

Jennifer Matelski

Dr. Carlton Jean

Clinical Social Work Practice III with Groups

Journal #1

This week, we had our first group session. Our group consists of 5 individuals. 4 of the participants identify as female and 1 participant identifies as male. The participants range in age from 30 to 50 years of age. This is a closed group. The same group members will attend the group from January through April 2023. Each week, there will be a different topic of discussion

The topic of our first group meeting was depression. We started by introducing the topic in the group. One member acted as the group leader and introduced the topic. That member opened the floor to allow someone to begin sharing about their experience with depression. One participant discussed her job and how that can trigger her depression. She shared that she can start to feel symptoms of her depression creep into her life when she is feeling stressed about work. She feels pressured to get her work finished within tight deadlines. Other participants validated her feelings with nods and other signs of active listening. After this first member shared, other members began opening up. One participant shared that juggling her internship and school has caused her anxiety. Her hair began to fall out and the prolonged anxiety led her to feel depressed. All members in the group are pursuing their MSWs and were able to relate to this individual. The group began discussing their shared experiences and supporting one another through empathy and encouragement.

After a few minutes of discussion about school and the stress it can cause, the group leader allowed the next person to share about their experience with depression. The next member discussed her experience with depression stemming from her medical diagnosis. She discussed being very fearful when she was told she may have cancer. All of the doctors appointments and stress led her to be depressed and feel hopeless. She expressed that she was able to find ways to cope with this and then found she did not have cancer. Through talking to those she can trust, getting regular activity, and getting the news that she was cancer free, her symptoms of depression began to subside.

The final member to share was the group leader. He shared how his family dynamics have contributed to him feeling depressed. Because he co-parents his children with his ex-wife, he has to coordinate life with her. That can be complicated at times since they are not together as a couple any longer. He expressed some ways he copes and some systems they have developed to help things go more smoothly while co-parenting.

At the beginning of the group, participants seemed hesitant to discuss personal matters such as their experiences with depression. However, as members began disclosing their own journeys, there was a bond formed between participants. Knowing that we could relate to one another through our shared pain helped us to feel more comfortable being vulnerable.