

THE
TAVISTOCK
INSTITUTE
OF HUMAN
RELATIONS


LITHUANIAN GROUP
RELATIONS SOCIETY



Vilnius
University

invite you to attend

Exploring Capacity to Feel and Think in Role:

Leadership, Authority, Organization

17th – 21st August 2026

The 15th International Group Relations
Conference in Lithuania

A face to face working conference based on the Tavistock experiential learning methodology

Introduction to the theme



We are experiencing significant social upheaval, with rapid change and widespread existential anxiety. Those in power divide the world into competing spheres of influence, and former allies are now rivals. The world order established after the great wars is faltering, driven by greed and fear of losing control. At the same time, we sense a cyclical nature in history and unresolved collective trauma, as today's events resonate with past experiences.

Organisations and societies are dominated by complexity and paradox. Artificial intelligence and technology advance faster than the structures that govern them. We crave connection and visibility but fear privacy violations. We seek for autonomy and individuality but also long for belonging to a group, community, or organisation. Stability is desired, yet constant change creates anxiety. We seek recognition but dread criticism and humiliation. We crave solidarity, yet fear losing privileges. While we want strong leadership for direction and security, we are also wary of authoritarianism and over-dependence on individuals or ideologies.

How can we understand what happens to people in groups when anxiety is high, and survival seems threatened? How can we think and act when pressure and tension are felt everywhere – globally and locally, shaped by both past and uncertainty of the future? How do leadership and authority connect people so that they can respond to existential challenges?

This experiential event, *Exploring Capacity to Feel and Think in Role: Leadership, Authority, Organisation*, provides a space to explore how authority, role, and leadership are taken up, shared, and challenged. It is a unique opportunity to learn how anxiety, experienced in different roles, can become an object of thought rather than unconscious action. This is not a traditional conference, but an immersive leadership learning environment where, in real time, we see how power, trust, and resistance operate within organisations and systems, and how invisible, unacknowledged processes influence our capacity to feel and think under strain.

We invite you on this journey of personal, deep, and practical learning, which strengthens systemic thinking, develops the ability to think under pressure, recognises projections, exercises authority without the illusion of omnipotence, and remains in role in the face of attack or idealisation.

Who is this conference for?

This conference is designed for those who wish to explore groups and system dynamics through direct experience and are curious about the dynamics of leadership, authority, and role. Members from a wide range of fields – including organizational consulting, education, government, healthcare, social support, community activism, law, the arts, technology, psychotherapy, human resources, leadership, and management – have found group relations conferences to provide valuable learning.

The programme attracts participants from diverse work settings and roles, including leaders, managers, consultants, educators, therapists, researchers, administrators, and other professional and technical workers.

What will you gain from this conference?

You will have opportunities to learn how to:

- manage yourself in the multiple roles necessary to successfully perform in contemporary organisations where greater inter-personal and inter-organisational dialogue and cooperation is called for;
- find and take up authority. Taking up authority involves risk, and putting one's authority into action involves recognizing not only one's responsibility but also one's accountability to another, or a group of others;
- support a new generation of skilful leaders and managers who will develop vision and foster creativity in changing organisational and social worlds;
- take up formal and informal leadership and followership roles as you explore group, institutional, communal and national dynamics as they happen.

The aims of the programme, therefore, are to help you:

- bring together understanding of both the conscious and the unconscious, along with the hidden motivations and resistances of work and social groups as they engage collaboratively and competitively with one another;
- become more effective in working with the underlying dynamics within and between organisations, communities and the wider society;
- apply the roles discovered and taken up within the conference to your own organisations, communities and networks.

With these aims in mind, **THE PRIMARY TASK** of the conference is to

study the exercise of leadership and authority in the taking up of roles, through the interpersonal, intergroup and institutional relations as they develop within the conference, as a temporary organization in its wider context.

The method

This conference is based on the theoretical perspectives and methods of group relations as developed in the Tavistock 'Leicester' working conferences on Leadership, Authority, Role and the Organization.

The conference programme is designed to provide opportunities for leadership learning. By **examining, interpreting, reflecting and making sense** of experiences in the programme events, participants will develop clearer understandings of their own organisations and their roles within them.

The programme offers the participants opportunities to use their imagination to explore how **they are taking up leadership roles and reacting to the leadership of others**.

The programme focuses on **culture, structure and task**, and the need for understanding the **roles** of participants as they relate collaboratively and competitively with each other. Such understanding involves disciplined attention to one's own **experience**, openness to the experience of others, tolerance of **uncertainty**, readiness to **interpret** what is happening, and courage to **test one's interpretations** through communication and action. This includes being alert to both **conscious** and **unconscious** aspects of behaviour and the ways in which behaviour is shaped by the broader social, political and economic **contexts** in which we work and live.

The method of learning is **experiential** – as participant you will be invited to study your own and others collaborative and competitive behaviour as it happens in the different events. **Consultancy** is always available in the programme events.

