re-occurrence of the trauma and also its impact on the emotional, mental and physical health. Resilience has been defined as a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity. Resilience is not a personal trait that individuals do or do not possess but rather a product of interacting factors—biological, psychological, social, and cultural—that determine how a person responds to traumatic events.

Most people can muster their own healing resources and support networks to heal these life wounds without professional care. However, many others cannot. The traumas themselves are usually not the problem. It's when the traumas go unresolved and unhealed that problems develop. Therapy to repair the 'impact of trauma' is difficult and long drawn, and a lot of success is dependent on whether the individuals have built a healthy resilience in the formative years. One of the strongest factors linked with resilience to childhood trauma is the reliable presence of a sensitive, nurturing, and responsive adult. The presence of such a figure can help children by restoring a sense of safety, predictability, and control. The presence of an authority figure whether at home- parents, primary care givers or at school- teachers, set boundaries and protect the children. The child who has been in the loving care of the parents or primary care givers since birth; embraced in a world of warmth and love, steps into the setting of a school where the teacher, an authority figure continues to provide the same warmth and love. The child is now exploring the world and building relationships beyond its immediate family and a whole new aspect of its being is nourished. The hours spent at school under the care of this teacher, makes the transition from home to school seamless. A teacher in the classroom is uniquely positioned to play the role of this figure. I believe that the role of a teacher needs to go far beyond teaching the 3Rs and should focus on the overall well-being of the children under their care including building resilience in them.

In my decade long experience as a kindergarten and grades schoolteacher at Waldorf Schools, I fully embraced this role- propelled by my own beliefs and built on Rudolf Steiner's philosophy and guidance to teachers. I believe that the approach I used helped build a resilience in my class children.

As I embarked on the journey of a class teacher with a group of enthusiastic, joyful, and playful children I met with each family in their home for a few hours. This was to get to know more about the birth and the biography of the child and understand the child in the context of the family. This gave me an opportunity to gain an insight into how they could attempt to weave their home life around the rhythms of the classroom. This would help extend the classroom into their homes. The idea was to help the child feel enveloped in a cocoon of warmth, love, and soul nourishment. An important aspect of Waldorf pedagogy is the practice of the same class teacher continuing with a group of children from 1st grade to 8th grade. The teacher gets to know the children intimately and watches them grow. The teacher becomes a role model for the children of all that is human.

Working with the curriculum through story telling was an amazing avenue to build resilience. The fairy tales and saint stories told to them in these early years help them understand what it is to be an ideal human through the aspirations of the protagonists in these stories. They also give a message of goodness that exists in the world and that it always triumphs! They emphasized that everything in the world is good and beautiful. 'Storytelling, as well as many other activities, support the re-connection with what is good, true, and beautiful, with who we really are.' I could see the children connecting to these stories at a soul level and understanding that ideals are very important; living a life full of ideals and striving for them is what makes the world a better place for all. In fact, very soon story time became a very sacred time for them, as this was speaking to them at a deeper level.

I have seen the wisdom in the importance of play for children. In fact, there should be a healthy protection of play in the early years both at home and in the school setting. Imaginative play that is in-built into the Waldorf pedagogy for the early years of a child's schooling is the cornerstone of a healthy building of resilience that the child can tap into for later years of its life. In today's world when it is the norm for children to end up in institutions- day care and schools, at a very early age, the importance of play cannot be over emphasized. The exposure to and immersion in nature helps the children perceive the wonders and secrets therein. This helps develop a sense for the connectedness of the self to nature. In this day of varied influences in our lives, including screens of various kinds, being out in nature nourishes children. This exposure to nature on a regular rhythm helps with proper breathing and centering of oneself. When I saw that the children in my class had several of the influences that undermine a true experience of childhood, I decided to immerse them in nature and we spent a full year, taking walks and spending time in the woods for an hour every morning at the start of the school day. Slowly, the calming influences of the time we spent in nature, became evident to all who interacted with these children. I believe that this immersion in nature gave the children a peek into the mysteries of the world; its vastness and depth; a higher power which they held in reverence and awe.

An important element of building resilience is to create a qualitative sense for time. In the early years, the child needs to experience the importance of rhythm aligned to the rhythm of the cosmos- seasons, day and night, growth, and decay, and several of the other cyclical rhythms of nature. Acknowledging these rhythms and celebrating festivals based around them helps experience time in a qualitative way. We celebrated several of the rhythms of nature on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. Taking care of farm animals and growing one's food were important activities that were closely intertwined with the cyclical aspect and highlighted the secrets of nature. As part of the 3rd grade curriculum the children were told stories of the native people of the land, their dwellings, life and culture. They got an understanding of how these people lived attuned to nature and had a sense for time that was more qualitative. As part of this study, we undertook a shelter project and built a wigwam just like the natives of the land. The understanding of the people who came before us and their life that was so attuned to nature and the seasons, evoked a sense of awe, and wonder amongst the children.

