Educational opportunities which allow for some understanding of the importance and functioning of small groups have been until very recently, conspicuously absent in psychiatric training. Since 1965, the department of psychiatry at Yale has conducted a formal group training program in which residents experience and study the behavior of groups. Prior to this a number of faculty members participated in such sessions and also in residential group relations conferences conducted jointly by the Tavistock Institute of London, the Washington School of Psychiatry, and Yale's department of psychiatry. More recently several faculty members have participated in conferences sponsored by the National Training Laboratories. In general, students and faculty found such training stimulating and useful.

The importance of knowledge about groups is quite obvious. Man is a social animal. He has inherited the capacity and propensity for social behavior from his primate ancestors and has learned group behavior during the long process of education in family and peer groups. To be a committed member of several groups and at the same time assert one's own individuality is a basic dilemma of the human condition.

During the 20th century living in groups has become more complex. The population increase, crowding in cities, greater mobility of migrating groups, and the creation of huge technocracies have contributed to this complexity. More than ever we need to understand the psychology of groups and intergroup behavior.

In psychiatry, knowledge of group relations has become important for both diagnosis and therapy. The observation of individuals in groups teaches us much about their adaptive or nonadaptive functioning. Obviously group therapy must be based on a solid knowledge of group relations. It is less appreciated that psychiatric therapy in institutional and community settings also requires fundamental and practical knowledge of groups and the transactions between such groups as patients, their families and peers, and the different groups of mental health workers.

Theoretical and practical knowledge about groups is derived from a great variety of sources. First there are the contributions of social psychology, sociology, and anthropology (Cartwright and Zander, 1953; Etzioni, 1961; Gaster, 1959; Katz and Kahn,