

Running head: Group Proposal

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Group Dynamics and Therapy

Introduction

This writer would like to create a Psychotherapy group targeting individuals with anxiety and depression (age range not yet specified). According to the textbook *Groups Process and Practice*, "The broad purposes of a therapeutic group are to increase members' knowledge of themselves and others, to help members clarify the changes they most want to make in their lives, to provide members with the tools they need to make these changes, and to support their changes (Corey, Corey & Corey 2018, P.6)." Corey (2018) states Psychotherapy groups in particular attempt to treat psychological problems and interpersonal problems of living (p.10). These populations "often have acute or chronic mental or emotional problems that evidence marked distress, impairment in functioning, or both (Corey, Corey & Corey 2018, p.10)."

Rationale for Group

The purpose of this group would be to alleviate members Psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, self-esteem issues, etc., and give each member a sense of realization, control, and empowerment over their own lives, behaviors, and thinking.

Goals

The long-term goals of the group will be as follows:

- 1-Participants will obtain a positive thought life.
- 2- Participants will obtain a positive self-image.
- 3- Participants will increase their self-esteem.
- 4- Participants will recognize what they can and cannot control about their own lives and others' lives.

5- Participants will become empowered to make the changes they need to live a healthier lifestyle.

6- Participants will become empowered to realize the control they have over their own thoughts, feelings, behaviors, etc. and to regain that control they may have given away to others or someone else.

7- Participants will gain closure and/or develop a new perspective on "unfinished business" with past significant others or events in their lives.

8- Participants will alleviate their symptoms or psychological problems.

Recruitment, Screening, and Exclusion

All participants will be cleared by their medical doctor as mentally and emotionally stable in order to participate in this group. Individuals suffering from severe depression and anxiety, members who are suicidal, and have severely impaired cognitive functioning will be excluded until cleared by their medical doctor. Participants must be ready, willing, and able (at heart) to participate in this group. Individuals with severe developmental disabilities will be excluded from this group in particular but will be placed in another homogenous group specifically tailored to their needs. Individuals who suffer from drug and or alcohol addiction will not be suitable for this group.

Logistics

This Psychotherapy Group would be a closed group. This writer chose a closed group because the same group members will be expected to return to each session

throughout the duration of the group, creating unity. "The advantages of time-limited groups are that the time span allows for cohesion and productive work and that members can then continue practicing newly acquired interpersonal skills with a new group of people (Corey, Corey & Corey, 2018, P.161)."

In open groups, members come and go, and although there are some advantages such as seeing more people, there are disadvantages I would not want to risk. "A potential disadvantage of open groups is that rapid changing of our members can result in a lack of cohesion (Corey, Corey & Corey, 2018, P. 162)." The group would meet twice a week for sixteen sessions. "But if I had my choice, I would meet with groups twice weekly: such groups have a greater intensity, the members continue to work through issues raised in the previous session, and the entire process takes on the character of a continuous meeting (Yalom, I., 2005, P. 283)."

The group size would be between six and fifteen members, creating more intimacy within the group, and also enabling it to be easier to see if someone is missing. This writer values quality over quantity. The target population would be co-ed individuals suffering from anxiety and depression. When working with the co-ed group, I may come across issues such as sexism, men or women thinking or coming across as they are better than one another, or even putting each other down. They may interact inappropriately with each other if they start to become attracted to one another, and that can cause potential issues within the group. It would be important to set solid boundaries and rules within the group to prevent these potential issues from occurring.

Group Rules:

1-Participants will treat every member with respect.

2-Derogatory language will not be tolerated.

3-What is said in the group stays in the group!

4- Participants will not interrupt others, as they are speaking, wait for your turn to share.

The length of each group session would be sixty minutes. This writer wants to truly empower, equip, and make an impact and a positive difference in the lives of the group members, and this amount of time would be ample to make that difference. "For groups of relatively well-functioning adults, a 2-hour weekly session might be preferable. This 2-hour period is long enough to allow some intensive work yet not so long that fatigue sets in (Corey, Corey, & Corey 2018, P. 160)." The location of this group would be a room in a church (perhaps the basement, conference room, etc.), providing the quiet space that is needed for the most effective group sessions. "Group meetings may be held in any room that affords privacy and freedom from distractions (Yalom, I., 2005, P.281)."

