

Self- Help Group Dynamics Analysis

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GRADE: _____

Goals

The goals for the members of an alcoholic anonymous group revolve around learning how to live their lives, be happy, and have fun without the use of substance.

Membership Eligibility

To gain entry into an alcoholics anonymous meeting, there are a few requirements that an individual must meet. These requirements may vary based on the type of meeting they attend. For all meetings, alcoholics who wish to gain eligibility must have a desire to stop drinking alcohol. If a client wishes to attend an open meeting, they will be met with a large variety of individuals. Open meetings allow any type of addict, students, observers, and family members of addicts to attend. Limited meetings allow only alcoholics to attend their sessions. Closed meetings are the most restrictive of all. These meetings only allow alcoholics who have a desire to quit drinking in their sessions.

Referral Sources

There are many sources for an addict to gain information about different alcoholic anonymous meetings. For those who attend church, many churches carry information on local meetings or host some of their own. Some clients may receive information after a hospitalization if they were admitted for alcohol use or detoxification. Others yet may gain information on meetings from a fellow addict, friends, or family.

Meeting Description

Self-Help meetings also vary on how they are ran based on the type of meeting. All meetings typically last for around an hour. Meetings are opened with a reading from a book, binder, weekly readings, or the Bible, followed by a prayer or the preamble dependent upon the religious capacity of the group. The members will then go through introductions and the topic of the day will be introduced.

Limited meetings often focus on a specific topic for their members. This is most often the topic of what instigates the use of alcohol or other substances for the members who are in attendance. During a speaker meeting, a few select individuals will be invited to share the entirety of their stories. These meetings are best used to allow people a place to talk about their feelings and get their stories in the open. These meetings are a good option for new and returning addicts as they allow for the release of stories as well as allowing others to hear that they are not alone.

Discussion meetings allow for smaller groups of members to sit at smaller tables to discuss their experience or the topic of the day with a smaller audience. These can also be held at one large table and all members take turns. Step meetings are available for members who wish to work through the twelve-step process of turning their lives from addiction. There are also book meetings which are used to allow members to read through material with others and talk about what they believe it means or how it makes them feel.

Group Roles

There are many roles that participate in a self-help group. Each role has their own specific tasks or identifying factors. The leader of the group is there to keep the members focused on the topic, reading, and task of the day. This role also leads the opening prayer or reading at the beginning of the meeting. This role is classified as a maintenance and growth producing role in the group. The group may have multiple harmonizers, who can be identified by their attempts to avoid conflict with other members or in the group as a whole. The harmonizers can be considered as maintenance for the group and may help with growth producing for other members. The role of the recorder is a task-oriented role. Their focus during meetings is to take notes and/or record the session.

Many group meetings also have dominators within them. This is a member who tries to take control of the meeting and other members of the group. This role is considered an individual role as this person typically works alone and is also growth inhibiting for both themselves and other members of the group. Recognition seekers are also a common role. This is an individual, growth inhibiting role that typically consists of a patient who is consistently talking about their achievements. This role may make others feel less successful in their journey through recovery. The speaker of the group is a member who will talk about what happened in their time as an addict, how they are working with the program, and how life is since starting their recovery. This role can be considered growth producing as sharing an individual's story may assist others in recognizing they are not alone and that this is possible for them to accomplish as well.

Groups often have multiple members who can be considered observers. These members actively listen to the speaker and other members of the group. These are the members most likely to believe that recovery through these programs will be possible for them as well. Observers are a growth-producing role in a self-help group. The reader or discussion leader in the group are other roles within a meeting. These are the members who will bring up new topics, ask their designated members questions about their recovery, steps, understanding of the reading, or if anyone is having trouble with continuing the program. This role is considered to be growth producing as they assist other members in growing their recovery.

Utilization of Meeting Attendance in Everyday Life

For members to be capable of applying the knowledge they learn in meetings to everyday life is the goal of self-help groups. The most common forms of application include finding and becoming your higher self daily, reading books that will help a member work through the process, practicing the principles of alcoholics anonymous daily, and more effective communication skills. Utilizing these skills helps a member become more likely to set their life back on a track that lacks substance use and gains relationships, employment, and other forms of livelihood.

Insight Gained through Learning Experience

Before this project, this nursing student was unaware of a lot of information about these meetings. This nursing student previously did not know that there were different types of meetings other than for different substances. This experience showed me that different types of meetings include for different substances, limited meetings, discussion, book, step, and speaker meetings. This student also learned that not each person who attends these meetings is an addict. Some of these members are unaware they have a problem or may not be ready to let go of their substance. This was overall an eye-opening experience that showed this nursing student how different these meetings really can be.

CRITERIA	POSSIBLE POINTS	EARNED POINTS	COMMENTS
1. Goals	2		
2. Membership eligibility.	4		
3. Referral sources	4		
4. Meeting description.	8		
5. Group roles identified. (e.g. task, maintenance, and/or self-serving roles). Clearly identify the roles within the group: (i.e.: leaders, followers, etc.) Are there any growth inhibiting roles versus	8		

growth producing roles?			
6. Discussion of utilization of meeting attendance in everyday life.	4		
7. Insight gained through this learning experience, and how this insight may be useful with future clients.	8		