Chapter 1

The Corey’s Perspective on Groups

- Groups are not a second-rate approach to helping people change
- Groups are the treatment of choice
- Groups offer a natural laboratory where people can experiment with new ways of being
- Members’ interpersonal difficulties get played out in the group

Group Process

- **Group process** – all the elements that are basic to the unfolding of a group from beginning to end
  - **Examples:**
    - group norms
    - generating trust
    - level of cohesion
    - how conflict emerges in a group
    - patterns of resistance
    - intermember feedback
    - healing forces within the group
    - stages of group development

Group Techniques

- **Group techniques** – leader interventions aimed at facilitating movement within a group
  - **Examples:**
    - conducting initial interviews
    - asking a member to role-play a conflict
    - challenging a member’s belief system
    - suggesting homework

Group Techniques

- Techniques should be:
  - presented as a choice—members should be invited to experiment with new behaviors
  - introduced in a sensitive and timely fashion
  - used with consideration for the member’s cultural background and have a rationale
  - should be abandoned if proven ineffective
  - developed in response to what is happening in the here-and-now

The Theory Behind the Practice

- **An integrative conceptual framework** -- involves the thinking, feeling, and behaving dimensions and is a challenge to create and implement
- **Technical eclecticism** – based on utilizing techniques from a variety of theoretical models
- **Theoretical integration** -- a conceptual and theoretical creation beyond mere blending of techniques
Critical Questions

- What is going on in the group process?
- How are my relationships with clients?
- What role do I take?
- In what ways do I tend to intervene?
- What techniques am I drawn to?
- How do I evaluate client strengths/growth areas, define problems/solutions, think about outcomes?

Various Types of Groups

- **Task groups** – aims to foster accomplishing identified work goals (pg 12)
- **Psychoeducational group** – aims to educate well-functioning group members who want to acquire information and skills in an area of living (pg 13)
- **Group counseling** – aims at preventive and educational purposes — utilizes methods of interactive feedback within a here-and-now time framework (pg 14)
- **Group psychotherapy** – aims at remediation of in-depth psychological problems — often focuses on past influences of present difficulties

Brief Group Therapy

- **BGT** - time limited, structured, last 2 to 3 months, and consist of 8 to 12 weekly sessions
- **Facilitators of BGT** - need training in group process and brief therapy
- **Advantages of BGT**
  - well suited to the needs of both clients and managed care
  - cost-effective
  - widely applicable to diverse client populations and problems
  - can be used in different settings (e.g., school and community agencies)

Piper and Orgodniczuk (2004)

- Brief Group Therapy treatment of choice for:
  - Complicated grief
  - Trauma reactions
  - Adjustment problems
  - Existential concerns
- Benefits include efficacy, applicability, and cost

A Multicultural Perspective on Group Work

- Achieving cultural competence is a lifelong journey
- Effective group work involves considering culture of participants
- Group workers must have awareness, knowledge, and skills to effectively deal with diverse membership
- Cultural similarities and differences need to be addressed in a group

A Comprehensive Definition of Multicultural Group Work

- "A helping process that includes screening, assessing, and diagnosing dynamics of group social systems, members, and leadership for the purpose of establishing goals, outcomes, processes, and interventions that are informed by multicultural counseling knowledge, skills and abilities. It is a process of planning, implementing, and evaluating group work strategies from a socio-cultural context of human variability, group, and individual identity, worldviews, statuses, power, and other salient demographic factors to facilitate human and organizational development..."
The Goals of Multicultural Group Work

• “To promote human development and to enhance interpersonal relationships, promote task achievement, and prevent or identify and remEDIATE mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders and associated distress that interfere with mental health, and to lessen the risk of distress, disability, or loss of human dignity, autonomy, and freedom.”

Tyson, 2009

Groups: Process & Practice 8th ed.

Chapter 2: The Group Counselor

The Group Counselor: Person and Professional

• Some personal characteristics of effective group leaders
  – Courage
  – Goodwill and caring
  – Becoming aware of one's own culture
  – Stamina
  – Willingness to model
  – Dedication and commitment
  – Belief in group process
  – Presence
  – Openness/nondefensiveness
  – Personal power
  – Willingness to seek new experiences

Tyson, 2009

The Problem of Fear

• What If I make mistakes?
• What if my anxiety shows?
• What if I say the wrong thing?
• What if someone doesn’t like me? I get defensive?
• What if they notice that what I saw and what I do aren’t congruent?