Ethical and Legal Considerations and Multicultural Awareness

Each member will have to sign off on an informed consent prior to beginning this group. "Informed consent is a process of presenting basic information about a group to potential group participants to assist them in deciding whether to enter the group and how to participate in it (Corey, Corey & Corey 2018, P.62)." The informed consent will include the writer's professional credentials, explanation of the study, techniques that will be used in the group, potential risks, voluntary nature of the decision to participate in the group, disclosure of information, rights and responsibilities, policy pertaining to attendance, etc. Corey, Corey & Corey (2018) states that therapeutic groups, although constructive to bring about positive change in a participant's life, may involve some risk

(p.65). The counselor will discuss the impact the power of the group may have on them and help prepare them for the changes they are about to undergo.

Confidentiality is one of the most important aspects of a therapeutic group, says Corey, Corey, & Corey 2018 (p.68). It is important for not only the group leader to keep personal information about members' confidential but also for members' to keep each other's information, which is discussed in the group private as well. This writer will discuss in depth the importance of confidentiality within the group and will also discuss the potential consequences if someone is to breach that confidentiality (being dismissed from the group, etc.) This writer will "consult and document all legal and ethical issues as well as the clinical implications that arise during my groups (Corey, Corey, and Corey, 2018, p.92)."

"Culture may affect a member's views on confidentiality (Corey, Corey & Corey, 2018, P.72)." According to Corey, Corey & Corey (2018), addressing diversity is an ethical mandate (p.76). Leaders should not ignore differences amongst group members of diverse backgrounds. As a group leader, it will be important for me to engage in self-discovery to recognize my own biases. This writer's group will aim to create a safe place for members to open themselves up about anything and everything ranging from joyful events to painful events in one's life regardless of their ethnicity.

This writer understands the importance and sensitivity of multiculturalism. "Multicultural group workers should be keenly aware of differential power, status, and wealth that may result in oppression and victimization or the recapitulation of oppression and victimization (Corey, Corey & Corey, 2018, p.79)." This writer will do her homework and learn as much as possible about people of diverse backgrounds before

beginning the group. It will be of great importance that this writer does not impose her own worldview onto the clients. "If you are not able to recognize that your values are not absolute truths, but products of your upbringing, then you will likely impose your own worldview and values on your group members and possibly do harm (Corey, Corey, and Corey, 2018, P. 16)."

This writer will encourage all members of the group to understand themselves and other members of the group, culturally. According to Corey, Corey, and Corey (2018), modeling genuine respect for the differences amongst the members in the group is an important aspect of leadership when working with clients of diverse backgrounds (P.16). This writer will learn about different cultures outside of her own so she can do her best to treat members with the utmost respect and integrity.

Leadership

This group would follow the co-leadership model to avoid burnout. Although as Corey, Corey, and Corey (2018) states there are many disadvantages to having a co-leader, such as struggle of power, disagreements, lack of respect and trust for one another (p.51), there are many advantages to co-leadership that this writer would be willing to risk the potential disadvantages for. "For one thing, the presence of a co-therapist lessens initial therapist anxiety and permits therapists to be more objective in their efforts to understand the meeting (Yalom, I., 2005, p.444)."

As the potential for burnout is high amongst demanding populations such as the psychologically impaired, as Corey, Corey and Corey (2018) state (p.49), since this writer chose a psychotherapy group, she feels it would not only be smart but essential to work with a co-leader in order to provide the utmost quality and dedication to group

members. Although there can be many disagreements between two co-leaders and potential conflict, this writer has always been a fan and believer of "teamwork makes the dream work" and has rarely had trouble working with others. This writer has the capacity and willingness to work through disagreements in a professional and productive manner and looks forward to the challenges the co-leadership model will bring.

Marketing/Promotion

This writer will promote her group by obtaining supervisor and peer support, publicity, and word of mouth. Attached below is the flyer this writer will use to promote and market the group. Flyers will be placed in churches, mental health agencies, social media platforms, supermarkets, etc. to gain exposure for the group and get the word out there.

