

Chapter Key People

CHAPTER 11

Psychotherapy Groups

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Chapter Key Terms

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Adlerian modality
Atmosphere of respect
Authenticity
Class method for treatment
Cognitive/Behavioral psychotherapy
Core competencies
Cyber-counseling
Diagnostic foundation
Employee Assistant Programs (EAPs)
Faith
Gestalt psychotherapies
Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs)
Humanistic modality
Knowledge competencies
Leadership variables
Managed Mental Health Care (MMHCs)
Managed care
Model-setting participant
Pharmacotherapy
Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs)
Reorientation
Skill competencies
Technical expert
Therapeutic environment
Training standards for group counselors
Transactional analytical
Transference
Up-coding

Chapter Summaries

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Mental health professionals have historically used the terms group therapy, group counseling, and group psychotherapy interchangeably. This has led to a modicum of confusion as to exactly what group psychotherapy entails. We have delineated three major differences between psychotherapy groups and other group forms: (1) psychotherapy groups require a diagnostic basis for the foundation of the group, (2) transference is more likely to occur in group psychotherapy, and (3) group psychotherapy requires actual change in group members. Although these foundations may occur in other forms of group work, they are most likely to occur during group psychotherapy.

The process of a psychotherapeutic group can be significantly impacted by its group leader. We have outlined five personal characteristics of effective group leaders: Group leaders should (1) possess a strong level of self-awareness, (2) be willing to engage in self-confrontation, (3) display authenticity, (4) employ self-care, and (5) have faith in group process. A group psychotherapist should be well aware of where he or she stands on these characteristics, as personal failings may result in the reduction of group efficacy.

The role of an effective group leader also involves creating a suitable environment that will facilitate member growth and change. The four components of effective group environments include (1) safety, (2) suitable rules and norms, (3) an atmosphere of respect, and (4) allowance for confrontation. Without a suitable group environment, member growth and change is unlikely to occur.

A final aspect of leadership variables is a group psychotherapist's inclusion of such technical knowledge as theories, group selection, interventions, and leadership style into his or her personal characteristics as well as the ability to create a suitable group environment. Without proper utilization of technical knowledge, a group psychotherapist will likely experience a myriad of difficulties in every spectrum of group work and thus severely inhibit overall efficacy.

At the dawn of the 21st century, the psychotherapy group leader is faced with a mixed bag of forces that will both inhibit and enable various aspects of group work. Managed care legislation has enabled even greater proliferation of group psychotherapy but has also increased a number of ethical concerns. These concerns include (but are not limited to) limits on treatment type and length, greater threats to confidentiality, difficulty in obtaining needed treatment, and contradictions between managed care guidelines and professional ethical guidelines.

Computers and the internet also hold positive and negative aspects for the group professional. Interactive computer programs have allowed students of group methods greater access to a wide array of training methods and research. Online or cyber-counseling has enabled individuals to tap previously unobtainable resources. Naturally, this type of psychotherapy is fraught with ethical dangers. There is currently no efficient way for consumers to verify the credentials of online group professionals or for legislators to regulate this growing modality. It is hoped that with new legislation and professional attention, online psychotherapy will reach the same levels of professionalism and efficacy experienced in today's face-to-face work.

Chapter URLs

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Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES)

<http://www.acesonline.net/>

Behavior Online

<http://www.behavior.net/>

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

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

Group Psychotherapy

<http://www.group-psychotherapy.com/>

National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC)

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

National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) code of webethics

<http://www.nbcc.org/AssetManagerFiles/ethics/internetCounseling.pdf>

AGPA Consumer guide

<http://www.agpa.org/group/consumersguide2000.html>

Illinois Behavioral Health Recovery Management Project-Care systems

<http://www.bhrm.org/guidelines/psychopharmacology.pdf>

Test Your Knowledge

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1. T F Although the term group therapy may include such group procedures as psychotherapy, it may also include such activities as physical therapy, recreational therapy, psychoeducational activities, and counseling.
2. T F Group psychotherapy may be looked upon as a specialized type of group therapy.
3. T F Psychotherapy in its most pure form does not demand a diagnostic basis for the foundation of the group.
4. T F The psychotherapeutic group deals with issues relating to transitional events and issues relating to specific problems.
5. T F One therapeutic benefit of the psychotherapy group is that the group can become symbolic of a group member's family of origin and can even become a microcosm of society itself.
6. T F The ultimate goal of a psychotherapy group is to influence change in the group members.
7. T F Although the psychoanalytic, humanistic, Adlerian, transactional analysis, cognitive-behavioral, and Gestalt psychotherapies were developed to be used with individuals, they are used in group settings with a variety of issues.
8. T F The goal of humanistic psychotherapy is to aid clients in attaining congruence and bring their lives in line with their self-actualizing goals.
9. T F Effective psychotherapy group leaders have specific personal characteristics that are used to further the group process.
10. T F An effective leader is aware of all the facets of his or her personality, values, and beliefs and uses his or her interpersonal style to enhance group process.
11. T F It is not necessary for a psychotherapy group leader to be in touch with his or her own emotions in order to successfully lead a group therapy experience.

12. T F One of the least important individual traits of the group leader is the level of personal faith in and enthusiasm for the group process that he or she has.
13. T F It is essential that the group leader interject his or her personal style in whatever theory he or she uses.
14. T F When selecting members for a psychotherapy group, each potential member's limitations and growth potential must be carefully determined and weighed in order to provide the best possible composition for therapeutic gain.
15. T F In the role of the model-setting participant, a leader will impart knowledge of the psychological process, ask probing questions, and use specific therapeutic techniques.
16. T F The stated goals of Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) are to monitor, control, and contain the costs of medical and mental health services while maintaining the quality of care.
17. T F Because managed care is so well maintained and structured, there are very few ethical considerations or concerns regarding this form of care.
18. T F Pharmacotherapy or drug therapy has seen a substantial decrease under managed care.
19. T F The National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) defines internet counseling as, "the practice of professional counseling and information delivery that occurs when clients and counselors are in separate or remote locations and utilize electronic means to communicate over the Internet."
20. T F Group psychotherapy is currently being practiced on the internet through chat rooms, bulletin boards, and/or e-mail.

Chapter 11 Answers

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