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SWK 658

Dr. Yoon

Journal Record Assignment

I recently had the opportunity to participate in a support group meeting, for caregivers and family members, of individuals diagnosed with mental illness-this proved to be a rewarding, and rich learning experience for me, particularly, as a future group facilitator. Attending this meeting, afforded me the opportunity to observe an external group process, was crucial to increasing my knowledge/skills, in this particular subject area, as group work remains an important element in social work practice. I hope to facilitate a group meeting in the next few weeks, and feel adequately prepared given combination of theoretical, and practical experience. Working on class-room assignments, within a group setting has been instrumental in further developing and enhancing my skills, and abilities.

I must certainly admit, group work is not as simplistic as initially perceived-can pose unique challenges for both members and facilitators as observed not only during the support group meeting, relevant class-room training videos, and role-play exercises, which continue to be effective learning tools/strategies. I especially look forward to my participation in these role-play, exercises as I consider myself, a “hands-on” type of learner. These learning activities, further enable me to hone my client engagement skills, and reinforce the necessary techniques required to be a competent group facilitator. Observation of this external group dynamic provided me the unique opportunity of witnessing group process first-hand, and gaining new

insights and perspectives. Additionally, I was able to mirror some of the class-room experiences to this setting.

My overall assessment of the family support group is, it provides a significant benefit, to not only its members, but the community as a whole. In speaking to some of its members, group has been well received, and highly regarded, despite some key areas of opportunity. While, still in the initial stages of development, group facilitators promote a democratic leadership style, have clearly outlined goals and objectives, and have a defined working relationship. Similarly, to small group classroom process, group members generally promote collaborative decision-making, and appear to have equal input and are adept at problem-solving, and conflict resolution, however, there are some apparent challenges (largely attributed to “growing pains”) such as power struggles, conformity, cohesion, etc. As a result of this experience, I’m leaning towards facilitating a similar type of group, if/when the opportunity presents itself.