



**MAKING GRADUATE
GROUP WORK COURSES
REAL**

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OVERVIEW

- ❖ Goals
- ❖ Literature review
- ❖ Syllabus review
- ❖ Pictorial autobiography—as mechanism to model group facilitation
- ❖ Why real is better
- ❖ Avoiding pitfalls



GOALS

- ❖ Help student develop group facilitation skills by modeling group leadership & practicing leading a group
- ❖ As faculty I want to learn something new in every class I teach



ICEBREAKER

❖ Share an object that you brought with you that helps us get to know you.



LITERATURE REVIEW





TOO LITTLE TOO LATE

❖ “Generalist practice courses gave students inadequate preparation for undertaking group assignments...” (in field placements)

- Goodman, Knight & Khudododov (2014)



STUDENT AS PARTICIPANT OBSERVER

- ❖ LaRocque (2012) a field instructor, speaks to students lack of preparation to lead groups
- ❖ Students were receiving good evidence based, theoretical training in groups, but had difficulty translating that into psychotherapy practice



STUDENT AS PARTICIPANT OBSERVER



❖ “Without the experiential component of what it is like to be an active group participant, the students often do not comprehend the relevance of the relationships that are built over the course of the group’s life, the therapeutic factors at play that impact any one individual member’s treatment goals and the likelihood of significant change and the therapist techniques unique to group therapy.”

(LaRoche, 2012)



STUDENT AS PARTICIPANT OBSERVER

❖ LaRoche (2012) advocates for a participant observer method of teaching group work where students participate in the group as participants and are able to observe and reflect on evidence based practice leadership (e.g. CBT or Client Centered groups).



SYLLABUS REVIEW

❖ Required Reading

❖ Corey, G. (2016) *Theory and practice of group counseling* (9th ed.). Belmont, Ca.: Cengage Advantage Books.

❖ Zastrow, C. (2016). *Social work with groups: A comprehensive workbook* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.



SYLLABUS REVIEW

- ❖ Showing up-critical, no free passes



LEARNING LABORATORY




❖ Group Work is conducted as a laboratory course within which students learn by directly experiencing being participants in an actual group. The major pedagogical strategy used to organize learning in this course is participation and observation of the class itself as a social work group. The richest and principle learning will be the student's ongoing analysis of the classroom process as a prototypical group process. Students will be expected to conduct ongoing analysis of the classroom group process as the method for identifying group work theory and principles in action. In the group work course, individual student participation is critical. In addition students are expected to complete assigned readings in advance of the class for which they are listed. As appropriate to a group work process, there will be classroom exercises and tasks, student lead discussion, and student presentations, and the development of a group work portfolio.



IN-CLASS GROUP

❖ Every student will have opportunity to serve the class as group facilitator or as a co-facilitator. Students will be expected to apply resources from course reading as they apply to group facilitation. The instructor will serve in the role of enabler, to nurture the group process and empower the student facilitators. The instructor will also help the class to identify areas of learning, which develop out of the group process during each class session. At various times the instructor will share the group facilitator role along with student facilitators. Students are expected to provide a handout to classmates summarizing the theory used for the group, goals for the group, and methods for conducting the group. Students will provide your professor with a plan including your handout at least one week prior to your group. I will let you know if there are areas you need to correct before your presentation. (Written assignment due one week after completion of your group)



❖ Class participation	25%
❖ Classroom Group Facilitator Responsibility	15%
❖ Paper on In-class facilitation	20%
❖ Journal	15%
❖ Final Integration Paper	25%

PICTORIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

- ❖ Using poster board tell your life story
- ❖ Share as much or as little about your life as you wish
- ❖ I facilitation group within a group. After a student shares their life story I facilitate feedback from peers using a Client Centered


Approach

- No probing, keep questions at a minimum
- Give reactions and places you can relate
- Be supportive



PICTORIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

❖ Caution about trauma history disclosure,
especially sexual trauma



WHY REAL IS BETTER

- ❖ Groups can touch the soul of group members. To be real is to find and develop the potential of the group
- ❖ Post trauma reaction—pretend you survived a plane crash together

AVOIDING PITFALLS

- ❖ As class instructor/leader my primary job is safety. No group member should ever feel unsafe.
 - If someone is probing or engaging in negative activity stop action
- ❖ Don't interrupt students practicing leading a group except for safety concerns, even if the group doesn't look at all like the group they say they are leading.
- ❖ Written handout with emphasis on understanding the theory behind their group as well as their role and expectations to me a week in advance.

AVOIDING PITFALLS

❖ Written handout with emphasis on understanding the theory behind their group as well as their role and expectations to me a week in advance. That way I can provide some quality control.

- Note: Students provide these handouts to the class immediately prior to leading their group and review them before starting.



AVOIDING PITFALLS

❖ Have students do written/anonymous feedback after each student led group. I collect these then read them to the group while we discuss what went well and what can be improved.

- Increases honest reactions.
- Allows me to be selective regarding overly harsh critiques

REFERENCES

- ❖ (2014) Goodman, H, Knight, C. & Khudododov, K. Graduate Social Work Students' Experience with Group Work in the Field and the Classroom. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work* , V. 34, pp 60-78.
- ❖ (2012) LaRocque, S. The Social Work Student as Participant Observer in Group Therapy Training. *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping*. V. 18, No. 2, pp 51-59.