

Navigating the Effects on Sexual Abuse Survivors: Sexual Abuse Group Proposal

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When it comes to navigating through the effects of dealing with individuals who went through a sexual abuse trauma it can be a touchy topic. Therefore conducting a group therapy that focuses on individuals who had experienced sexual abuse within their life, can provide an opportunity for these individuals to have a space to talk on their experiences and how they are dealing or dealt with the effects after the traumatic experience. In this group therapy we will use behavior therapy as our main therapeutic process, which will help us identify if the individuals who are attending group therapy are ultimately gaining something from the group where they are making changes. The main focus on using this type of therapeutic approach for this specific group of individuals is “the general goals of behavior therapy are to increase personal choice and to create new conditions for learning. An aim is to eliminate maladaptive behaviors and to replace them with more constructive patterns.”(Corey, 2018). Goals we can create for the group therapy aside from looking at the progress, is 1) Being able to create new truths about the lies the individuals tell themselves, 2) Being able to process our emotions and create healthy coping mechanisms when we are experiencing symptoms of PTSD, and 3) Rebuilding trust within yourself and your relationship with others. These are just some goals that we can work on when being in group therapy but there can also be more that we can create as group continues on.

Being that this is a sensitive topic to individuals, this group will be open for two weeks to let individuals get the time to join the group, but after that the group will be closed.

Understanding the importance of grace given the fact that some individuals might not hear about the group or might've not been able to tell others they may know about the group I would let the group stay open for those two weeks. I think keeping the group closed allows for the clients to

gain trust within the other group members since the topic is sensitive, so they feel free to share about their trauma. The group will also be primarily female who range from the ages of 25 years to 40 years of age, have children, in a relationship and also was sexually assaulted within 4 years from the start of the group. Keeping it to this criteria allows the clients to be able to relate with one another and also can offer helpful tips when dealing with relational issues they may be having whether that's with their significant other or their children.

Each group session will time from 90 minutes to two hours. This is to ensure that everyone is given enough time to talk and share and time for us to go over any activities or any goals that we may have for that day. The group session will be a 22-week therapy, meeting weekly on Thursday nights, at 6PM. Although the time may be a conflict with dinner and work, I think it is important to know that the clients are getting home at a decent hour, and also taking into consideration it should give them some wiggle time to make it in before work.

Our group session will initially take place on zoom for the first session to give an introduction, expectations, rules, etc. of the group and then we will conduct the sessions in person. Doing in person sessions allows the clients to be more engaged with one another and really allow the emotion and energy filter through the group. At times when we are staring at a screen too long we can get distracted by other things, and I really want to emphasize the importance of being present while others are sharing is a huge part of group therapy. Given the fact that the clients have families to tend to, I want them to be able to not get distracted by kids or the demands of their partners for a short period of time, so they are able to feel their emotions, and hear the things that are being said.

Ethical considerations that will be a concern is the clients comparing who “had it worst”? When different individuals are sharing their story. Another ethical concern is me as the counselor trying to relate to the individuals rather than guiding the conversation, because then it can open up a door for a client to try and become my “friend” rather than have a client-therapist relationship with me, or my fellow colleague. Legal considerations for group therapy would be confidentiality. This is always the biggest concern for any group therapy, but I do think there is more of an emphasis on this group due to the fact that some individuals may be in a court process since they could be proceeding forward with a case against their perpetrator. Therefore I think ensuring that the group can abide by the confidentiality policy is a huge role that will play part in group therapy. Also being mindful that some of these perpetrators are still out there, whether or not they are being convicted, so being mindful that sharing information that isn’t ours to share will possibly cause harm to themselves or other members in the group. If any of these legal policies, or ethical considerations are being questioned the group will have to stop until all areas are being worked out, and any members who fail to uphold the policies will be asked to leave.

Advertisement of the group will not be a typical flyer posted on a bulletin board for everyone to see. It will look like targeting women who may live in low-income communities, woman-owned businesses, facilities that work specifically with women or patients who are in CBT or behavioral therapy, hospital faculty who are able to pass along to patients who might’ve come in for domestic violence or a prior rape. The goal is to target woman of the qualifications listed above but it is also to ensure the safety of these woman so that everyone can’t see the flyer so these individuals can feel safe when attending group. We would primarily be working out of a

hospital so there is a safety barrier surrounding our group sessions, but also being equipped as a therapist if someone may come in distraught, then we will have access to hospital staff to step in and help if needed.

Creating an outline for the group therapy gives us a good outlook on how the sessions can be ran. But the main goal is to ensure that the goals are being met and that progress is being made. Therefore we will set daily check points, a simple google form can be sent out every other day asking simple questions and using a sliding scale answer from 1-4, 1 being not good at all to 4 being the best she's ever felt. Based off the responses we can see if we can see an increase in mood and a decrease in PTSD symptoms. We can also focus in group the things we learned last week, and how we applied it this week. If we notice a group member sliding through the cracks we will pull them aside and offer some one-on-one counseling so we can guide them back on track with the rest of the group members.

References

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