

Chapter Key People

CHAPTER 1

Group Work: An Introduction

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Chapter Key Terms

CHAPTER 1

Group Work: An Introduction

Closed groups
Counseling groups
Encounter groups
Group goals
Guidance/Psychoeducational groups
Heterogeneous or mixed-gender group composition
Homogeneous or same-gender group composition
Marathon groups
Open groups
Psychodrama groups
Psychotherapy groups
Self-Help groups
Sensitivity groups
Social microcosm
Task/Work groups
T-groups
Therapeutic factors in groups

Chapter Summaries

CHAPTER 1

Group Work: An Introduction

Group counseling has its roots in the early 1900s, when it was applied in medical settings and with children, adults, and families. The first “laboratory” group, or T-group, emerged in 1947, and groups later were conducted in university and other settings. Interest in group work has increased dramatically over time, illustrated by the recent flood of self-help groups led by either professionals or lay people.

Among the goals for groups are to facilitate the release of feelings, to strengthen members’ self-esteem, to help members face and resolve their problems, to help them learn how to recognize and solve interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts, and to facilitate their maintenance of therapeutic gains. Group goals can be addressed in a number of ways: (a) general goals for groups, (b) goals for specialized groups, (c) goals based on theoretical perspectives, and (d) goals developed by individual members.

Distinctions can be made between group therapy (more likely to be longer term and have a therapeutic emphasis), group counseling (having a focus on conscious problems and an orientation toward short-term issues), and group guidance (in which the leader presents information or conducts mental health education to a larger group). Specialized types of group experiences include sensitivity groups, psychodrama groups, marathon groups, and task groups, among others. Based on the ASGW’s definitions, groups can be classified into four primary categories: task/work groups, guidance/psychoeducational groups, counseling groups, and psychotherapy groups. All of these types of groups can be either heterogeneous (mixed gender) or homogeneous (same

gender) and can be closed (members stay together until the group is terminated) or open (new members are added as others leave).

Therapeutic factors in a group include acceptance, altruism, universalization, intellectualization, reality testing, transference, interaction, spectator therapy, and ventilation. Translated into leader qualities, these factors entail presence, personal power, courage, self-awareness, belief in group process, inventiveness, stamina and energy, goodwill and caring, openness, becoming aware of one's own culture and that of group members, nondefensiveness in coping with attacks, sense of humor, and personal dedication and commitment. Numerous myths commonly connected to group work, by group leaders and others, can actually detract from group effectiveness. Among these misconceptions are that everyone benefits from group experience, groups always have advantageous outcomes, the group revolves around the leader's charisma, group members should be limited to discussion of here-and-now experiences, and dysfunctional people are the only ones who can benefit from groups. Groups can be either powerful and growth enhancing or stifling and hindering. The more a leader is aware of the goals, purposes, and dynamics of groups, the better equipped he or she will be to provide an optimal experience for group members.

Chapter URLs

CHAPTER 1

Group Work: An Introduction

American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

<http://www.counseling.org/>

American Group Psychotherapy Association

<http://www.groupsinc.org/>

American Psychoanalytic Association

<http://apsa.org/>

American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama (ASGPP)

<http://www.asgpp.org/>

Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
(CACREP)

<http://www.cacrep.org/>

Association for Specialists in Group Work

Professional Training Standards

www.asgw.org/PDF/training_standards.pdf

Best Practices Guidelines

www.asgw.org/PDF/best_Practices.pdf

Principles for Diversity Competent Group Workers

www.asgw.org/PDF/Principles_for_Diversity.pdf

Test Your Knowledge

CHAPTER 1

Group Work: An Introduction

1. T F Many of the problems that bring clients to counseling are interpersonally based.
2. T F Group counseling does not fit well into the current emphasis on managed care.
3. T F It is hypothesized that there will be a lesser need for group counseling in the 21st century.
4. T F Joseph Hersey Pratt uttered the famous line: "By the crowd they have been broken; by the crowd they shall be healed."
5. T F Betty Gabriel was the first American to use groups with adolescents.
6. T F Many of the leaders of the American group work movement gained their experience in military hospitals during the 1940s and the aftermath of WWII.
7. T F Kurt Lewin emphasized field theory and the interaction between individuals and their environments.
8. T F The 1920s were characterized by the application of group procedures to family counseling.
9. T F The institution responsible for determining and evaluating specific group work specialist preparation guidelines for the graduate-level university educator is the Council for the Accountability of Counseling and Special Educational Programs (CACSEP).
10. T F The use of groups has expanded to virtually all settings connected with counseling and therapy, as well as to schools, hospitals, and corporate environments.
11. T F Process goals have to do with establishing a psychological environment within the context of a group that is conducive to supporting members as they work toward their personal goals.
12. T F Counselors who lead Task/Work groups are involved in the process of improving group function and performance.
13. T F Participants in T-groups learn to understand themselves and others better

and to develop the skills of collaboration.

14. T F Content goals relate to teaching members appropriate methods of sharing their own concerns and providing feedback to others in the group.
15. T F A closed group is characterized by having members who remain together until the group terminates. In an open group, new members are added during the life cycle of the group.
16. T F A homogeneous group is composed of members who are dealing with issues concerning homosexuality.
17. T F A therapeutic factor in a group is an element occurring in group therapy that contributes to improvement in a patient's condition and is a function of the actions of a group therapist, the patient, or fellow group members.
18. T F Self-help groups are rarely utilized as adjunct support for individual or group counseling because of the lack of professional standards.
19. T F Stamina, energy, goodwill, and caring are among the personal characteristics of effective group leaders.
20. T F To benefit from a group, a member has to be dysfunctional.

Chapter 1 Answers

1 T, 2 F, 3 F, 4 F, 5 T, 6 T, 7 T, 8 F, 9 F, 10 T, 11 F, 12 T, 13 T, 14 F, 15 T, 16 F, 17 T, 18 F, 19 T, 20 F