

Self-Help Model

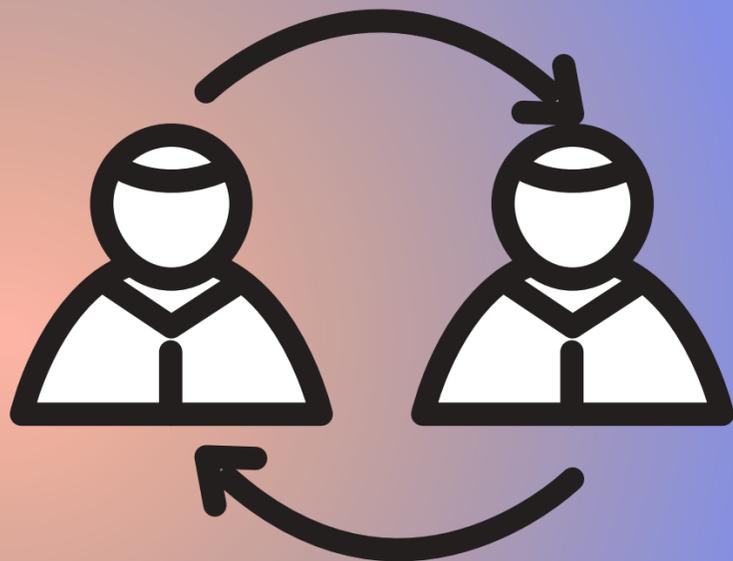
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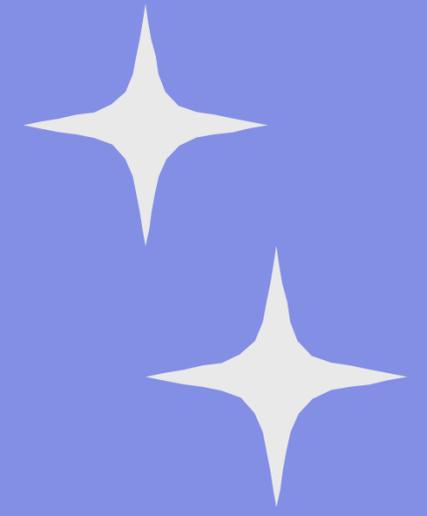
Goal of Self-Help Groups



- ✦ to enable members who share a **common experience** to provide **mutual aid** to one another



Who can benefit from Self-Help?



★ Applicable to many populations since there are different types of support groups available

- Bereavement Groups
- Early Stage Dementia Groups
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Cancer Support Groups

Who is this model not for?



Nearly any population can benefit from self-help groups.

Individuals of all cultural backgrounds and religious values/beliefs can benefit from this supportive environment since all participants have a commonality.

(example: experiencing loss, experiencing an illness)



✦ Techniques & Methods:

- Practice Modality: Group
- Primary form of communication: Speaking
 - Other forms of communication can be used such as drawing, writing, game play, art, or physical touch such as a hug between participants



How and Why Change Occurs



- Emphasis is on self-help, not specifically on therapeutic intervention
- Many different types of support groups. Some are more structured/formal than others. However, they all focus on the reciprocal relationship between participants.
 - **Change occurs through the sharing of one another's experiences, feelings, and advice. (Sense of community)**



✦ The Social Worker's Role:

- **Group Facilitator (In self-help groups, this is usually a group member, not a professional)**
- Since each group has their own structure, the role of the facilitator can vary slightly from group to group.
- Facilitator needs to be willing to relinquish control to allow participants to share with one another. In a self-help group, the facilitator is not typically a professional, but a group member.





✦ The Social Worker's Role :

- Facilitator should:
 - Create a safe space for participants
 - Help members share information and process the experiences that brought them to the group and attribute meaning to those experiences
 - Empower and Encourage participants



A Study on Self-Help Groups for Caregivers of Children with Disabilities

- 81 caregivers participated in the study
- Set up 20 self-help groups focusing on caregiver empowerment



Outcome of the Study

Through development of a social structure and resources, and the establishment of a degree of **social connectedness**, the caregivers were enabled to make decisions and to take actions, to demonstrate abilities and to engage in capacity-building.



Meaning...

The caregivers ultimately started to think differently about their own capacities to influence change.

The self-help groups did empower the participants as a whole.



Limitations of Self-Help Groups

Since the emphasis is on self-help, not specifically on therapeutic intervention, Self-Help groups alone are not sufficient for treating severe mental health conditions/crises.

The advice given by fellow participants may be helpful, but it is not professional guidance.

Self-help groups work well in combination with individual therapy.

Influence on My Practice as a Social Worker

When facilitating the young adults bereavement group, I try to find a balance between empathy and encouragement. This can be difficult depending upon where each participant is along their grief journey.

The study focused on specific categories that the participants needed support in. This can help me to guide the conversation to topics that will empower and positively impact participants.

Thank you!

