Course Description: Group work theories, interventions and techniques applied to persons with emotional, social and psychological problems.

This course focuses on the theory and practice of community based social work in groups. Competence in this method of practice is an essential part of the social worker’s foundation of professional knowledge, skills and values. Groups are microcosmic reflections of our larger society and offer us opportunities for learning, growth and survival. We are born into a group and live our lives in a variety of groups, within and outside the social work profession. This course is designed to facilitate your ability to critically and effectively apply theory to practice in community based clinical social work with groups.

Current social work practice is influenced by managed care mandates that require rapid assessments, time limited community-based services, clear documentation on service delivery and an emphasis on measuring treatment outcomes.

Course Objectives: By the end of the semester, you will be expected to be able to:
1. Clearly describe community based clinical practice with group including the following: an understanding of focal group process in agencies and other community settings; the function and role of the social worker in linking clients to resources and networks of service providers and other client groups; and advocacy with a focus on client empowerment, while demonstrating sensitivity to the intricacies involved in the reciprocal working relationship between agencies and the social worker.
2. Clearly describe and critique the community based clinical social worker’s purposeful use of self in the formation of viable social work groups designed to enhance, promote, maintain and restore social functioning.
3. Describe common and differentiating characteristics among various types of groups, e.g. those designed for mutual aid, for mutual treatment, and for training and education.
4. Describe and analyze the worker’s differential use of group processes throughout the phases of work to termination and evaluation.
5. Describe and analyze the workers differential use of group processes throughout the phases of the group’s development.
6. Clearly describe and critique the social worker’s purposeful use of group processes around issues of diversity and vulnerable populations e.g. race, ethnicity, age, gender, social class.
7. Clearly describe and critique your own growth and development as a leader and participant in the context of social work groups.
8. Demonstrate competent ability to apply group intervention knowledge and skills in clinical social work with groups. The emphasis will be placed on therapeutic and preventative frameworks of practice including cognitive-behavioral, reality therapy, client-centered, rational therapy.
9. Describe the use of the strengths perspective as part of group process in the context of community based social work practice with diverse populations.
Required Texts:

Reserved Reading: A binder will be in the library with the required reserved readings. They will also be accessible through electronic reserve.

Good Reference Materials:

Evaluation of Learning and Grading: Achievement of learning objectives will be measured as follows:
1. Classroom Assertiveness Group Lab Assignment and Class Participation [30 points] - There will be two groups composed of an even number of members each lasting approximately 6 weeks. The groups will be held in the classroom functioning as psycho-educational groups (or focal groups), with an emphasis on building leadership skills, developing an understanding of group development and group process, identifying different member roles and patterns of communication, and to develop interpersonal skills often needed in the field of Social Work. These groups are not for the purpose of psychotherapy, but there may be some therapeutic benefit for the student from participating in these groups. The groups will be approximately one hour of each class meeting. Each class member will be responsible to participate in one group. The roles of leader and co-leader will rotate weekly. Additional instructions will be distributed.
2. Academic Journal: (10 points) – Student will keep an Academic Journal throughout the semester.
   For each weeks readings you will make an entry in the Academic Journal that answers the following four questions: 1. What are the ideas you favor that help inform your approach to practice? 2. What ideas have you rejected and what are the reasons the ideas are of no use to you? 3. How can you apply this information to enhance your own practice? You will track your thoughts by keeping a journal/log throughout the six-week assertiveness group process. (Review Date: October 27, 2003)
3. Designing Your Own Group (Mid-Term Project): (30 points) – Students will be required to create and design their own six (6) session group covering the following areas: the target population; the structure including an outline; theories and techniques to be used; leadership skills; and a critical incident. You must use a minimum of five (5) references other than the textbook. These must be in APA format, and typed. Detailed guidelines will be distributed. Be sure to use the group planning forms that I have posted on WebCT. (Mid=Term Due: October 12, 2003)
4. Your Own Theory of Group Therapy (Final Project Due November 24, 2003) [30 points]. The final project will be to develop your own theory of group therapy based on Chapter 20 of the Donigian and Hulse-Killacky (1999) text.