A significant activity that helps build resilience in children is artistic work. It helps tap into our inner self from which all creativity flows. An engagement in a creative outlet helps build a connection to the 'I am' and a connection to the higher power. The connection to this true self is very important for any healing process. In my work with children in these early years we engaged in different artistic pursuits in a weekly rhythm- painting, drawing, modeling, hand work, sculpture, etc.

I hope that my experiences and perspectives about building resilience in formative years may act as a practical guide to teachers who would like to embrace this critical role.

About the author: Sudha Gutti, LSW and AAP Intern is a practicing mental health therapist and EMDR trained clinician specializing in trauma. She also has worked as a kindergarten and grade schoolteacher for more than a decade.

Uncertainty

by David Tresemer, PhD

When can I plan to travel? Will I lose my job? Will schools reopen? Will there be more disruptions?

We depend on certainty—that 10:52 is one minute after 10:51, that the minutes are the same, that my heart beats on average 72 times a minute, giving 25920 heart beats a day, connecting me to the Platonic Great Year of 25,920 years, the time it takes the spring equinox via precession to return to the same place in the heavens. We take comfort in Plato's knowing that number—certainty has existed for a long time. We take comfort in the relationship of each heart beat to the full expression of the ages of time.

We trust in the constancy of gravity to hold us in place, that up and down are dependable. We trust that two miles in our journey is twice one mile. We trust that the sun goes down, and we sleep, and the sun rises, and we awake. We trust that summer gets warm. We trust that our mitochondria turn nourishment into energy, and that we can walk and talk and think. We trust that, if we look to the right, when we look back to the left things will be almost identical to how they were a moment before.

Our energy bodies ("etheric" bodies) and physical bodies rely on these regularities.

Our astral bodies (of thoughts, feelings, deeds) adhere to certainties too. We expect that, if we work hard, we will earn a promotion; we can vacation in a regular rhythm; we can secure a comfortable retirement. We expect that people will walk on the sidewalk in such a way that they don't bump into us, that people drive on their side of the road. (Isn't it amazing how vehicles can travel at such high speeds on the same bit of ground with only rare collisions?!) We depend on supplies being on the shelves of stores for us when we need them and, after waiting in a courteous line that moves along slowly but surely, we wheel a cart to the check-out, where someone will take our money and we will go out the door with the supplies we need. Life proceeds like a clock that moves from minute to minute. We may feel overwhelmed by all the tasks we have to do in those minutes, but we depend on those minutes to tick-tock their way through our days with regularity, with certainty.

When certainty fails, we can lose trust, respect, comfort, reliance, security. We can even sense that some of the many tick-tock clocks of an orderly world are stopped, or sporadic. We can even feel that the basic fabric of time and its patterns is stretching or compressing. We lose our way, lose focus, lose orientation both to time and space. Even a little bit of unhinging can make us anxious, so much so that we go to a doctor who may prescribe a medicine which is meant to help us cope, a medicine that, as most of us know through experience, puts us into a walking sleep.

Hold on a moment. Certainty is not why we're here. Order is not why we're on this earth. Too much certainty puts us in slumber, and perhaps you know people who have mechanized their lives in service of safety all the way to their deaths. On the other hand, too much uncertainty leads to breakdown and chaos. You learn best with a little loss of certainty, maybe even a moderate loss.

How can anthroposophy help? It reminds us that we're here in this earth realm for soul growth, which means dealing with challenges. We're here for our personal growth of soul—self-realization—and also for a contribution to humanity and the planet. We are not here to hide from danger or difficulty. Anthroposophy suggests that humanity is evolving, that if we found a pleasant and nice pattern that we would like to repeat and repeat, the pattern would fail, because our tasks would arise to surprise us, awaken us. Steiner spoke about these times as spirit-worlds opening up to humanity, for which most are not prepared. In other words, the old ideal pictures of how life ought to be patterned are unraveling. Present uncertainties make for an extraordinary springtime for soul growth, but the cost can be more suffering than is tolerable.

