

The BSW Class as a Group

Using Role-Play to make Group Work Explicit

Presented by:

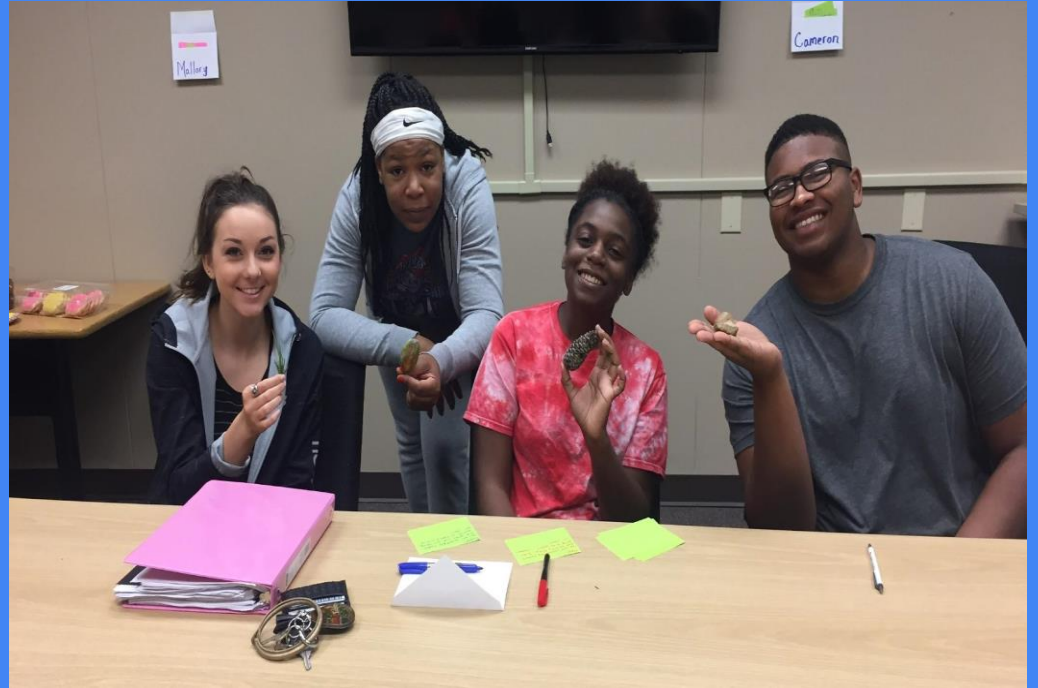
Bobbye Roberts, LCSW, Associate Professor of Social Work

Megan Mahler, BSW Student

Kennedy Smith, BSW Student

Louisiana College

Benefits of Role-Play





- ❖ Experiential Learning
- ❖ Makes the Abstract Explicit
- ❖ Modeling Skills
- ❖ Students Learn to Plan and Lead a Group
- ❖ Supportive Environment
- ❖ Enables Risk-Taking
- ❖ It's Fun!

Course Overview



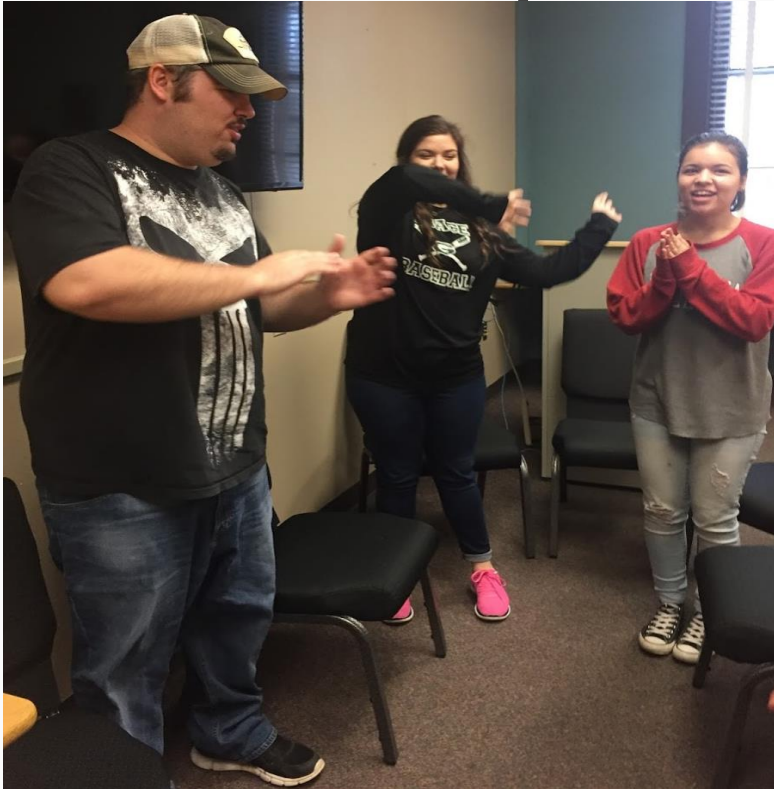
Semester Schedule

- ❖ Weeks 1-6: instructor-led experiential group activities; reflection & processing; didactic content
- ❖ Weeks 7-14: student-led group leadership role-play sessions; reflection & processing; feedback
 - Interspersed with instructor-led sessions described above
- ❖ Week 15-16: Class as a Group Termination & Group Design Due as a Final Exam/Assessment

