

GROUP WORK PROCESS

SUBJECT: SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH GROUPS

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Values of social Group work

The values of social work are rooted in the democratic and humanitarian principles. The inherent value of the human being and his dignity regardless of his status, position and his actions are recognized. Social work believes in equality, justice and freedom. Social challenges structures, institutions and practices which prevent individuals, groups and communities from realizing these goals. Therefore it can be said that human rights values are important part of social work values also. Another important value is the recognition that everyone has the inherent capacity to resolve his or her problems. Thus given the right conditions that person can successfully resolve his problems. The values of social work are codified as professional ethics which is implemented by the professional body. The principles of social work such as principles of acceptance, individualization, self determination, confidentiality, non judgmental attitude and controlled emotional involvement are derived from these values.

Group work values are the same as the generic values of social work. Gisela Konopka describes the three humanistic concerns of group work. They are

1) Individuals are of inherent worth. **(2)** People are mutually responsible for each other; and **(3)** people have the fundamental right to experience mental health brought about by social and political conditions that support their fulfillment. These values find its expression in the practice of group work. Group work emphasis on voluntary participation by the members. Group workers are sometimes do work with involuntary groups due to statutory or agency demands. But that is not the norm. Secondly, the social worker values the decisions made by the group-the principle of self determination. The group members are encouraged by the group workers to participate in the planning and implementation of group activities, even if There are disagreements between the group and the worker regarding the effectiveness of the activity, the worker will not impose her decision on the group. Negotiation and discussion are the means that the worker uses to help the group understand her point of view. Similarly, decisions regarding the group have to be made by the group using democratic methods. Participation by all members is stressed. Everybody has equal right to contribute to the discussions in the group. Fourthly, the group has to maintain the principle of confidentiality-members' opinion and feelings which are shared in the group should be kept confidential and should not be revealed outside the group. However the group worker unlike the caseworker has to depend also on the group members to achieve this aim. Therefore often a confidential clause is attached in the contract. Social workers take special care to ensure that confidentiality working with children who have difficulties in doing that.

Models of Social Group Work

In the initial days, the conventional view for the purpose of group work was prevention, but afterwards group workers were gradually involved in treatment as a primary

GROUP WORK PROCESS

goal. As group workers embarked on practice in a range of settings, they attempted to describe repeated patterns of phenomena and to define practice in the language of science. This led to the development of a wide variety of theoretical models for practicing group work. A model enables the group worker to focus on problems in a holistic manner. What kind of model to be employed in a group today depends on the group goals or objectives or purposes. There are several classical as well as a few contemporary models and we shall discuss here the major models seemingly found in practice. Papell and Rothman (1966) have pioneered three models i.e. the social goals model, the remedial model, and the reciprocal model. These are at the core of social group work tradition.

Social Goals Model: The settlement house movement, the social movement, the labour union movement, and the women's movements of the 1930s in USA are the roots of the social goals model (Sullivan et al., 2003). The central focus of this model is on 'social consciousness' and 'social responsibility'. It helps members of the community to work on solving social issues and bringing about social change for oppressed populations. The model has a strong avowed social values stance. Cohen and Mullender (1999) assert that the social goals model is referred to in recent literature as social action group work. The principles of democratic group process are fundamental to this model. Principles guiding practice involving the social goals model include: clarification of agency policy, positive use of limitations, identification with agency goals, determination of appropriate issues for collective action, and the weighing of alternatives for action and their consequences (Papell and Rothman, 1966).

Remedial Model: The function of the remedial model is the treatment of individuals. It tends to be clinically oriented. The model focuses on those who have problems of adjustment in personal and social relations (Fatout, 1992). A worker undergoes this model while dealing with a group of persons with emotional problem or teaching skills of daily living to a group of mentally handicapped children. The group worker, in this model, is viewed as a change agent who facilitates interaction among members of the group to achieve change. He is in a some-what superior position than the group members whose social skills are impaired or not fully developed. The worker using this model exercises considerable authority, instructs model behaviour for group members, and creates an atmosphere which motivates individual growth. The group participants here are regarded as clients rather than members (Brandler and Roman, 1999). The remedial model is widely used in mental health centers, correctional institutions, family service organizations, counseling services, schools, health care facilities, and in many other agencies.

