

Jennifer Matelski

Dr. Carlton Jean

Clinical Social Work Practice III with Groups

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This week, we discussed Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Groups. Our group session was composed of individuals who have experienced trauma. Some of these participants have experienced anti-Asian violence or have witnessed it. Many in the group have expressed that they feel their lives will consist of trauma and violence against them forever.

The social worker started the group by allowing each individual to introduce themselves and express how they are feeling at this moment. The first participant shared that she was feeling anxious because discussing the past trauma can make her feel like she is reliving it. Others in the group validated her feelings and some mentioned they can relate to that feeling. Another participant shared that he is angry because he feels anti-Asian hate crimes are on the rise and he thinks it will impact him throughout his life. The last participant shared that she feels that trauma will always be present in her life and she will always have to be exposed to violence. The social worker portrayed active listening and thanked each participant for sharing and for attending the group today.

The social worker then addressed the group and asked who else in the group felt that their lives will always consist of trauma and violence, forever. All participants raised their hands. The social worker stated that she knows they have all experienced trauma in unique ways, so it makes sense as to why they feel this way.

The social worker then asked the group to go around and describe one good day or moment they had in the past. She said it can be anything, big or small, that made you feel good. One participant shared about a day his family all went out to get ice cream on a summer night. Another participant shared that they enjoyed their middle school graduation dinner with friends. Each participant was able to share something positive. The social worker then asked them if they feel they will have more days or moments like that in the future. They all said yes, they likely will. One participant mentioned that she will have some hard times too. The social worker validated that and said that is likely true. “We will all experience hardship and happy times in our lives.”.

After thinking about those good moments you have experienced and the good moments to come, can you reframe this thought you had? How would you state this now? The social worker wrote this on the dry erase board in their room “There will be trauma and violence in my life, forever.”.

One participant volunteered to write a revised thought on the board. She wrote “There likely be trauma/violence and positive experiences in my life.” The social worker had each of the participants write a revised thought. Each was slightly different, but all the phrases included the positive experiences they will have in their futures, rather than just the trauma and violence.

I feel the social worker succeeded in utilizing cognitive reframing. She was able to listen and validate the participant’s experiences and feelings, but also help them look at their futures from a more realistic perspective.