This second edition is revised and expanded from the first edition of Groups That Work: Structure and Process, published in 1988. Over the past decade, we have been teaching, writing, and practicing group work in a variety of social work venues. Our thinking and reflection prompted us to expand our work on leadership, increase the number of cases with analyses, and rework material on boards of directors and on teams. We added detailed profiles of five distinctive group cultures and expanded the organic metaphor regarding organizations to consider them as interactional and transactional associations of small groups.

In the beginning of the twenty-first century and for the foreseeable future, our vision is that the small group in large and small organizations and neighborhoods can be a focal point that revitalizes democratic principles in various combinations of instrumental and interpersonal influences. In this regard, we note the contributions of the Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups in reviving the importance—indeed, the primacy—of the small group in social work.

Much has changed since the first edition. What has changed is not so much the nature of groups but rather our understanding of them, of the organizations that are composed of ecologies of small groups, and the world in which these groups and organizations live.

We acknowledge the supportive atmosphere set by Dean Jesse J. Harris of the University of Maryland School of Social Work for his effective leadership and unchanging civility at a time when both are in short supply in many organizations. We thank John S. Glaser, an excellent social worker and community activist, for his insight into small groups and processes in organization. Joan C. Weiss contributed cogent observations about the increasing power within organizations of information technology and of people skilled in its
use. Raymie Wayne contributed a case study of leadership that lets us shine some light on the relationship between a staff person and the indigenous leadership within a group.

Our special thanks to Gwen Young for keyboarding the text and numerous revisions with her usual skill and good humor.

A privilege we shared was to experience teachers who cared deeply both about groups and about their students. There were too many to mention them all, but we refer especially to the late Saul Bernstein, Herbert Thelen, and Mary Louis Somers. What’s useful about this new edition is the result of the foundation we got from them, other teachers, colleagues, our students, and the groups in which we have worked.

As in the first edition, the authors share equal responsibility for the words and ideas in this text, an experience that will be remembered with a smile.
GROUPS THAT WORK