Tyson, 2009

The Optimal Group Climate

• One that is safe, positive, and supportive, yet strong enough to at times withstand highly charged emotions, challenges, and interactions between members

• Leader’s interpersonal skills, genuineness, empathy, and warmth are significant variables in creating the kind of climate that leads to successful outcomes

Tyson, 2009

Developing Competence in Using Group Leadership Skills

• Essential to acquire and refine skills
• Skills cannot be separated from the leader’s personality
• It is an art to learn how to use group skills
• Skills learned through supervised experience, practice, feedback, and participation as a member

Tyson, 2009
Group Leadership Skills

- Active listening
- Reflecting
- Clarifying
- Linking
- Suggesting
- Interpreting
- Facilitating
- Supporting
- Empathizing
- Questioning
- Modeling
- Blocking
- Confronting
- Summarizing
- Terminating

Tyson, 2009

Sample Group Leadership Skills
(finding your strengths)

- Interpreting: “I wonder if…”, “I have a hunch…”
- Terminating: Suggestions to transfer to outside group life, preparing to face life outside group, making aftercare follow-up referrals, managing feelings of loss.

Tyson, 2009

Becoming a Diversity-Sensitive Group Counselor

- Diversity competence – involves deep understanding of own culture
- Culturally competent group workers:
  – are aware of their biases, stereotypes, and prejudices
  – apply skills and interventions that are congruent with members’ worldviews
- Ethical practice entails diversity competence
  – engage in experiential activities and personal growth opportunities to increase awareness of different cultures
  – stay up to date with current readings

Tyson, 2009

Guidelines for Competence: Diversity Issues in Groups

- Group workers need to:
  – Consider the impact of adverse environmental factors in assessing group members’ problems
  – Understand how their values and beliefs influence their facilitation of a group
  – Respect the roles of family and community hierarchies within a member’s culture
  – Respect members’ religious and spiritual beliefs and values
  – Acknowledge that ethnicity and culture influence behavior

Tyson, 2009

Focus Areas

- Beliefs and attitudes
- Knowledge
- Skills

Tyson, 2009

Framework

- “If you are not able to recognize that your values are not absolute truths, but products of your cultural upbringing, then you will likely impose your own worldview on your clients and possibly do harm.” pg 47

Tyson, 2009
**Advantages of Coleadership Model**

- Decreases the chance of burnout
- Less overwhelming to respond to the needs of the group
- If one leader is absent, the group can still meet with the other
- Coleader peer supervision is beneficial
- Can be helpful in managing countertransference
- Coleader can help process members’ reactions to other leader

**Disadvantages of Coleadership Model**

Most of the disadvantages in coleading groups have to do with:
- Poor selection of a coleader
- Random assignment to another leader
- Failure of the two leaders to meet regularly
- Poor relationship skills

**Developing a Research Orientation to Practice**

**Importance of Having a Research Orientation:**

- Allows group practitioners to remain flexible and responsive to new evidence
- Allows group practitioners to critically evaluate new developments in the field of group work

**Current State of Research in Group Work:**

- Lack of collaboration between researchers and practitioners continues to be a key problem in group work
- Many research studies in group work suffer from serious methodological problems

**Groups: Process & Practice 8th ed.**

**Chapter 3:**

*Ethical and Legal Issues in Group Counseling*

**Ethical, Legal, and Clinical Issues in Group Counseling**

- **Ethical issues** pertain to the standards that govern the conduct of professional members. These standards can be found in the ethics codes of the various professional organizations
- **Legal issues** define the minimum standards society will tolerate, which are enforced by the rule of law at the local, state, or federal level
- **Clinical issues** involve using your professional judgment to act in accordance with ethical and legal mandates
Informed Consent

- **Informed Consent**—Provide members with adequate information that will allow them to decide if they want to join a group (consider it from the perspective of what you know about this class before you walk in and then after the first day of class)

- **Some information to give prospective members:**
  - The nature of the group
  - The goals of the group
  - The general structure of the sessions
  - What is expected of them if they join
  - What they can expect from you as a leader

