

Reflection Paper 2

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What is like for you to facilitate your own group? Did it give you insight into the work your group leader does?

It was exciting to lead my own group and put into practice what we have been learning. Also it was not a real group so any mistakes I made, didn't hurt anyone. As a matter of fact, my mistakes could help the other students realize they do not want to make that mistake either. And I trust my classmates to give real feedback and be honest about how my leadership affected them and how I could do better next time.

It felt comfortable running group and I learned a lot from leading the group experience. I found I do have the temperament to lead the group but I have to be aware of several issues. First I need to be cognizant of my attitude. As Dr. Ramos pointed out in his feedback, if I enter group with high energy and am very positive, clients will often respond by not sharing anything that might bring down the energy or be seen as negative. I need to enter group as a clean slate so that the group members can fill that space with what they are going through. I also have to be careful that I don't fall into being friends with my clients or becoming part of the group. In the group therapy experience I noticed I became concerned with how other members saw me and altered how I responded to make myself look good. I believe I was also aware of that when I led group which can obviously lead to an unhealthy group dynamic.

The insight I gained from running group and then putting our group therapy into perspective given that experience, was minimal. I am a planner and for my group, I had several ideas on how to begin to ensure a safe environment as well as several ideas on how to deal with issues that may have come up in group. The impression I got from our group and our leader was

that she let group unfold with no plan besides her own experience leading groups for many years. I reached out to her to find out what her plan was but she has not gotten back to me.

What were your impressions of your group leader now compared to be beginning of group?

Many of my first impressions of our leader turned out to be correct. That does not mean that will always be the case with first impressions in groups. I did learn however to trust myself more. Also I believe I could have tried harder to investigate while in group, what other's experiences were which would have helped me discern the validity of my interpretations of everyone's experience. That seems to be a lost opportunity. I let the groups go by in an effort to not dominate group but instead I believe I quieted feedback within me that could have benefitted the group and the experience as a whole.

At the beginning of group, I looked for the lessons in my group leader's leadership. What could I take from her as a group counselor and incorporate and make my own? I had difficulty at first trying to see her plan or method but sat back and kept trying to understand where her techniques were. I identified open-ended questions, linkages and simple reflections. I had expected to gain deeper knowledge of group dynamics from observation but our group mainly stayed surface and was more like people sharing what they did the last week with a few exceptions. The exceptions did provide lessons however from fellow students.

What was the most effective intervention you witnessed in group?

Within the group the most effective interventions were by Brittany and British when they kept after a fellow student (different students at different times) to get a deeper answer from them. They identified the issue despite efforts by the other person to bury the issue within humor or other information, asked for clarification or reflected. Those moments were some of the only

extended times group was beneficial in teaching group dynamics. I saw Brittany use articulating the un verbalized several times when she noticed people's reactions and asked more about them. I saw Danny and Hani use sharing knowledge sporadically.

The most effective intervention overall though was when Dr. Ramos pressed the class on what was going on in group. I saw several techniques used during that time, questions, information giving, and challenge. I saw put into practice, "the use of effective influencing responses requires helpers to feel secure enough about themselves to have their own voice and to tolerate client disapproval and disagreement." (Cormier, Nurius, & Osborn 2017).

What has the termination process in your group looked like? How have you been impacted by it?

Irvin Yalom wrote in *The Schopenhauer Cure* "A looming end of the group propelled members to address their core issues with increased ardor." When one of my fellow students did their mock group, they began by saying "we have 8 groups left." I was very much interested in seeing how our leader would end group. We did not discuss the end at any point in our prior eleven groups (unless it was discussed in the one I missed). But when the twelfth group arrived, the leader decided to add one or two more so my last group was not the last group and we did not do anything different in that group to create closure.

One debate we got into was on should a leader be a part of the group or set apart of the group. Our leader said she believes leaders should be a part of the group and her participation in group shows this. My experience has been that leaders should be set apart from the group and focus on facilitation. The reason I bring this up is that I believe the leader's desire to be part of the group instead of outside it led to her adding groups to satisfy others schedules and needs and in turn did not satisfy the few of us who finished at twelve groups.

Can you see yourself doing group work in the future? If so, what population would you work with?

I can definitely see myself leading groups in the future. While individual therapy has so much to offer, my life experience has shown me that when people can act in a certain way, and then have that behavior pointed out to them by several people in the moment, change can happen. I am open to any population that God places me in but youth or women would be who I would lean towards.

References

- Cormier, Sherry; Nurius, Paula S.; Osborn, Cynthia J.. (2017) *Interviewing and Change Strategies for Helpers* (p. 140). Cengage Learning. Kindle Edition.
- Yalom, I. D. (2005). *The schopenhauer cure: A novel*. (p. 282) Harper Perennial.