The focus of learning is based on examining the **'here and now'** of group and institutional behaviour. You will be invited and challenged to take up your own **authority** to accept what proves to be useful **learning** and reject what is not. Through this process you will be able to reconsider the way that you gain or lose **power** and exercise **authority** in your organisations.

Consultancy Learning Group

The conference design includes a Consultancy Learning Group (CLG). Participants of the CLG will have an opportunity to strengthen their ability to exercise their authority and build up their consulting expertise by taking up different roles within the conference. Members of the CLG will be invited to learn from these experiences and make links with their external roles outside the Conference. The CLG is not intended primarily as a training to take up consulting roles in group relations conferences, but as an opportunity to deepen learning about consultancy through the group relations model which can be applied beyond the conference membership role.

The CLG is open to those who have been members of at least two group relations conferences and are interested in developing this type of learning, exploring roles requiring a consultative stance and applying these insights to their professional lives. The consultancy learning group has its own separate timetable, which combines experience with time for reflection. **The number of places in the CLG is limited.**

Conference Staff

Participants will be working with a staff group that is invited by the Conference Director on behalf of the sponsoring organisations of the Conference.

The Conference Director, Associate Director and Director of Consultancy Learning Group, in addition to their consultancy roles, together with the Conference Administrators, constitute the **Conference Directorate**.

Director:

Jolita Buzaitytė-Kašalynienė, PhD, Associate professor of Sociology and Social Work Institute, Vilnius University. Co-founder and board member, Lithuanian Group Relations Society. Associate of oezpa Akademie & Consulting (Germany) and professional partner of Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. Board member, European Association of Social Work Research. Representative of Vydūnas Youth Foundation (Chicago).

Associate Director:

Kasparas Laureckis, MA, Social Work at Vilnius University. Head of the programs at NGO Vilnius social club. Group psychotherapist in private practice. Group Analyst in training, Vilnius University. Board member of Lithuanian Social Street Work Association and Lithuanian Group Relations Society. Member of Lithuanian Group Analytic Society.

Director of Consultancy Learning Group:

Leila Djemal, M.A., Organization Development Consultant and Executive Coach; Founding past Co-Director and Instructor, Touch OFEK Professional Development; Graduate, William Alanson White Psychoanalytic Institute Program in Systems Psychodynamics, New York; Associate, A.K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems; Board Member, PCCA - Partners in Confronting Collective Atrocities, Member; OPUS - Organisation for the Promotion of Understanding in Society; Member and past Board Member, OFEK - Association for the Study of Group and Organizational Processes.

Administrators:

Agnė Mažvilaitė, EMBA, Vilnius University and ISM University of Management and Economics. Executive management experience across the business, non-governmental, and public sectors. Organizational consultant in training in a post-diploma studies program at Vilnius University and the Lithuanian Group Analytic Society. Member of Lithuanian Group Relations Society.

Aliona Pankova has a bachelor's and master's degree in real estate, but has been building professional experience in the field of HR administration, where they have been working for eight years. Currently holds a managerial position in an international team, responsible for human resource management, process coordination, and fostering collaboration between teams. Is a member of the Lithuanian Group Relations Society and is actively interested in organizational dynamics and interpersonal relationships within organizations.

Consultants:

Anna Frank, Psychologist, Diploma University of Heidelberg; trained as psychoanalyst and group analyst, Member of the German Society for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy DGPT; trained as organizational consultant and coach, Member of the German Society for Coaching and Supervision DGSv; She works as psychoanalyst in her private practice and as training-supervisor in post-graduate Psychotherapy Programs; She has directed a number of residential Group Relations Conferences in Germany and was member of the staff in several conferences abroad.

Jurgita Gaukštė, MSc in Business Management, is an organisational consultant working with leadership and organisational culture. She is President and Chair of the Board of the Lithuanian Group Relations Society. She works as a coach at INSEAD's Personal Leadership Development Programme in Singapore. She is an alumna of the postgraduate programme in organisational psychodynamics at Vilnius University, Institute of Clinical Medicine.

Matthew Gieve MSc, MBPsS – Independent Researcher and Consultant; Associate, The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, UK. Matthew has over 17 years' experience as a social researcher and consultant, working across fields including family separation, mental health, children's social care, organisational wellbeing, and climate policy. Drawing on his background in psychology and psychoanalytic theory, he has increasingly focused on group and organisational dynamics, including through teaching in organisational development and leadership and supporting reflective practice with complex clinical teams.

Artur Krupa is a consultant, family and couple's therapist, and psychodramatist with a background in psychology and management. Since 2011, he has served in Polish and international Group Relations Conferences as a consultant, co-director, and co-organizer. His areas of interest and specialization include group dynamics, leadership, and accompanying individuals and groups through processes of change. He works with organisations and teams to support learning, development, and thoughtful engagement with change.

Martijn van der Spek MA, General Social Sciences, BSc. Health Psychology; assistant professor, senior organisational consultant, program leader executive programmes Inside Dynamics in Organisations. Theory and Practice of Working with Hidden Processes in Organisations at Utrecht University School of Governance, Netherlands; international Group Relations practitioner; professional partnership with Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, UK; associate consultant Tavistock Consulting; UK; member International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organisations (ISPSO).