Course Assignments

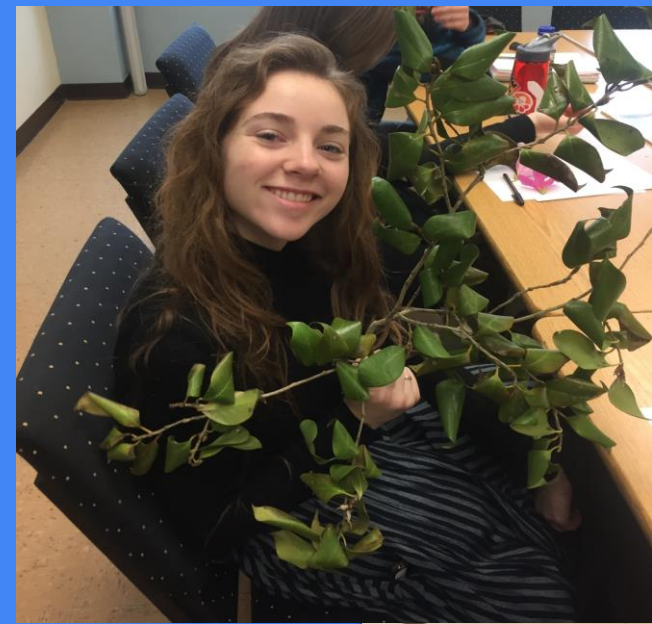
- ❖ Group Research Papers (Evidenced-Based to Support Group Interventions)
- ❖ Group Proposal
- ❖ Group Leadership Simulations/ Role-Play
- ❖ Group Design (6 group sessions) - Final Course Assessment
- ❖ Observation of 2 groups - (1 treatment group and 1 support group in the community--paper)

The Class as a Group



- ❖ Experiential group activities
 - Integrating faith perspectives that draw upon client strengths
- ❖ Beginning, Middle, and Ending Stages
- ❖ Modeling Group Leadership Skills
- ❖ Reflection and processing
- ❖ Didactic Component





Group Leadership Role-Play Sessions



Setting up the Group Leadership Role-Play

- ❖ Students choose group population and area of focus
- ❖ Students randomly draw type of treatment group designated as beginning, middle, or ending stage. (e.g. support group-beginning stage; therapy group-middle stage, etc.)
- ❖ One week prior to student-led group, student submits group session agenda (feedback given w/changes made as needed)
- ❖ Prior to student-led session, class members identify roles they want to play, without knowledge of group leader

Embracing the
role of a group
in a juvenile
detention center



Example Session Agenda for beginning stage of group (adapted from Toseland & Rivas, 2017)

Goals:

- ❖ By the end of this session each participant will be able to:
- ❖ (List minimum of 3 goals for each session)

Agenda for Session One:

- ❖ Introduction: (this should include specifics about how the leader and members will become acquainted with each other initially)
- ❖ Orientation: (Using text, Ch. 7, p. 199-purpose, confidentiality, rules, etc.)
- ❖ Activities/ Process/Intervention(s)
- ❖ Appropriate Ending

The Group Role Play Simulation

- ❖ Student leads a 45 minute group session, based on his/her planned agenda
- ❖ Class debriefs, processes, and gives feedback to student
 - Approx. 15 minutes
 - Strengths discussed as well as potential areas to improve
 - Students reflect upon overall process and experience
 - Students gain insight into how to improve their leadership skills

Instructor Evaluation of Leadership Skills

- ❖ Use of specific elements and attainment of goals for given stage and type of treatment group
- ❖ Use of communication skills throughout group session (verbal and non-verbal)
- ❖ Use of leadership skills as discussed in Chapter 4
- ❖ Planning and/or organization of group session
- ❖ Use of program activities/ materials/ and creativity.

Challenges for the Student Group Leader

Challenges for the Student Group Leader

- ❖ Attending to each member & group processes as a whole
- ❖ Focusing group communication & linking member to member communication
- ❖ Managing peer/group members' behavior
- ❖ Confronting & resolving conflict
- ❖ Making group processes explicit

Challenges of Implementing Role-Play in the Classroom



Challenges of classroom implementation

- ❖ Managing the Group - Keeping the group on-track with overall semester course schedule ; Time factor
- ❖ Fitting in all of the didactic course material
- ❖ Keeping role-plays realistic
- ❖ Unpredictable elements of role-plays
- ❖ Trying not to disturb all of the other classes on our hall because we're having **TOO** much fun!

Students
enjoy
choosing
various roles
to act out in
student-led
sessions



References

Clemans S.E. (2011) The Purpose, benefits, and challenges of “check-in” in a group-work class. *Social Work with Groups*, 34 (2), 121-140. doi: 10.1080/01609513.2010.549640

Humphrey, K. R. (2014) Lessons learned from experiential group work learning. *Social Work With Groups*, 37:1, 61-72. doi:10.1080/01609513.2013.816919

Knight, C. (2014). The BSW social work curriculum: Teaching strategies, case material, and assignments for teaching group work. *Social Work with Groups*, 37(1), 36–47.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01609513.2013.816917>

McKinney, J., O, C. V., & Pruitt, D. (2018). Experiential learning through group work and theater. *Social Work with Groups*, 41(1/2), 49–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01609513.2016.1258623>

References cont.

Toseland, R.W. & Rivas, R.F. (2017). *An introduction to group work practice*. Boston, MA: Pearson

Twenge, J. (2017). *IGen: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy, and completely unprepared for adulthood*. New York, NY: Atria Books

Warkentin, B. (2017). Teaching social work with groups: Integrating didactic, experiential and reflective learning. *Social Work with Groups*, 40(3), 233–243.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01609513.2015.1124034>

Wayne, J., & Gitterman, A. (2004). Offensive behavior in groups: Challenges and opportunities. *Social Work with Groups*, 26(2), 23–34. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J009v26n02pass:\[_\]03](https://doi.org/10.1300/J009v26n02pass:[_]03)