



SWK456/556 GENERALIST
PRACTICE WITH GROUPS,
ORGANIZATIONS, AND
COMMUNITIES

Chapter 9: Intervention, Termination, and Evaluation

- **Group Work and Social Justice:** “Group work practice brings people together in meaningful ways that can serve as a forum for increasing understanding, appreciation, and respect for others. In short, whether group membership is homogeneous or heterogeneous, the experience can reduce the effects of exclusion and the injustices associated with feelings of marginalization”.

Chapter 9: Intervention, Termination, and Evaluation

- **Intervention:** The primary function of the intervention phase of group work is to carry out the goals established during the assessment phase.
 - **Support progress toward individual and group goals:** Having established individual and group goals in the assessment phase, members can develop and implement a plan to accomplish the goals. Social workers must be attentive to the potential need to renegotiate goals during this phase of work.
 - **Attend to group dynamics and processes:** Social workers must be vigilant in their observations of group dynamics and processes. As group members become familiar with one another, they may feel more confident confronting one another, which can create conflict within the group. Moreover, social workers must be mindful of alliances that form within the group and outside the group and of the impact of those relationships on individual and group functioning.
 - **Use evidence-based group practices and resources inside and outside the group:** As the work phase progresses, social workers should be aware of and have access to resources that may be helpful to group members.

Chapter 9: Intervention, Termination, and Evaluation

- There are many evidence-based group interventions available for use. What do we mean when we say 'evidence-based interventions?'
- Identifying the intervention approach, format, and structure *that best fit your goals for working with groups* is the key issue to consider whether you are developing a task, remedial, reciprocal, or social goals group.

Exhibit 9.3 Effective Methods for Working with Task Groups (Chapter 9)

Silence can be a useful strategy to display acceptance and interest but also enables others to have a voice.

Mirroring and reflecting feelings provides an opportunity for reassessment or refocusing the discussion and addressing obstacles.

Exploring, probing, and questioning with open-ended questions can elicit additional and/or expanded perspectives and thoughts.

Providing direction can be useful if used in moderation. Universalizing and connecting points of view may be more effective strategies to move the discussion forward.

Confrontation, when used to share a perspective on potential future implications of group decisions can be helpful to the group.

Support may be provided in the form of supporting a point of view, the right to express a point of view, a group member, or the way in which the group handled a situation.

Modeling, coaching, and shaping enables the facilitator to represent a behavior or alternative for the benefit of the group.

Supposals are using one's imagination to consider possible solutions.

Summarizing, focusing, partializing, sequencing, pacing, and grading strategies occur when the facilitator provides a recap and/or analysis of the group's discussions to invite clarification and progress toward a decision.

Decentering can help to re-engage uninvolved members, while setting limits can serve to remind members of the group norms and rules for interacting.

Dividing into smaller subgroups can promote brainstorming strategies and solutions.

Knowledge of the concepts and techniques of parliamentary procedure can be important. (Source: Ephross, Vassil, & Rose, 2017, pp. 519–521)

Summary of Intervention Skills for Social Work Group Practice (Chapter 9)

The social worker engaged in the intervention phase of social work practice with groups should:

be knowledgeable and skilled in group leadership (e.g., logistics and time management);

facilitate group communication and group dynamics;

be competent with individual and group problem-solving (not 'fixing' the problem);

focus on promoting progress toward group and individual goals.

Chapter 9: Intervention, Termination, and Evaluation

- **Termination/Ending in Group Work Practice:** The social worker's role in termination is to "help members examine their accomplishments, review their experience together, and prepare for the future ... and express and integrate positive and negative emotion" (Garvin & Galinsky, 2013, p. 8).
- Negotiating terminations with groups is an often-complex endeavor in which the social worker deals with endings on **three levels:**
 - The relationship between group members and the social worker
 - Relationships among group members
 - The structure of the group itself
- Endings can and should be a time for reflection and celebration. It is important that all social workers in group practice, particularly those in the early stages of their careers, review the group process as it has impacted their personal and professional growth.

Chapter 9: Intervention, Termination, and Evaluation

- **Evaluation of Group Work Practice**

- While evaluation of group practice shares some commonalities with evaluation of individual and family interventions, evaluating group interventions is more complex, as it requires examinations of both the individual members of the group and of the group itself.
- Formative evaluations occur throughout the life of the group with a goal toward improving the group experience. Outcome evaluations target specific changes made by group members.
- Strategies for evaluating group work practice include:
 - Direct feedback from group members
 - Questionnaires
 - Pre and post test assessments
 - Observation
 - Self-evaluation