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Existential Group Therapy

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This week session commenced with Praise and Worship songs by Maverick City, name: “Keep on Getting Better” played by professor Carlton, it sets the atmosphere for a wonderful class session, it motivates and prepared me for the study plan and for the rest of the class. Prof. Carlton, you are an inspiration in this difficult time in my life.

This week’s role play was based on existential group therapy. “Existential therapy focuses on free will, self-determination, and the search for meaning. Often centering on you rather than on the symptom. The approach emphasizes your capacity to make rational choices and to develop to your maximum potential.” We were given a scenario to work with and instructions to follow. Basically, one student was chosen to be the facilitator and the rest of us portrayed the elderly individuals in the group. This role play was a lot of fun.

During the role play we were able to identify various issues that plaque that population. We could easily recognize the symptoms of dementia, denial, and forgetfulness. There were other issues that could not be that easily detect. One of the student mentions about the elderly populations in a laughing manner. I said, to myself how easy to point the finger on an elderly person and their flaws and ages. This really had me thinking how people view the elderly person. I am not saying this like I am judging myself or my classmates, just sharing my view.

On page 234, Corey shares that “in existential group therapy members are assisted in coming to terms with the paradoxes of existence.” In this group facilitation the questions were simple and straightforward and could have possibly led to a constructive discussion except for the fact that some participants weren’t cognitive enough, others were confused, others yet were

more determined to hang on to and exhibit contrived realities. This is not a bad thing; it is a reality that these individuals due to their life experiences and ages are living.

I believe facilitating a senior group is not easy it can be very difficult, however, Judy, did a great job. The facilitator in this case understood the need at hand. These individuals have arrived for the most part at a place of dependence with most of them being over the age of 70. The facilitator understood and was patience and kind.

The elderly populations deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. In Corey text on page 234, shares that “It is essential for the group leader to recognize existential anxiety and guide group members in finding ways of exploring it constructively. Aging is not easy it comes with complex issues and sometimes loves ones and friends are not there presently. So, it becomes a little lonely and not easy to cope with.

REFERENCES

Corey, G., 2015, January 1. Theory & Practice of Group Counseling., Cengage Learning 9th
Ed., Boston, MA