

This past week I attended my first session of Group Dynamics with Dr. Ramos. I was initially overwhelmed by the expectations outlined in the syllabus. Before the class started, I was under the impression that group therapy would be taking place during the class sessions, and was unsure about the format and assignments. Finding out that group therapy is a separate component of the class that I'll have to pay out of pocket for made me nervous because I'm not currently working or financially stable and could barely purchase textbooks.

After learning that the sessions were \$50 each, I was more at ease and came up with a payment plan for myself to be able to accommodate this new expense. I contacted Ms. Nancy Stiefel the day after our first class meeting and was able to arrange with her to attend a Saturday afternoon session for the next twelve weeks. I posted about Nancy's group on E360 and she got responses from enough people to form two groups, because most students will be working or are already employed and Saturday is their only free day to do things outside of work and school.

Nancy and I did a brief introductory interview where I shared with her that while I am not uncomfortable speaking in front of groups, I don't particularly like or care to. I told Nancy about the fact that I am a CASAC and have conducted groups at work and shared a bit with her about my life, career path and personal struggles with mental illness, for which I am receiving ongoing individual therapy.

I am not looking forward to group therapy, as I tend to listen and not participate in group situations but I think being in group therapy can stretch me and my ability to open up to groups of strangers.