Reciprocal Model: The reciprocal model has been derived from the systems theory, field theory, social psychological theories of behaviour, and the practice principles that are a part of generic methodology for social work (Skidmore et al., 1988). There is a duality of attention in this model i.e. it serves both the individual and society. In other words, reciprocal model focuses on the major concerns of both social goals model and remedial model at the same time (Fatout, 1992). According to Papell and Rothman (1966), the thrust of this model is to establish a mutual aid system and worker or members do not keep here any preconceived goals. The image of the worker is a mediator or an enabler who is viewed as a part of the worker-client system.

GROUP WORK PROCESS

Treatment Group

Treatment Group: The Treatment Group in SGW practice is: Essential tool in clinical social work setting. It plays an important role to deal with other patients group like - Drug addicted group or in patients' group in health setup etc.

Primary Function or Purpose of Treatment Group: 1. Support, 2. Education, 3. Growth, 4. therapy and 5. Socialisation

Support: Support Group provide support in reference of same problem of other group. Being a support group it help, guide, gives assurance, supervision to other group for solving the problem of whole group.

Education: Treatment group Educate about the problem. It provides information, enhance the knowledge spectrum. It enhances the skills and operation concept for doing the things. Education group act as a vehicle for learning and reinforce for discussion.

Growth: It develops the potential and strength and expands for changing the thinking, opinion and behaviour of the group members. It enhances the power to face challenge, crisis and encounter the situation.

Therapy Group: It provides the therapeutic methods & treatment modalities. According to Kanopka in 1963 has noted the importance of therapy group in connection with Psychiatry in the form of "Group Therapy", Psychotherapy, and other therapy methods in recovering the patients.

Socialisation: This group is conducted in various setting according to Klein 1972 & Gravin 1989. This group is responsible for enhancing the social skills, appropriate social behaviour and social functioning. It helps in fulfillment of personal need, reducing introvert personality concept of group members by creating recreational group

Task Group: Task Group is focus on client needs to solve the problem as soon as possible. The Task group focus on discussion of specific task. In task Group the role are assigned often relating to ability or expertise. The Success is based on accomplishing the task or producing a product. It emphasised on the group meeting, group action with the directive approach.

PRINCIPLES OF GROUP WORK

- 1) The social worker's goal is to enable clients or group members as a whole to move toward greater independence and capacity for help.
- 2) The social worker must use the scientific method to prepare for action fact-finding analysis and diagnosis in relation to the individual, group and the social environment.

GROUP WORK PROCESS

- 3) The social worker must form purposeful relationship. It means a conscious focusing on the needs of the group members and attempts to fulfill them.
- 4) The social worker must use himself consciously. This includes self-knowledge and discipline in relationship but without the loss of warmth and spontaneity.
- 5) The social worker must accept members as they are, without condemning their behaviour. This involves deep understanding of group members as well as knowledge and identification of values regulating human beings.
- 6) The social worker must understand the origins of his own value system and be able to handle it in relation to the value system of others.
- 7) He must allow members to develop their own behaviour without much interference and to choose their own point of departure without imposing outside demands. But the worker has responsibility for stimulating change.

GROUP WORK PROCESS

Introduction

Group work process consists of various stages. Intake, study, objectives, goal setting, intervention strategies and evaluation are part of this process. In intake members are selected according to the benefits they will gain from the group effort. Study phase is where a detailed study about the advantages and disadvantages of the group members are studied for formal intake into the group. Objectives are defined to give a clear idea about how the group must function and for the purpose of evaluation and guidance. Goal setting is where the goal is set and activities, assignment of responsibilities to the members are executed. Intervention strategies are strategies which are used to intervene into the functionality of the group, and on the members of the group. Evaluation is done in a periodical manner to evaluate about the level of achievement of the group as well as of the group members.

Intake

During intake, the presenting concerns and needs of prospective members are identified. Judgments that some or all of these people could benefit from a group approach are made. An agreement is often formulated between the members of the group and the group leader about tentative group goals. This stage may also be referred to as the contract stage, as the leader and the members make a commitment to pursue the situation to the next step.

Study

Study can be also termed as “fact finding” or “gathering of facts or information”. Intake and study are going together. It includes collecting facts about each individual in the group or group as a whole. Here the principle of individualisation is important. That is each individual is unique to the group worker and each group is also unique to the group worker.