It's helpful to count our blessings, as well as count our challenges. Though anxiety can make us feel that the sky is falling and apocalypse is here now, we need to breathe ("ah, there's air here to support me"—though some protections of the air are needed) and stand ("ah, gravity is working just as before"—no work needed in that department) and stretch ("ah, the body functions to reach out into the world"—muscles and bones always need attention) and walk ("ah, my stride tells me that rhythm and time are still operative—and, hey, I feel my heart beat!"). And, very importantly, we need to relate—"ah, there are others out there who have experiences like mine, with whom I can communicate and thus learn about my own story, and assist others in their stories."

We all have a task, individually and collectively—to manage difficulties in our personal selves and in others around us, and thus grow our souls. How to do this? Not by hiding—"stay safe" can extend to a fearfulness that exceeds reasonable cautions. We also don't learn when the building we're in collapses. Though suffering is occurring all around us, and within us, the usual measures of quality (percent employment, hospital bed occupancy, vaccination dramas) are not the main ones. The most important ones can't be measured—they have to do with soul growth, the facing of the uncertainties while standing on the ground of certainties (gravity, air, warmth) with curiosity, openness, and warm relationships.

David Tresemer, Ph.D., teaches in the certificate program in Anthroposophic Counseling Psychology (www.AnthroposophicPsychology.org), and at the StarHouse in Boulder (www.TheStarHouse.org).

This article was published in Lilipoh magazine, Spring, 2020.

Miss Mouse by Veronica Oliva-Clour

My journey with Miss Mouse at Little House originally began as a way of coping with the loss of operating my early childhood program. Due to Covid19, my doors closed for three months due to lack of enrollment. Naturally families felt safe at home, and with older children staying home with their online education, it was difficult for parents to drive their preschoolers to other places. With my own doors closed, I began to sort through old papers and boxes, finding Waldorf memories of my trainings and other teaching materials. The loveliest treasure I found, was Miss Mouse, a hand-knitted grey mouse wearing a red and white polka dotted dress. Within a few days, I had written a story to my preschoolers about Miss Mouse at Little House. It was about her adventures, as well as her concerns and loss of hearing the children play and the sounds of their pitter patter feet running outside. There was also disappointment of not finding little grains of brown rice on the floor, for her evening meal.

During this time, I was enrolled in the Association of Anthroposophical Psychology (AAP), a three-year anthroposophical psychology program devoted to the study of the wholeness of the human being, as seen through the body, soul, and spirit. Through discovering a deep understanding of the dignity of the human being and its wisdom, from both earthly and cosmic spiritual aspects, the motto "Know Thy Self" offers courage to seek within one's Self, as well as through kindred spirits and community, a sense of the true image and highest form of what it means to be truly human.

My final Capstone Presentation was "A Journey with the Seven Life Processes and Miss Mouse at Little House". Through the 7 Life Processes: breathing, warming, nourishing, discriminating, maintaining, growing, and generating, and using the image of "steppingstones", Miss Mouse endeavors to connect with these physiological qualities. In the stories of Miss Mouse, one can sense the qualities that behold each of the processes. For example, in "Miss Mouse and the Forget-Me-Nots" Miss Mouse is grieving the loss of friendship and of connecting with those around her. There are sad days for Miss Mouse, when she wonders what others are doing while she is home alone. One day while finding some "Forget-Me-Nots" on a walk, I shared with Miss Mouse the heart felt sense of remembering those that we care for. How can we stay connected when we are apart? For young children, planting some Forget-Me-Not flowers was one way that we showed we were concerned and appreciated. Miss Mouse and I sent each family a pack of seeds for remembrance. Using the image of steppingstones for the 7 Life Processes, Miss Mouse and I are moving from "discriminating" becoming aware of the situation of sadness towards "maintaining" living in the moment of this grief and working with the feelings (moods and expressions), towards "growing" - moving out of the grief period towards something new and eventually "generating" - planting seeds in the hopes of remembering the goodness of the friendship. The stories of Miss Mouse can provide a series of images of using the 7 Life Processes as steppingstones towards working through a challenge

Miss Mouse and the Hot Cross Bun

When Miss Veronica came to see Miss Mouse this week, she brought her something wrapped in a cloth napkin that was warm and sweet. Miss Veronica asked Miss Mouse to sit down at the kitchen table and so she did. Miss Veronica gently placed a warm, sweet bun onto her lap. Miss Mouse twitched her delicate little nose, "sniff, sniff, it smells like cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves," she said. "It's a Hot Cross Bun," said Miss Veronica, and she told her this story.

