

Berengere Howard

GCN 604: Group Dynamics and Therapy

Dr. Ramos

Journal Entry #4

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Group this past weekend was absolutely beautiful. I must say, for someone who was apprehensive about this process as a whole, I'm actually more and more excited to be a part of this process as time progresses. I'm really thrilled with the uniqueness of this group. It's very intimate and cathartic in nature; and after a psychologically draining week, it was a great chance to simply...have release.

First, we gave a check-in with some stretching exercises. We all shared how our week was, while doing stretch exercises; the remainder of the group mirrored the positions of the person speaking. I pretty much shared the difficulty I was having adjusting to this new normal, and how after taking a semester off from school—I struggled staying on top of assignments (readings, due dates, etc). I got some good advice from a member named Johnny; I will say, he's great. Somewhat "preachy," but I appreciated everything he had to say. Megan and Elizabeth were also in the group, they shared their weeks and concerns with the pandemic as well as stability in home life.

The second exercise was about locating an item within range that represents you, and to name it. Unorthodox, confusing at first...how was I supposed to do that? I realized that my living room is filled with cardboard boxes (my mom was packing to move to South Carolina before COVID-19), and I figured, why not? So I chose my cardboard box and I named it "Boxie." I had to describe how the item is similar to myself. Cardboard boxes are built to carry a lot of stuff.

They are sturdy and strong enough to move from place to place *while* carrying a lot of stuff. However, overtime it grows weaker and weaker, and after it gets taped up, the tape becomes harder to remove.

Like myself, I carry a lot personally and psychologically. Memories, trauma, adult responsibilities, you name it. I'm a strong girl. I can carry it; it just gets heavy after a while. My self-sufficient nature is the "tape" that keeps all the stuff in; it keeps people from offering me, and me receiving, assistance. After we each explained how our items reflect us, we had to come up with quotes that align with such. My quote was this: "*Just because you're strong enough to carry it, doesn't mean you have to.*" You don't have to carry everything that life throws your way. It's ok, and in your best interest, to let some stuff go.

This leads me to the third exercise. We had to take our quotes, and repeat them to one another. We paired up with each other, and repeated the following quotes to one another:

"Follow your joy." "Have that hope that it will get better." "Be who you are and rest in it." Be true to yourself." "Keep up the good work." "Just because you're strong enough to carry it, doesn't mean you have to." These quotes were developed as a result of the chosen items.

It was cathartic. Tears were shed. Emotions were shared. It was indeed, a needed and well run group (once again, Julie was amazing). It was organic and nothing was forced. As I stated in previous journals, vulnerability is not my strong suit. I'm grateful that we were able to share without "sharing," instead we do these exercises that are just as helpful. Am I opening up? I'm really not sure. It's ok though, it's ok...