The final grade will be based on the final average attained by the student. Grades from the three areas will be provided on a 0-100 scale, and then weighted according to the designated percentages for the overall average.

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Teaching Methods:
The course will include a number of teaching methods with sensitivity to the variant learning styles of participation. The course will include lecture, small group simulations, discussions, videos, guest speakers, and problem solving exercises that include the use of critical thinking.

1. **Class participation:** Social Work students are required to attend ALL class sessions. Professional functioning typically involves collegial sharing and peer support. By being present in class, students develop a commitment to, and a skill in, mutual problem solving. For this reason, class attendance is mandatory. Any absences should be discussed in advance, whenever possible, with the instructor and Skills Lab group.
2. **Academic Integrity:** Social workers must demonstrate high standards of integrity. Students are expected to do their own work on all materials submitted for a grade. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. School and University policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced. Students found to have cheated or plagiarized will receive no credit for the exam or assignment and may also receive a failing grade for the course. Students who observe others violate this policy are expected to report this to the instructor. Please see your academic advisor if you have any questions or concerns about this policy.
3. **Incomplete Grade:** In exceptional circumstances, an incomplete grade may be given per School and University policies. Individual arrangements must be made with the instructor for completion of the course requirements.
4. **Special Accommodations:** Students registered with UCF’s Office of Student Disability Services and having special needs which require accommodation for the successful completion of this course must see the instructor no later than the end of the first week of class. Failure to do so may result in accommodation(s) not being made.

Course Outline

**Week 1: August 23, 2004**

**Introduction to Social Group Work**

**Content:**
1. Orientation to the course
2. Introduction to Group Lab Experience/Assignment (Assertiveness Group)
3. History of social work groups
4. Group work and social work practice principles
5. Ethical group practice
6. Ethnic sensitive practice
7. Types of groups
8. Objectives of group work

**Readings:**
Reid  Chapter 1. “Groups to Help People”, pp. 1-17  
Posthuma, B.  “Assertiveness: Small Group Program”, pp. 249-279 (Reserve)

**Classroom Lab Group:** Select Group Members (No More than 8 to a Group)
Week 2: August 30, 2004
Establishing the Group
Content:
1. Establishing group goals
2. Group norms/composition and screening
3. What are Focal and Task Groups
4. Group development
5. Life-span metaphor
7. Groups, Correctional/Remediation Groups, etc.
8. Structuring the group

Assertiveness Groups begin – September 13, 2004

Readings:
Reid: Chapter 4, “The Group Cauldron”, pp. 55-73
Chapter 9, “Establishing the Group”, pp. 167-187

Week 3: September 6, 2003   -   Labor Day

Week 4: September 13, 2004
Stages of Group Development
Content:
1. Stages of Group Development--overview
2. Contracts in Group Work
3. Ground rules/norms
4. Culturally and racially diverse clients
5. Communication patterns
6. Managing conflict
7. Goal-oriented practice
8. Termination/evaluation
9. Johari window (see reserved reading)

Readings:
Reid: Chapter 10, “The Beginning Phase of Group Work”, pp. 189-208
Chapter 12, “The Middle Phase of Group Work”, pp. 229-249
Chapter 13, “The Ending Phase of Group Work”, pp. 259-275
(Reserved)
Johari Window (Reserve)

Week 5: September 20, 2004
Therapeutic Factors in Groups
Content:
1. Fears about joining a group
2. Therapeutic Factors of joining a Group
3. Member roles
4. Potential Critical Incidents and how to handle
5. Advantages of group work
6. Universalization
7. Self-disclosure/Johari Window
8. Activities and Techniques
Assertiveness Group Lab
Readings:
Reid: Chapter 3, “Therapeutic Factors in Groups”, pp. 39-54
Chapter 5, “The Person as a Member”, pp. 75-94
Chapter 11, “Program Activities”, pp. 209-228
Smokowski, Rose, Todar, Reardon, “Post-group Casualty Status, Group Events and Leader’s Behavior: An Early Look Into the Dynamics of Damaging Group Experience,” pp. 555-573 (Reserve)