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Information in writing

- Policies regarding appointments, fees, insurance
- Length of treatment
- Limits of confidentiality
- Treatment expectations
- Orientation of therapist

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Involuntary Group Membership

- Many groups are composed of involuntary members
- The challenge is to demonstrate the value of a group for members
- Basic information about the group is essential
- Avoid assuming that involuntary members will not want to change

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Psychological Risks of Group Participation

- **Potential risks that group leaders need to monitor** —
  - Misuse of power
  - Members may be pressured to disclose and violate privacy
  - Confidentiality may be broken
  - Scapegoating may occur
  - Confrontation may be done in an uncaring manner
  - Group leaders may not have the competencies to deal with some difficulties that arise in a group

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Confidentiality

- Confidentiality is the foundation of a working group
- Leaders need to define the parameters of confidentiality including its limitations in a group setting
- Members need to be taught what confidentiality involves
- Leaders talk to members about the consequences of breaching confidentiality (gossip)
- Leaders remind members at various points in a group of the importance of maintaining confidentiality

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Special Issues in Confidentiality

- Minors
- People with diminished capacity/guardians
- Court ordered treatment
- School-based programs
- Cultural considerations
- Managed care involvement
The Role of Group Leader Values

- Essential to be aware of your values and how they influence what you think, say, and do in groups.
- Groups are not a forum for you to impose your values on members.
- Leaders’ role is to assist members in examining options that are most congruent with their values.
- Group members have the task of clarifying their own values and goals, making informed choices, and assuming responsibility for what they do.

Values in Balance

- Although you may not directly impose your values on them, your interventions could be aimed at getting them to do what you think is best for them.
- Soft universalism (Knapp and VandeCreek, 2007).
- Expressed values less interfering to therapy process than concealed values.
- In therapy it is not about us (pg 90).

Ethical Issues in Group Work With Diverse Populations

- Considerable harm is possible when diversity exists within a group and the leader fails to use a multicultural approach to assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning.
- Some of the group norms generally associated with group participation may not be congruent with the cultural norms of some clients.
- It is the practitioner’s responsibility to have a general understanding of the cultural values of his or her clients, so interventions are congruent with their worldviews.

Special Issues Pertaining to Sexual Orientation

- Counseling with group members who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered (GLBT):
  - Clients come to group with a history of victimization and fear of abandonment.
  - Counselors whose religious values conflict with their ethical duty must seek supervision and/or consultation.
  - Counselors must critically examine their own biases, heterosexism, and homophobia.

Special Issues Pertaining to Sexual Orientation

- Counselors establish group norms and make interventions that facilitate the safety and inclusion of GLBT group members.
- Counselors create a climate that allows for voluntary self-identification and self-disclosure on the part of GLBT clients.
- Counselors take an active stance when other members express either overt or covert disapproval of GLBT group members.

Ethical Issues in Technology and Group Work

- Research studying online groups is in its infancy.
- Group workers have many concerns about the ethics of online groups (e.g., difficulty of ensuring informed consent and maintaining confidentiality).
- Some advantages of online groups have been noted:
  - Internet social groups offer a less threatening environment in which to meet others.
  - Many forms of technology could be used for teaching, training, and supervising group workers.
### Best Practice Guidelines of ASGW (1998)

- Professional competence in group work is not a final product, but a continuous process for the duration of one’s career

- Some suggestions for increasing your level of competence as a group leader:
  - Participate in continuing education and in personal and professional development activities
  - Seek personal counseling if you recognize problems that could impair your ability to facilitate a group
  - Seek consultation and supervision as needed

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### Professional Training Standards for Group Workers

- ASGW (2000) has recommendations for what constitutes competence as a group facilitator –
  - Knowledge competencies: course work is essential
  - Skills competencies: specific group facilitation skills are required for effectively intervening
  - Core specialization in group work: task facilitation groups; psychoeducational groups; counseling groups; psychotherapy groups

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### Some Legal Safeguards for Group Practitioners

- Take time and care in screening candidates for a group; and for preparing them to participate actively
- Demystify the group process
- Strive to develop collaborative relationships with members
- Consult with colleagues or supervisors whenever there is a potential ethical or legal concern
- Incorporate ethical standards in the practice of group work