When Miss Veronica was a little girl, she lived in England with her Maman, Papa, and two sisters, Sylvie and Stephanie. At Easter time, there were specially baked breads and meals that were cooked. As little girls, they always looked forward to eating Hot Cross Buns. They were only available at the bakery during Easter. The girls would walk to town, place their coins on the bakery counter and ask politely, "Please, may I have a Hot Cross Bun?" And the baker's wife would say, "Tish, Tish, only one?" And she would sell them five Hot Cross Buns, one for each of them at 10 pence each. She put them in a bag and the little girls said, "Ta very much," (which means 'thank you very much').



With their friends, they had learned the Hot Cross Bun nursery rhyme, and so they sang it, skipping all the way home!

Hot Cross Buns, Hot Cross Buns, one a penny, two a penny, Hot Cross Buns! If you have no daughters, give them to your sons! Hot Cross Buns, Hot Cross Buns!

So, this Easter, Miss Veronica baked some Hot Cross Buns for her family and one for Miss Mouse! She hopes to bake some with you, when we are together at Little House! And we will sing and skip, and she'll tell you this story too, when we are sitting together at our big, wooden table! Take good care friends! Love, Miss Veronica and Miss Mouse

Veronica Oliva-Clour is a 2021 graduate of AAP and has won MN state-wide acclaim for her Little House.

Behold Death by Hazel Archer-Ginsberg

Behold the human being of flesh and bone And there you behold Death, Yet, Look within the bones And you will behold the Awakener –

To follow through with the thoughts developed in yesterday's' essay Bildungsroman from Steiner's 'Inner Realities of Evolution' – Death represents & fulfills itself in the 4th element – earth. As we have previously explored, the other elements – warmth, air, water – have their essence in the spiritual world, and are only a mere semblance here on earth – The interesting thing is that in the whole sphere of physical existence – death is the only true reality!

"We have tried to trace the world of Maya back to reality and in doing so we have shown that all Fire is sacrifice, everything of the nature of Air is the generous virtue of giving, and the Fluid element of water – the result of renunciation and resignation. To these three truths we have to-day added the fact that the true nature of the Earth or solid matter is death, the cutting off of any substance from its cosmic purpose. Because this severing has entered, death itself enters the world of Maya or illusion as a reality..." ~Rudolf Steiner Lecture 5

We know that the physical body without the etheric, astral and "I" is separated from its source – The moment something is cut off from what gives it meaning in the spiritual sense – it dies. Crazy to think that the seed of this was first sown back on old Saturn with the rejection of the Sacrifice of the Spirits of Will by some of the Cherubim. And so when we come into the 4th earth embodiment, we understand that Death would not exist if there were no element of earth.

Because the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms have their spiritual essence in the higher worlds, only the human being can actually experience death! Not even the gods knew what death was.

But then at the Turning Point of Time when the Being of Love incarnated into a human body for the first and only time, and gave us the ultimate sacrifice through the deed of Golgotha, we can now receive the gift that gives true meaning to earth existence – the victory of life over death! – A healing redemption to that original sacred wound – reclaiming the corner stone that was rejected – to make the Temple whole once again.

Will we accept this sacrifice, this offering, this vital gift?

Thinking of these connections, I feel that if I don't make my own selfless sacrifice, live into the virtue of bestowing, and renunciation, I can never fully understand and embody this gift of redemption, this transformation of death into life.

These insights into the inner realities of evolution, as well as all the other insights of Spiritual Science given to us by Steiner, are meant to be chewed on, digested, and transformed through our doing, to convert our soul forces into new organs of perception.

We are meant to imitate the gods, just as children imitate their parents. And somehow, especially recently, I find myself feeling called to take this on more and more. My process of initiation no longer feels theoretical. I can say I have tasted sacrifice, and the rejection of sacrifice – and I have chosen to make my own renunciation – letting go of bestowing seems the hardest for me right now; I'm still yearning to share. But mostly I am standing with death – face to face with what is dead in me – my moral failings, my unworthiness, the beasts that I harbor in my soul forces. Yet I have entered the underworld willingly to lay in the tomb in my search for freedom. Yes, friends, it's true, being excluded from one's essence and purpose is death. But unless we die we cannot be born again.

To quote Adriana Koulias from her book 'The Sixth Key': "To know the meaning of life, one has to understand death, and to understand death, one has to know the meaning of evil. You see they are interdependent"

As I stand at this threshold, I am listening to John the Baptist crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said' Asking myself: Is it possible to repent, to truly forgive, to change my heart and mind, so that I can have my own Damascus experience?

Well, I am willing to die trying, because I know that once I begin to understand Anthroposophia while in the physical body, once I can live as 'Christ in me' – that impulse can be worked on further, cultivated in the higher worlds.