Fact finding in social group work is done by means of (1) observation and listening in the group, (2) occasional individual contacts with a group member or with members of his/her family, and (3) home visits and a sound knowledge of the economic and social influences of the neighbourhood and work place from which the individual or his parents come.

Fact finding in social group work, therefore, relates to the understanding of the individual, to his role and his relationships in the group, to the kind of impact the group has on individual, to the individuals' impact on the group, to the whole group atmosphere, to the interpersonal relationships outside of the group, and to the social and economic environment. Without this knowledge group work cannot be effective.

Tools for Fact finding

- ☐ Basic knowledge of Individual & group dynamic behaviour
- ☐ Active listening to the group members
- ☐ Observation, consultation and help from outside
- ☐ Home visit
- ☐ Occasional individual contact

GROUP WORK PROCESS

- Empathy

Objectives

When our objectives are clear, we are helped in the determination of the kind of service or program that the agency should provide, and our conception of the purpose will control the specific emphasis of the program. Naturally, statements of purpose do not constitute a program, nor do they bring programme into reality; but they do help us to know what type of program is most important to us.

Our objectives should be utilised at the point of deciding upon constituency or clientele with whom we work. It is practically impossible to make wise judgments regarding constituency, except in terms of agency objectives. It is equally difficult to develop satisfactory relationships between the agency and the constituency unless there is clarity as to the purpose to which all parties subscribe.

Our statement of objectives provides us with essential guideposts to the kind of leadership we need. This is important from the point of view of both paid personal and unpaid volunteer workers. It will help the agency to outline the kinds of skills needed by all the people who work with agency groups.

Our statement of objective can be utilised continuously in the process of financing the agency, providing plant and equipment, and dealing with all physical matters of operation. It is distinctly necessary to use the agency purpose as a point of reference in budget making because what the agency is trying to accomplish should be the chief motivating factor in the way it allocates its funds.

Our objectives are put to work at the point of evaluation; in fact a major aspect of evaluation process resolves around the matter of purpose. When the agency faces the question of evaluation, it is accomplished by using its stated purpose as the basis upon which it checks out its work. thus, when purpose are clear, individual and group energy can be effectively mobilized and focused; priorities can be determined logically and soundly; programs can be measured; and public support will be sustained.

- ❖ Objectives are tasks you set out to achieve in manageable stages, working towards your aims. Choose objectives that you know you can achieve.
- ❖ Objectives can change - so it's good to have an aim that keeps you going in the same direction.
- ❖ The more precise and defined your objectives are, the easier it is to follow a plan to reach your aim.
- ❖ Once you have set your objectives, you can record your progress. It's possible to evaluate a process which has defined objectives.
- ❖ If you are involved in a project with others, it helps if you have stated your objectives or has them written down. Then you know which objectives you share and which ones cannot be fulfilled in this group.

GROUP WORK PROCESS

Finally, while working as a group, or been accountable to a mentor or a coach can help improve your goal setting, it doesn't take away from the need to be accountable for yourself. At the end of the day, how you work, and how motivated you stay is all dependent upon you. It is up to you to make it happen!

Intervention Strategy

Gestalt Therapy

In gestalt therapy the worker aids the clients in learning how they prevent themselves from maturing. It is the aim of worker to help the client to become aware of and accept responsibility for how they make themselves feel better.

Transactional Analysis

It is a process of analyzing and explaining intra-personal and interpersonal processes. This therapeutic model was developed by Berne. He proposes that personal change can be maximized through group psychotherapy where the social processes are much more varied than just one to one relationships. According to Berne, individuals are products of social processes and they use social processes. Within the group settings individuals can be made aware about their self-defeating behaviour. Once they are aware of their behaviour they can do something for changing it. The group provides a safe environment for practicing new behaviours.

Behavioural Model

According to this model, specific group programmes are implemented to alter dysfunctional patterns and learn new styles. The expertise of Behavioural group therapist is essential in assessing and devising a treatment plan for each individual member within the context of the group. The group worker calculates the specific elements of the disturbing behaviour to be decreased or desired behaviour to be developed. Other group members provide assistance and feedback concerning progress throughout the stages of the treatment process.

