

Support Group Meeting Assignment

Support Group Meeting Assignment

Carolyn Cuevas

Professor Jean Carlton

SWK658: Clinical Social Work Practice III
with Groups (NOS)

Spring 2023

Support Group Meeting Assignment

This group purpose is to support people with eating disorder, it took place in Hybrid-Balance Brooklyn, located at 304 Boerum Street, Brooklyn, NY 11206. The group is scheduled for Sundays at 3:30- 4:30pm EST, the group is open to BIPCO/ Queer/Trans/ Women/Men, in person & online. The group was hybrid a portion of the participants were online and other were in person. There were 4 participants online and three in person. Majority of the group participants were women and one male; The ages of the participants were different. One of the members was in her 50's, 3 women were in their 40's, two others in their 30's and the male in his late 20's. The ethnicity of the participants was diverse, four participants were White, and three others were Hispanic background (two Puerto Ricans and one Dominican). The group had one speaker who was also the facilitator, and it is an open support group.

The group started by praying the serenity prayer all together. After the prayer every member of the group that was new introduced themselves. Members of the groups that have been part of it for a while did a brief introduction, shared their names and the reason why they were at the group as well. The facilitator briefly introduced himself and explained the goal of the groups and some of the norms the group abide to when sharing and listening to other members. I observed different emotions within the members, some of them share their personal stories and the reason why they were in the group. I felt some shame in some of the members who mostly kept their cameras off and kept silent when ask who volunteer to read any of the materials during the session. I also observed that some of the experience share by some of the members were helpful for me to understand eating disorder better. I also noticed that some members share their progress, and they were very emotional of the plan B they must put in place to make progress and avoid eating when feeling frustrated, stress or angry. One of the group members share the progress she has been making to fight anorexia nervosa. This member shared her video for a

Support Group Meeting Assignment

little while, and it was touching to me, it was my first time seeing a person that has the condition. One of the members share how she uses art as a replacement of eating when she is not hungry. There was a member of the group who shared how she has been making progress through her recovery, but at the moment she was feeling anxious regarding the process and feeling eager to make it to her recovery goal.

I believe the facilitator used a democratic leadership style to facilitate the group, he allows all members to share their experiences, progress and how their week was. The facilitator allowed for members to voluntarily read the slides and share their opinion about the readings. The facilitator did not try to push on members to do things they did not volunteer or felt like doing. He allowed silent time and used it to give members the space to think and reflect. The material shared with the group were informational and motivational. The facilitator shared the 12 steps for Eating Disorder Anonymous (EDA) and I was surprised by noticing that a lot of the content is God oriented. God is use as a source of strength, understanding, guidance and support through the process. The 12 steps also direct members to the understanding that the body is made to God's image, and he can restore it, but there is also a responsibility we have as well. The facilitator promoted a safe and support environment for all members to share them. The facilitator used active listening, paraphrasing, and clarifying to help different members to process through their feelings and making them aware of their emotions in the situation they are in. The material shared by the facilitator were oriented to empower the participants through their process. Some questions used for open forum by the facilitator were used to help the group treat the group and grow from each other's experiences. He used it as a way to empower the members through the group's own experiences. "Empowerment counters oppressions by helping vulnerable groups and their members to increase their ability to make and implement basic life

Support Group Meeting Assignment

decisions” Zastrow 2018, pg. 234. The members of this group are part of the vulnerable population, most of the members are part of the LGBTQI community and low-income families. The way the facilitator used empowerment in this group was as a strategy to promote emotional strength and stability through experiences. While some of the group member shared their experiences many of them went into catharsis while describing their eating disorder, how they experienced it the first time and their progress.

During this experience I learned that many people traumatic experiences started with an emotions or situation that affected them. While the person seeks for a way to compensate those feelings, they end up developing disorders and trauma that perpetuate other issues as a result of the original matter. Many people develop eating disorder as a way to cope with anger, anxiety, frustrations, growing pains they wished to be free from, etc. I learn that eating disorder is not just bulimia, anorexia nervosa, binge eating. It also includes purging, over exercising, laxative abuse, self-denying, self-manipulation, misuse of insulin etc. I also learn that the population suffering from eating disorder experiences relapse, and it is similar in away to the addictive behavior population. The relapse impacts can make the individual in question very unstable emotionally and feeling miserable to relapse on the same habit that make them feel that way originally. The eating disorder population can deal with a lot of pain and obsession that lead to feelings that might be become unbearable to dealt with. I observe that the facilitator also used the strength perspective strategy to help members to focus and use their strength to continue their progress. “The strength perspective seeks to identify, use, build on, and reinforce the ability and strength that people have.” Zastrow 2018, pg. 234. During my observation, some of the members of the group share how they replace some of the feelings that they experience with making artistic pieces such as painting, drawing and others use journaling as a way to process their feelings. I

Support Group Meeting Assignment

believe the use of strength perspective can be very useful when working with his population in order to help them explore ways they can use to avoid relapse and utilized their strength as a tool to promote recovery.

Bibliography

Zastrow, C. (2018). (10th ed.). *Social Work with Groups: A comprehensive work text*. Belmont, CA: Thompson/Brooks Cole. ISBN-13: 978-1285746401; ISBN -10: 128 5746406