And so in this tearing open of the sacred wound, I hope to heal...

Hazel Archer-Ginsberg – Founder of Reverse Ritual: Understanding Anthroposophy through the Rhythms of the Year and the 'I Think Speech' Podcast. Trans-denominational Minister, Essayist, Lecturer, Poet, Anthroposopher – working as the Cultural Events and Festivals Coordinator of the Chicago Rudolf Steiner Branch.

Prophecy's Lullaby by Patti Smith

The night is dotted with constellations crowned with a band of light, whose galactic center produces the milk of time. When shall we drink, children?

We shall drink when the seal is broken, the princess wilts and the bullseye closes. We shall drink when the tears from the eyes of the girls in raincoats form unsullied streams, and their brothers lead us to the baptismal waters.

The clay of the earth will be ours and there will be nothing we cannot image and therefore accomplish. We will build a miniature city from the palace of memory, yet not a temple to house our covenant. We are our own house, the living architecture.

We shall send up a fleet of kites, scrawled with the words of the day. Kites of bleached muslin stretched over glowing cross-sticks, dressed with flowing tails.

They will be seen drifting above the clouds, all our blameless, childish hopes.

Stalking the target, our bows indestructible, we draw and release. The Sun shall have the fleece and the flesh shall fall away. the secrets of the Minotaur, the grail of Parsifal and the bones of saints shall be purified, committed to the elements.

And these thing we saw written on the immense screen once known as sky. And these things we heard as prophecy's lullaby. the mountain is the mountain. The Lord is the Lord. the holy city belongs to none. the Mountains of Judah belong to none. The yielding seed belong to none. and we are the new Jerusalem.

These things are written on the wind...



News



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Biennial IFAPA conference INVITATION TO THE TRAIN THE TRAINERS IN ANTHROPOSOPHY BASED PSYCHOTHERAPY Emerson College, 26-30 June 2023 Focus: Expanding the therapist's awareness and implementation of

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If you have any questions or wish to register, please email Zheni Nasi at: zheni@netsolutionstime.com

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SEGAN BEGINNER'S LEVEL

Beginner's Level: SEGAN The Sensory Mosaic of Healing®: A Portal into Transformation

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3rd Tuesdays of the Month Online 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm Mountain Time

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I invite you to join me in gathering every third Tuesday of the month, where we will be featuring the wonders of the Polyvagal Theory, Somatic Experiencing and Safe and Sound Protocol/SEGAN applications! Discovering the Neuroception of Safety by supporting Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition! In addition, we will discuss the nuances of the Sensory Mosaic of Healing®, A Portal into Transformation (SEGAN).

Bring your cup of tea or chai ... this is a peer-focused model with presentations, supervisions, studies on the theories, and discussion on how to embrace and apply these theories that promote Autonomic Regulation.

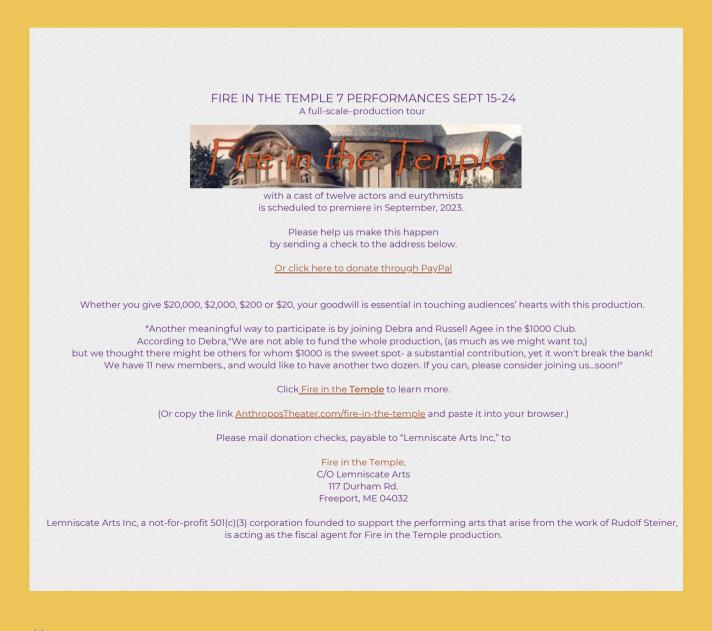
Ana will be the facilitator of each meeting. There will also be options for others to share their knowledge with the group.

Anyone needing Somatic Experiencing group credits will be considered for select meetings only.

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