Weeks 6 & 7: September 27 & October 6, 2004
Leadership and Foundation Skills
Content:
1. Effective Group Leadership
2. Leader Skills
3. Opening and Closing group sessions
4. Leader interventions and techniques
5. Transference/countertransference
6. Fears and anxieties associated with group leadership
7. Foundation skills
8. Co-Leadership

Assertiveness Groups labs
Readings:
Reid: Chapter 6, “Worker in the Group”, pp. 97-114
Chapter 7, “Foundation Skills,” pp. 115-138
Chapter 8, “Worker Interventions,” pp. 139-164
Gilbert, B.M. “The Social Worker's Role In a Interdisciplinary Spinal Cord Educational Group,” pp. 109-111 (Reserve)

Week 8: October 11, 2004
MID-TERM PROJECT DUE
DEVELOPING A THEORY OF GROUP THERAPY
ASSERTIVENESS GROUP LAB

Week 9: October 18, 2004
Client-Centered Therapy
Content:
1. Explanation of theory
2. Key concepts
3. Therapists roles and techniques
4. Applicability to practice
5. Critical Incident in the initial stage of group
6. Critical Incident I: Group Silence

Assertiveness Group Lab
Readings:
Donigian/Killacky: Chapter 1: “Client-Centered Therapy”, pp. 7-18
Chapter 13: “The Initial Session”, p. 121

Week 10: October 25, 2004
Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
Content:
1. Explanation of theory
2. Key concepts
3. Therapist roles and techniques
4. Applicability to practice
5. Critical Incident in Power/Control stage
6. Critical Incident II: Group Attack on the Leader

Readings:
Chapter 14: "Group Attack of the Therapist", p. 156
Brennan, J. "A Short-Term Psychoeducational Multiple-Family Group for Bipolar Patients and their Families," pp. 737-742 (Reserve)
Pomeroy, Kiam, & Abel, “The Effectiveness of a Psychoeducational Group for HIV-Infected/Affected/Incarcerated Women,” pp. 171-187 (Reserve)

Week 11: November 1, 2004
Rational-Emotive-Behavioral Therapy
Content:
1. Explanation of theory
2. Key concepts
3. Therapist roles and techniques
4. Applicability to practice
5. Critical Incident in Intimacy Stage of Development
6. Critical Incident III: Mass Group Denial

Personal Reflection Paper Due
Readings:
Donigian/Killacky: Chapter 8: “Rational-Emotive-Behavioral Therapy”, pp. 66-76
Chapter 15: “Mass Group Denial”, p. 189

Week 13: November 8, 2003
Reality Therapy
Content:
1. Explanation of theory
2. Key concepts
3. Therapist roles and techniques
4. Applicability to practice
5. Critical Incident in Working or Interdependent Stage of Development
6. Critical Incident IV: Member chooses to leave the group

Readings:
Donigian/Killacky: Chapter 9: “Reality Therapy”, pp. 78-84
Chapter 16: “A Member Chooses to Leave”, p. 235

Week 14: November 22, 2004
Solution-Focused Therapy
Content:
1. Explanation of theory
2. Key concepts
3. Therapist roles and techniques
4. Applicability to practice
5. Critical Incident in Closing/Termination Stage
6. Critical Incident V: A deep disclosure near the end of a session termination

Readings:
Chapter 17: “A Deep Disclosure Near Session Termination”, p. 278

Final Papers due---November 24, 2003

Overview of Theoretical Frameworks
Week 15: November 29, 2004
Content:
1. Summary of Theoretical Frameworks
2. Termination in Groups
3. Evaluation
4. Follow-up

Readings:
Donigian/Killacky: Chapter 18: “A Member Maintains Distance”, pp. 300-334
Chapter 19: “Comparing the Theoretical Practitioners' Interventions”, pp. 337-356

Final
Week 16: December 6, 2004

Bibliography


Wells, L. (1990). The group as a whole: A systemic socioanalytic perspective on interpersonal and group relations. In J. Gillette & McCollom (Eds.), *Groups in context: A new*


