CHAPTER 6

Approaches to Evaluating Groups

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Chapter Key Terms

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Group evaluation
Outcomes
Planned evaluation
Quantitative
Qualitative measures
Formative evaluation
Summative evaluation
Measures of symptom reduction
Beck Depression Inventory
Group process and therapeutic factors
Group Sessions Rating Scale
Therapeutic Factors Inventory (TFI)
Group Counseling Helpful Impacts Scale
Measures of leadership
Group Psychotherapy Rating Scale
Measures of goal attainment
Groupwork Engagement Measure
Client satisfaction
Skill building
Qualitative feedback
Retrospective surveys
Group process development
Interpersonal Process Recall method
State Trait Anxiety Inventory
Categories of Good Moments
Corey and Corey's group leadership measure
Elliot's taxonomy of helpful impacts

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Group counselors evaluate their groups to determine whether group goals and objectives, including those of individual participants, have been met. Group counselors need to know whether their groups are effective at helping clients achieve their goals and how a group can be improved. It is also important to know whether the group was implemented as planned, because this affects its outcomes. Thus, evaluation helps group leaders determine the success of their groups. Certainly, success or effectiveness can have many definitions (e.g., skill development, symptom reduction, insight) but once group leaders define these goals, they have many ways to evaluate the degree to which the goals have been achieved.

The use of formal evaluation procedures and measurement instruments helps group leaders to systematically organize, categorize, and review information on group process and outcomes. Evaluation helps answer important questions about the degree to which these goals have been met as well as associated questions concerning the quality of the group process and the efficacy of various interventions.

Using evaluation helps leaders and participants focus on the development of effective group processes and work toward their individual and collective goals. Group counselors receive feedback that can be used to improve their leadership skills. Engaging in evaluation prompts group leaders and participants to consider how they will define success and what evidence they will gather to measure whether they have achieved their goals. At termination, evaluation information can be used to make decisions about

continuing a specific group, making changes to improve it, or deciding that it is best to serve clients in some other way.

Formative evaluation is done to gather ongoing feedback as the group evolves for improving and refining the group to improve outcomes. Summative evaluation's purpose is to determine whether a group has met its goals and should be continued. Group leaders should also consider methods of evaluating whether the group was implemented and conducted as planned.

The process of evaluating a group may involve measuring numerous variables, including measures of: symptom reduction, skill development and behavior change, group process and therapeutic factors, leadership, goal attainment, and client satisfaction.

Evaluating group work can contribute to improving both the quality and efficiency of interventions. The literature on group research and evaluation provides models for planning evaluations. Ideally, evaluation is taken into consideration at the planning stage of the group when leaders consider their questions about group process and outcomes. Case studies of evaluations done for a psychoeducational group and a training group demonstrated the use of evaluation as applied to group work. A group evaluation planning sheet to help leaders plan for quality evaluations was introduced and its use demonstrated.

Chapter URLs

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Qualitative Methods Workbook
http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/qualmeth.html

Qualpage has useful information of Qualitative research
http://www.qualitativeresearch.uga.edu/QualPage/

Association for Assessment in Counseling and Education
http://aac.ncat.edu/

National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST)
http://www.cse.ucla.edu/

Test Your Knowledge

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1.   T   F   Evaluation creates an educational process in which results can improve a counselor's effectiveness by providing constructive and corrective feedback that supports good practice and minimizes poor work.

2.   T   F   Even group leaders who do not use formal evaluation are drawing informal conclusions about their group's efficacy in meeting its goals.

3.   T   F   Quantitative methods can track group process, identify themes raised by participants, and note member reactions to critical group events.

4.   T   F   Qualitative evaluation methods are those that emphasize observation and description over objective measurement.

5.   T   F   Formative evaluation is done to gather ongoing feedback as the group evolves for improving and refining the group to improve outcomes.

6.   T   F   Evaluating leadership behavior is one of the measures that would be appropriate for evaluating group work.

7.   T   F   The Group Sessions Rating Scale (GSRS) was found to be effective in the measurement of group satisfaction.
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8.   T   F   Common goals listed for teenagers in groups include: enhancing social skills, developing the ability to relate to authority figures, and learning to cope with puberty.

9.   T   F   The use of retrospective surveys decreases limitations based on the idiosyncrasies of an individual's perceptions of the past.

10.   T   F   Interpersonal Process Recall method is used to structure case presentations.

11.   T   F   Comparison groups are important because they help control for the effect of factors other than group participation on results.

12.   T   F   The author provided a group evaluation sheet which included a section on defining the population.

13.   T   F   Evaluation is unnecessary for psychoeducational groups that only seek to empower individuals and build a sense of community.

14.   T   F   In most supervision groups, elements of group process and peer learning are usually attended to in a systematic way.

15.   T   F   It is important for group leaders to keep abreast of the literature pertaining to groups, especially regarding areas of research and evaluation, because this literature provides models for planning evaluations.

16.   T   F   Group process measure that leaders and participants complete include Categories of Good Moments and Elliot's taxonomy of helpful impacts.

17.   T   F   Meaningful and useful evaluation must be formalized and systematic and cannot be simply integrated into the group process itself.

18.   T   F   Quantitative measurement instruments might include client experiential stories.

19.   T   F   Group evaluations can take the form of either quantitative or qualitative assessment measures or a combination of the two.

20.   T   F   Summative evaluations are used to assess outcomes for the purpose of making decisions regarding the groups continuation.

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