Facilitative Intervention

Gentle Interventions

Doing nothing –leaving the group to sort things out for themselves

Using silence –essential for reflection; helpful to restore calm; allows space for thinking and problem solving (we often don't appreciate how much we actually know and silent thinking often releases information from our unconscious mind); can provide an opportunity to explore with individuals or small groups the basis of their fear of silence.

Support –verbal and non-verbal contributions, which support what is happening or what is being said. This empowers individuals and the group and helps integrate you into the group.

GROUP WORK PROCESS

Clarifying –checking what is happening, checking your understanding of contributions, checking acceptability of process.

Persuasive Interventions

Questions to move the group –can be very gentle e.g. “are you ready to go on now?” or more firm “are you ready to go on yet?”

Questions on where next –the move on is assumed and emphasis is on where next e.g. “Ok so where do you want to go now?”

Suggesting choices –this will have a direct impact on what happens next so try not to limit choices unnecessarily.

Suggesting paths –offering various ways the group could proceed if they have lost their way and ask for suggestions.

Sharing your ideas –giving your view is probably more directive than you intend depending on how much power the group has invested in you as the facilitator.

Suggesting action –the most persuasive intervention useful if the group is completely at a loss or if the energy is very low but still offer several options.

Directive Interventions

Guiding the group –by suggesting what you would do in their situation, or do something yourself such as write on the flip chart.

Choosing for the group –you deciding what the group should do next e.g. “I think it would be useful for us to stop at this point and ...”

Directing the group –telling the group what they will do next.

Types of Interventions

Clarifying and Summarizing

Clarifying refers to resolving misunderstanding or incorrect perceptions in what members are saying. Summarizing refers to providing a summary of the major points and accomplishments of a discussion.

Synthesizing and Generalizing

Synthesizing occurs when several points and ideas are put together in a common theme.

GROUP WORK PROCESS

Probing and Questions

When the group needs additional information or needs to explore additional ideas.

Reflecting Feelings

Most messages have two parts: the content and the speaker's feeling, often expressed nonverbally. Reflecting feelings refers to communicating back to the speaker's points of view.

Providing Support, Coaching, and Counselling

Providing support includes encouraging group members to talk and express ideas. The team is encouraged to think about the problem and develop solutions. Coach and counselling may occur in a private meeting with individual, particularly the formal supervisor of the group.

Modelling

Managers have many responsibilities, it is important for group members to learn how to make process interventions. Members should be encouraged to take over the role of process interventions.

Feedback Observations

Feedback to work groups can occur at meetings or to individuals after meetings. There should be no feedback to individuals or groups until they are ready to receive it.

Structural Suggestions

The manager makes structure suggestions about the work group membership, communication patterns, allocation of work, assignment of responsibility, and lines of authority.

Evaluation

Evaluation of individual growth

Group is composed of individuals. They become the member of the group because of certain needs and desires. Therefore, the main objective of social group work is to fulfil these needs and desires in accordance with the prescribed rules and procedures. But how can the worker be able to know the level of fulfilment of their needs without evaluating their growth process. The worker evaluates the presence of each member. He evaluates their level of participation in the group activities. Sometimes it happens that the member because of difficulty in adjusting himself in the group remains usually absent giving one or the other reason. The worker evaluates the growth of skills, methods of problems solving, behaviour techniques or knowledge gained by the member through the group experience.

GROUP WORK PROCESS

Evaluation of the group

Group is the medium for achieving individual's objectives and individual personality development. Therefore, it is essential for a worker to evaluate the effects and growth of group as a whole. The group worker evaluates the group organization, a social responsibility fulfilled by the group, maturity that has achieved, skilfulness, and expertness has developed, the techniques of problem solving have seen learned and mutual understanding and cooperation have developed among group members.

Evaluation of the member's contribution to group

The focus here is on the contribution of the member to the development of the group, not on his total personality. This calls for an assessment at the end of each meeting.

A primary aspect of group evaluation involves asking group members directly about the effects of the group. When conducting an evaluation with group members, the leader should ask broad questions about the strengths of the group, the weaknesses of the group, and ideas for improving the group (Zastrow, 1997) as well as seek feedback about any particular activities or techniques used. This form of evaluation can be done verbally during check-in rounds throughout the course of the group process. Group members, however, may feel pressure to please the group leader by giving desirable answers (Rubin & Babbie, 2008), especially at the beginning of the group process, when the group is still forming and members may be more guarded and less comfortable giving honest feedback. Such check-ins are more likely to elicit useful information midway through the group and in environments where open and genuine dialogue has been established between members and the group leader.