Evaluation Process

In order to determine the effectiveness my group has had on members, this writer will send a questionnaire to the members to receive their feedback. The questionnaire will contain questions such as how the group has impacted or changed their lives both positively and negatively (if there are any negatives), what they have gained from the group, how can the leader's improve, etc. "Asking members to address some of our questions in writing encourages them to again reflect and one more time put into words the meaning of their experience in the group (Corey, Corey and Corey 2018, p.330)."

This writer would also interview each member personally before termination from the group. Corey, Corey, and Corey (2018) states individual follow-up interviews are held with members to gain their feedback (p.331). This writer would also collect the member's notes taken during the sessions at the end of the duration of the group. "On the

basis of their journal notes, which are private, members write several reaction papers describing their subjective experience in the group as well as what they are doing outside the group. These reaction papers are given to us both during the life of the group and after the group has terminated (Corey, Corey and Corey 2018, p.331)." This feedback would enable me to measure the effectiveness of the group and if it has accomplished its purpose or not, and would also allow me to see where the group needs improvements.

Session 1- Introduction

Objectives:

- 1- Introduce the therapist and group members
- 2- Break the ice and begin establishing a good rapport amongst the therapist and group members.
- 3- Create group rules together
- 4- Create a list of expectations each member would like to receive out of the group

Activity, Rationale, and Expected Time

1) Introduction: 30 minutes

- a) Each group member, including the therapist, will provide a brief background on himself or herself, including their age, where they live, what do they hope to get out of this group, and what brought them here, one strength and one weakness.
- b) Rationale, aspect of group development, and therapeutic factors:

2) Establishment of expectations: 15 minutes

- a) The therapist will facilitate a group discussion of group expectations and agree upon them together while each member takes personal notes. Each member should express what they expect to receive from the therapist and also group members and share how they would like to be treated during the group. We will discuss how we don't like to be treated and or spoken to in order to stay away from potential triggers that may upset another member. The therapist will ask for members to share trigger words and have the group agree upon avoiding those triggers for each member. Members of the group will be asked to write down this

important information about each member so they can remember it throughout the group duration.

b) Rationale, aspect of group development, and therapeutic factors: This will be an opportunity for members to step outside of themselves and realize how other members may feel and can be impacted by certain words or behaviors from other people, creating empathy towards one another within group members.

3) Establish group rules: 15 minutes

a) The group members will be asked to create one rule they would like to see themselves, and each member upholds. The therapist will go around the room and ask each person what their rule is, and the group will agree or disagree on each rule presented (and explain why), eventually creating the rules for the group.

b) Rationale, aspect of group development, and therapeutic factors: Each person should understand the importance of their role in the group and the importance of their voice. The therapist will observe the interactions the members are having with each other and will guide them (if needed) to become one unit. "The whole is greater than the sum of all its parts."

Session 2- Who am I?

Objectives:

- 1) Begin peeling off the layers and getting to the core of each group member
- 2) Participants will share their passions in life and how they became who they are today (significant life events, struggles, accomplishments, etc.)
- 3) Members will pair off and fill out a questionnaire about temperament, happiness, ambition, joys, struggles, hopes, and dreams, etc.
- 4) Activity, rationale and expected time

1) Introduce the concept of an artichoke: 30 minutes

a) The therapist will introduce an artichoke on a PowerPoint slide and explain to the members how human beings are very similar to an artichoke. The therapist will go around the room and ask members to write down ways they think people and artichokes are similar. Once all ideas are written down, the therapist will go on to explain the rationale behind this concept.

b) Rationale, aspect of group development, and therapeutic factors: The therapist will show group members the similarities between an artichoke and a human being, such as both having layers that need to be peeled off in order to get to the core (of both an artichoke and a person). Participants will learn the layers they have put up over themselves to protect the core of their being. Participants will learn how to carefully peel off each layer gently during this group to discover their core, truest version of themselves.

Session 3- Obtaining a Positive thought life

Objectives:

- 1) Help members realize the power of their thought life and how to alter it.
- 2) Help members realize the power they have over their own thoughts (Garbage in, garbage out!)
- 3) Help members notice the destructive patterns of their own thinking.

