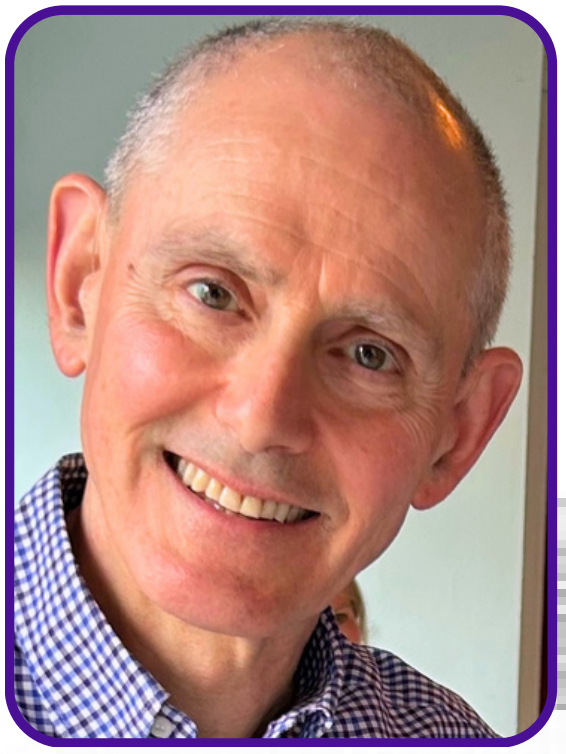

Nashville Group
Psychotherapy Society

NGPS Fall 2026 Conference

On the Capacity to Be Used: Psychoanalytic Companioning, Survival and Transformation in Individual and Group Treatment

Presented by:

Dr. Robert Grossmark, Ph.D., ABPP

6 APA-Approved Continuing Education Units

In his paper "The Use of an Object and Relating Through Identifications," Winnicott famously stated: "To use an object the subject must have developed a capacity to use objects." In this presentation, Grossmark suggests that in order to help patients who have suffered early developmental trauma make use of individual and group treatment, the therapist must *develop the capacity to be used*. Grossmark leans on Winnicott and others to reflect on the deep transformational processes that can unfold when the patient and group are companioned and known in their primary agonies and unrepresented states.

Unmetabolized developmental trauma does not initially find form in symbolization, but rather manifests in the action of mutual enactment. Thus, rather than view enactment as an impediment to the therapeutic process, Grossmark embraces it as the most profound non-symbolized expression of inner pain and agony. These points will be illustrated with case material that represents how that very pain and fear can be transformed when known and survived in mutual enactment, in both group and individual treatment. This work makes great demands on both therapist and patients, and the case material captures the struggles inherent for all parties, along with the significant psychological transformations that can emerge.

The presentation will include a case presentation, didactic instruction, and a demonstration group.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to define psychological trauma
2. Participants will be able to differentiate organic and developmental destructiveness from aggression
3. Participants will be able to companion moments of disruption in treatment
4. Participants will be able to discern mutual enactment in individual and in group treatment
5. Participants will be able to describe the value of companioning the flow of mutual enactment
6. Participants will be able to hold and think about inner states of disruption that occur when engaged in enactments of early trauma

Date: November 7, 2026 **Time:** 9:00am to 5:15pm **Location:** Junior League of Nashville

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Schedule

9:00 -10:00 a.m.	**Introductions & Didactic Instruction**
10:00–11:00 a.m.	**Demonstration Group**
11:00–11:15 a.m.	**Break**
11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m.	**Demonstration Group Q&A**
12:15–1:45 p.m.	**Lunch [on your own]**
1:45–2:30 p.m.	**Didactic Instruction**
2:30–3:45 p.m.	**Demonstration Group**
3:45–4:00 p.m.	**Break**
4:00–5:00 p.m.	**Demonstration Group Q&A**
5:00–5:15 p.m.	**Wrap-up**

6.00 APA-approved continuing education units will be available for purchase for an additional $39.99 at the event.

Date: November 7, 2026 **Time:** 9:00am to 5:15pm **Location:** Junior League of Nashville