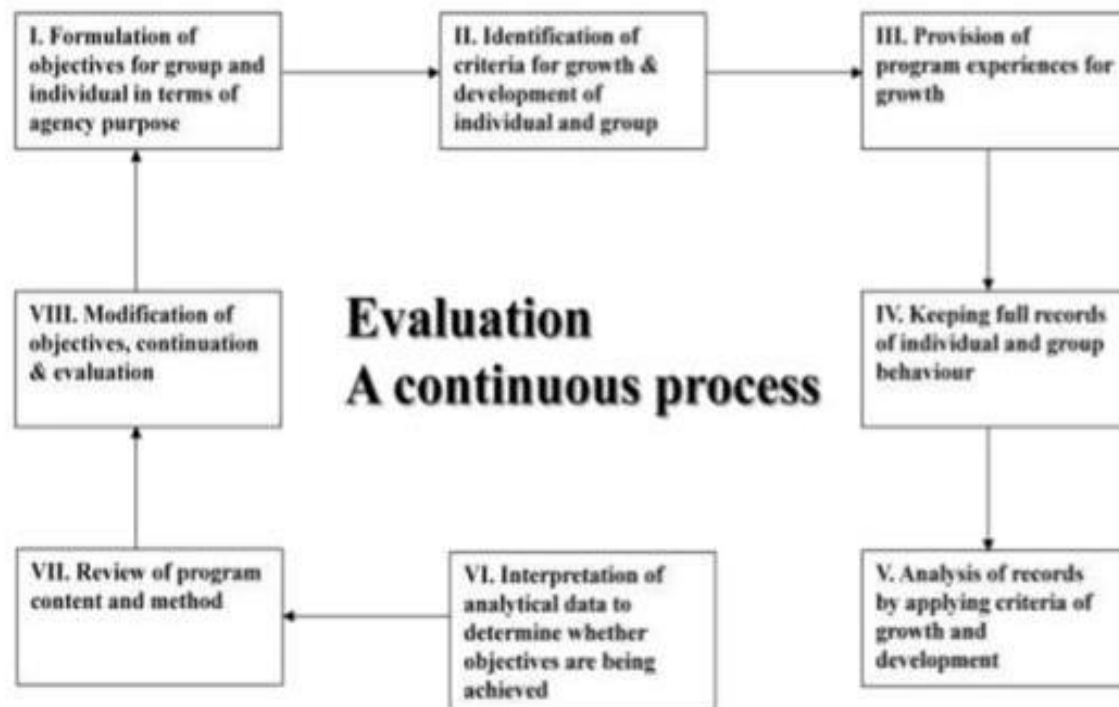
Group leaders may consider seeking feedback about group members' perceptions of the group through anonymous questionnaires to reduce the bias associated with assessment in front of the rest of the group. These types of written evaluations are commonly used in agencies at the conclusion of services. While they provide some indication of group members' level of satisfaction with the group, they do not measure its effectiveness.

To best evaluate the group's effectiveness, group leaders should utilize pregroup and post-group assessments that target the specific thoughts, feelings, and behaviours the group aims to change. To ask such targeted questions, the leader and the group members must have a clear understanding of the purpose of the group and the outcomes desired. A clear purpose directly informs the questions the leader asks at the beginning and end of the group to measure change. For example, a treatment group oriented toward alleviating postpartum depression might use a standardized measure of depressive symptoms at the start of the group to assess members' functioning prior to treatment and then repeat the same measure at the end of the group to see if individuals, and the group as a whole, improved over the course of the group. Depending on the length of the measure and the time it takes to administer it, leaders might also decide to conduct evaluations midway through the group to get a sense of group members' progress and identify ways to improve the second half of the group.

GROUP WORK PROCESS

forms, including changing the format of the group, reassessing who is included in the group, or changing the length of the group, the approach, or interactions among members.

Group leaders, especially new leaders, may be surprised at the positive feedback they receive from group members during evaluation. Group leaders should be aware of what they are doing well and should continue to do, in addition to identifying areas for improvement. Furthermore, conducting evaluations during group may be helpful in drawing the group's attention back to the overall purpose and helping individual members' reflect on their level of motivation, progress, and efforts toward change.



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