Activity, rationale and expected time

- 1) Read a few selected chapters from the book "Thoughts become things" by Mike

Dooley: 30 Minutes

a) The therapist will read a few selected chapters from the book and gain members' feedback about their thoughts and feelings about the content read from the chapters. The therapist will ask questions such as what did they learn about themselves and their own thinking? The therapist will observe the room and member's reactions and mannerisms (bodies becoming less tense, individuals becoming calmer, etc.) when the book is read and ask members to share their listening experience.

b) Rationale, aspect of group development, and therapeutic factors:

The therapist will empower members to realize the power of their own thinking and how thoughts can create their reality. The therapist will release tools of thought and change into the atmosphere, and into the minds of the members to help them realize their own destructive thoughts and be careful to think about more positive things.

2) Members will share their listening experience and what they learned about their own thinking, and how it has affected their life: 30 Minutes

a) The therapist will go around the room and ask each member to share their experiences in how they were impacted by the material that was read to them. They will be asked to share what they noticed about the way they have been thinking all of these years up until the present, and how they plan to change their thinking. They will be asked to identify if they feel their thinking has been constructive or destructive, and how has their thought life turned into "things" (positive and negative).

b) Rationale, aspect of group development, and therapeutic factors:

The rationale behind this activity is to help members become aware of the power of their own thinking and to realize the current thoughts they have been allowing their minds to have all of these years and to encourage them to know they have the power over their own thinking and how to change their thoughts.

Session 4- Who do I want to become?

Objectives:

- 1) Members will participate in self-evaluation.
- 2) Members will rate their current life satisfaction (Career, home life, etc.) from a scale of 1-10.
- 3) Members will discover the area's in their lives that may or may not need improvement.

Activity, rationale and expected time

1) Self-Exploration Activity: 30 minutes

a) The therapist will help members engage in self-exploration by giving them a handout to fill out and asking certain questions to gauge their level of satisfaction in each area of their life. The therapist will help members find out who they currently are and who they would like to become.

b) Rationale, aspect of group development, and therapeutic factors: The rationale behind this activity is to help members see (concretely) where they currently are in their lives and where they would like to go. People cannot change what they are unaware of. This exercise will bring awareness to members so they can make necessary changes to their lives at a later time.

2) Sharing of findings with the group: 30 minutes

a) Participants will be asked to share what they discovered about themselves from the self-exploration activity with the group. The therapist will ask members to share how they came up with these realizations, what was their light bulb moment? Participants will be asked to share how their thoughts have brought

them to where they are currently and how they feel they can change them to get to where they want to be.

b) Rationale, aspect of group development, and therapeutic factors:

The rationale behind this exercise is to help members see where they are in their life and how they would like to change or keep their current circumstances. This exercise will aim to help members realize they are not alone in their walk of life (or their own thinking), and no one is perfect. Members may see similarities with other members in other's cognitions and feel comfortable and or more at ease that their way of thinking (even if changes are needed) are somewhat common amongst others.

Session 5- What are my truths?

Objectives:

- 1) Members will discover the truth's they have created about their own lives.
- 2) Members will discover what type of mindset they have.
- 3) Members will choose the type of mindset they would like to have and learn how to obtain it.

Activity, rationale and expected time:

- 1) Members will fill out a template describing the thoughts they have about their lives: 30 minutes.

- a) They will share their truths, such as "I am a failure, I am a bad father, I do not have enough money, things will never go well for me, I am the richest person in the world, I am so full of energy, etc.

- b) The rationale behind this exercise is to help members realize the limitations they have placed on their own lives and their own thinking. Members will see how their "truths" has lead them to lead the lives they are living today and discover the mindset they currently have.

- 2) Sharing of findings: 30 minutes

- a) The therapist will ask each member to share their truths and the mindset they currently have. Members will then be asked to choose the mindset they would like to have and provide the blueprint they think they will need on how to get there.

- b) Rationale, aspect of group development, and therapeutic factors: The rational behind this activity is to help all members realize the type of mindset they all currently have so they can change their mindset to one they would want to have.

