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SWK 658

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Journal Record Assignment

As the group continues to undergo the relevant stages of growth and development, I'm often confronted with some of the associated challenges of effective group practice. The group to which I'm currently assigned, consists of a diverse group of students/members with varied personal and professional backgrounds, which is a significant strength for the group as a whole, however, conflicts often arise due to the diversity of opinions amongst members. It is becoming quite apparent that group cohesion, may be an unrealistic or unattainable goal, however, members remain committed to the attainment of overall group objectives, largely facilitated through a democratic leadership structure.

Membership in this group has afforded me the opportunity to further develop my leadership skills, as I continue to assume a greater level of responsibility in the administration of group activities. In the initial stages of group formation, "growing pains" (it is noteworthy, interpersonal conflict is commonly experienced within groups) became quite evident and I was instrumental in devising solutions to this issue, and group members were able to develop a greater sense of inclusivity in group interactions. In my past/current experiences, fostering a sense of belongingness, and value amongst group members, promotes increased outcomes. It is crucial that all groups have a clearly defined plan to mediate/resolve conflict.

The small group process continues to be a rich learning experience for myself and peers, and I'm certainly impressed by the tremendous level of growth we have all experienced as result of this process-the popular saying team-work makes the dream work, comes to mind. Overall, group has reached a level of homeostasis-considered coordinated and well balanced. One of the major strengths of the group, is the diversity of its members, as every individual brings a unique perspective to group interactions which helps to further enhance and support group objectives. It is noteworthy, members are generally supportive of each other thereby, fostering a sense of community.

I hope to facilitate a group meeting in the next few weeks, and feel adequately prepared, given my combination of theoretical, and practical experience. Working on class-room assignments, within a group setting, and my recent participation in a family support group meeting (observation of this external group dynamic provided me the unique opportunity of witnessing group process first-hand, thereby, gaining new insights and perspectives) has been instrumental in further developing and enhancing my skills, and abilities, however, I must certainly admit, group work is not as simplistic as initially perceived-group work poses unique set of challenges for both facilitators and members.

Similarly, to small group classroom process, I will adopt a democratic leadership style, when I facilitate my upcoming group meeting (I'm leaning towards conducting a family support group as well given my commitment to social work practice with individuals/families). Additionally, group members will be encouraged to engage in collaborative decision-making, and will have equal input-to reduce/eliminate potential for power struggles. In order to promote order, there will be clearly defined rules, and relevant code of conduct will be enforced. My

ultimate goal, is to create a safe and inclusive environment so that every individual (and not a select few) is able to benefit from overall group objectives.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to provide personal feedback about this course-my overall assessment of this course, is it's been extremely effective in imparting the relevant skills needed to effectively conduct group work in both therapeutic/non-therapeutic settings. I must admit, I initially had reservations about group work, however, I thoroughly enjoyed the class-room experience, particularly, the "role-play" exercises. Prior to my enrollment, in this course, my experience with group therapy was somewhat limited however, this experience has enabled me to develop a greater level of competency in this subject matter.