The Role of Staff

Staff have specific roles in the conference:

1.

They **act collectively as management**. Collective management takes responsibility and authority to provide the boundary conditions – task, territory and time – in a way that all participants in the Conference, members and staff, can engage with the primary task of the Conference.

2.

They work in their consultancy roles to the various events, informed by their own experiences of the events and the primary task of the event and the Conference overall. The staff will **offer working hypotheses** based on their understanding of what is happening.

3.

Staff members are not only observers of the process but are actively involved in it. It is important, therefore, for staff to be as **explicit as possible about their task and roles** throughout the Conference. The way they take up these roles is always open to examination.

Working Language: The working language of the conference is **English**. However, where all members of a group are Lithuanian or of some other nationality, their native tongue may be the language of usage in that group.

When is the Conference? Where? How much?

Time:

The conference will begin at 9 AM on Monday, 17th of August 2026 and end at 5 PM on Friday 21st of August 2026.

Place:

The conference will be held at Vilnius University, Faculty of Philosophy, Universiteto St. 9, Vilnius.

Fees:

The conference fee is **850 EUR**. Additional fee for participation in the Consultancy Learning Group is 110 EUR.

Discounts:

(i) There is a reduced fee of **610 EUR** for public and NGO sector workers in Lithuania.

(ii) In addition, there is an **early bird discount of 80 EUR** for all applications received by **7th of June, 2026**.

(i) A limited number of partial bursaries will be available to support participants who require financial assistance. Applications for partial bursaries will be accepted until **7th of June, 2026**. To apply, please complete the designated field in the registration form.

Cancellation Policy:

Cancellation on or before 1st of August, 2026: 75% of payment will be returned.

Cancellation after 1st of August, 2026: 25% of payment will be returned.

Early booking is advised as the number of places is limited and not guaranteed.

Closing Date for Applications: 26th of July 2026 or earlier if the Conference is full.

Payment can be made by bank transfer. Further administrative details will be provided upon completion of the registration process.

How do I apply and reserve my place?

To register, please complete this online form, and we will contact you

REGISTRATION

Registration will be confirmed once the participants fee has been paid.

Participation in the Consultancy Learning Group will be confirmed by the CLG Director based on the applicant's experience and motivation.

For further information or any questions, please contact the Conference Administrators by email grupiusantykiai@gmail.com

Other Administrative Details

Meals:

Coffee and snacks will be provided in the morning and afternoon. Meals will not be provided.

Attendance:

As the conference programme is an integrated whole and its events are all interrelated, participation in all the sessions is strongly recommended. If you know in advance you will be unable to attend all events, we suggest deferring your application to next year.

It is important to note that, while experiential learning at this conference can be enriching, it may also be stressful at times. Therefore, individuals who are unwell or facing significant personal difficulties may wish to postpone their attendance.

The conference is non-residential. Participants from other cities or countries are advised to arrange accommodation at nearby hotels.

Certificate:

Participants will be issued a certificate of professional development attendance by Vilnius University.

Sponsoring organisations

Lithuanian Group Relations Society

The **Lithuanian Group Relations Society**, established in 2017, is an association whose mission is to develop experiential learning in groups, organizations and communities. The Society applies a group relations “learning from experience” methodology from a psychodynamic systemic perspective. The Society aims to foster a culture of open and reflective dialogue and productive collaboration between representatives of private, public, and non-governmental sectors for the purpose of enhancing leadership and empowering meaningful action.

For more information click [HERE](#)

The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations

The **Tavistock Institute of Human Relations**, first registered as a charity in London in 1947, is a non-profit consultancy, research, and professional development organization dedicated to applying social science to contemporary issues and problems. The Institute engages in evaluation and action research, organizational and change consultation, and executive coaching and professional development, all aimed to support sustainable change and ongoing learning. The work of the Tavistock Institute, developed in many countries, is recognized for innovation and for working across boundaries in difficult situations. The Tavistock Institute combines research and analytical skills with practical help in devising solutions and following through to implementation. It is particularly known for its capacity to address issues that are otherwise hidden, and sometimes unconscious. The Tavistock Institute has been a sponsoring organization of Vilnius Group Relations Conferences and Lithuanian Group Relations Society since their inception.

For more information click [HERE](#)

Vilnius University, Department of Social Work and Social Welfare

Vilnius University houses one of the first schools of social work in Lithuania. The Department of Social Work began operating in 1992, and initiated the process of institutionalizing the social work profession, which had not existed during the Soviet regime. In 2018 the Department of Social Work and Social Welfare was established to further define the mission and scope of the profession. The Department offers master’s and bachelor’s study programmes in social work and provides in-service training.

The Department takes an active role in the discourse of social work as an academic discipline. This includes researching the profession's field, practice, identity, and status. The Department organizes scientific events on social work leadership, social innovations, the ecology of social work, and other national and global issues. It publishes in the scientific journal STEPP, participates in shaping social policies, provides consultation as experts and evaluators of policy measures, and testify on the legal basis for social work.

For more information click [HERE](#)