This exercise will also serve as a bonding activity, which should be fun for the members to create cohesiveness amongst one another.

Session 6- What are my lies?

Objectives:

- 1) Members will recognize the lies they have been telling themselves or allowing other people to tell them and may have believed.
- 2) Members will learn to recognize the difference between a positive thought and a negative thought.

Activity, rationale and expected time

1) Discovering thought life: 30 minutes

a) Members will be asked to write down the persistent thoughts they have during the day and during their week. Members will be asked to fill out a checklist measuring the types of thoughts they are most prone to have on a typical day.

b) The rationale for this activity is to help members realize the types of thoughts they are having on a daily basis and identify if they are positive and negative.

2) Changing thought life:

a) Members will be asked to identify the negative thoughts they wrote down in the previous exercise and write the opposite thought to replace it instead.

b) Rationale, aspect of group development, and therapeutic factors: The rationale behind this activity is to help members see the direct difference between a positive thought and a negative thought, and how they can change them.

Session 7- What are the changes I need to make to be happy and healthy and live the life I have always dreamed of living?

Objectives:

- 1) Participants will put together a compilation of all they have learned about themselves thus far.
- 2) Participants will gain a clear understanding of where they currently are in their lives and where they want to be.
- 3) Participants will create a blueprint of the changes they need to make in their life to get to where they want to be and list the thoughts they need to erase from their life.

Activity, rationale and expected time

- 1) "It's Crunch time": 30 minutes
 - a) Members will compile all of the information they have learned about themselves so far and create a cohesive document of their current thought life, where they are now and where they would like to be, and all of the other information that was listed above.
 - b) Rationale, aspect of group development, and therapeutic factors: The rationale behind this activity is to help members create a clear, tangible blueprint to know where they are, how they are thinking, and where they want to go so they can make the changes they need to make to live the life they want to live.
- 2) Members will share their blueprints with the group.

Session 8- Regroup

Objectives:

- 1) Members will monitor and measure the changes they have made thus far in the group
- 2) Members will discover if they are on track with the rest of the group if they are lagging behind in any areas, if they are giving it their best efforts or not, etc.
- 3) Members will learn where they need to improve and will learn from one another where each person is in their group walk.

Activity, rationale and expected time

1) Read the blueprint: 30 minutes

- a) Members will read from their blueprint that was created during the last session and see all of the progress they have made and or still need to work towards making.
- b) Rationale, aspect of group development, and therapeutic factors: The rationale for this activity is for members to realize the progress they have made thus far and how far they still have yet to go. They will learn if they need to put more effort in or if they are on track or even surpassing expectations.

2) Group Revelation: 30 minutes

- a) Members will share with the group their current progress. Members will read aloud their blueprints to the group and highlight the most important areas.
- b) Rationale, aspect of group development, and therapeutic factors: The rationale for this activity is for members to unveil the layers of their artichoke so far. By revealing their entire process and progress so far will aim to create unity amongst the group members and bring them even closer together than they have been thus

far. Members will see that everyone is a work in progress, and no one has arrived or is perfect. This may alleviate some symptoms of depression and anxiety one may hold against themselves if they are used to having negative self-talk.

Conclusion

This writer proposed a co-ed psychotherapy group for individuals with anxiety and depression. The main purpose of this group is to empower people to realize the limits they place on their own thinking, change a negative mindset to a positive mindset, obtain a more positive thought life, realize the control they have over their minds and actions, and to gain self-esteem. This group would aim to alleviate member's Psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, self-esteem issues, etc., and give each member a sense of realization, control, and empowerment over their own lives, behaviors, and thinking. This group will be a closed group consisting of 16 sixty-minute sessions, twice a week.

References:

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Yalom, I. (2005). *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy* (5th ed.)

Co-Ed Psychotherapy Group (16 weeks). **Be Empowered.**

Be renewed. Be healed. Be whole. Help us help you! Sign

up now before spots fill up, they are going fast!. This is a

closed group and we will be accepting the first 6-15

members only.

Please Contact Kaitlyn Flynn at 347-553-2179 for more information.

