THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
School of Social Work

SW 624: INTERPERSONAL PRACTICE WITH GROUPS

Winter ’01
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course builds upon the content in the IP foundation course and presents selected concepts from group dynamics and small group theory. The course will focus on the processes of treatment, task and support groups, and serves as a methods platform course for advanced courses in group practice.

The course will review the various ways that groups are used in social work practice for such purposes as socialization, treatment, self-help, consciousness raising, and prevention. Particular attention will be given to the recruitment and composition of groups, leadership structure of small groups, phases of group development, group processing such as decision making, tension reduction, conflict resolution, goal setting, contracting and evaluation. Students will learn how to assess group problems such as scapegoating, member resistance, overactive deviance, low morale and so on. They will also be presented with a variety of intra-group strategies and techniques such as programs, activities, structured exercises and so on. The course will draw from a number of practice theories such as behavioral, cognitive, gestalt, Lewinian, psychodynamic, existential, Balesian and so on.

The course will also consider how gender, ethnicity, race, and social class of members will impact on various aspects of group functioning. For example, the course will demonstrate how these variables impact on purpose, composition, leadership, selection of intervention strategies, and development of small groups.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Apply concepts and principles from group dynamics and small group theory to the practice of treatment, task and support groups.
2. Identify appropriate group models that can be applied in selected human service settings with particular client populations.
3. Assess how the composition of the group impacts on group functioning and development.
4. Assess various problematic patterns that might emerge in a group and to resolve these problems from either a leadership or member position.
5. Apply various intervention strategies and techniques as appropriate to the group's purpose, setting, membership and stage of development.
6. Account for the impact of gender, race, ethnicity, and social class on various aspects of group functioning.
7. Identify those variables and conditions that contribute to successful group functioning.
COURSE TEXTS

REQUIRED:

RECOMMENDED:


RELEVANT JOURNALS
The following journals are oriented primarily toward group research, practice and education:
Group, The Journal of the Eastern Group Psychotherapy Society
International Journal of Group Psychotherapy
Journal for Specialists in Group Work
Small Group Research (A combination of two journals: Small Group Behavior and International Journal of Small Group Research)
Social Work with Groups
The Group (Ceased publication in 1955)

SESSION SUMMARY

SESSION
I. KNOWLEDGE BASE OF GROUPS AND GROUP WORK
1) January 9 Introduction: Definition of Group
2) 16 From Theory to Practice
3) 23 Values, Ethics and Professional Guidelines
4) 30 Group Work and Underrepresented Populations

II. ACHIEVING CHANGE THROUGH SMALL GROUPS
5) February 6 Group Structure and Formation
6) 13 Group Process and Development
7) 20 Group Leadership: Roles, Functions and Guidelines
8) 27 SPRING BREAK
9) March 6 Task Groups: Foundations and Specialized Methods
10) 13 Working with Groups
11) 20 Working with Groups (cont.)

III. PHASES OF GROUP WORK PRACTICE
12) 27 Pregroup
13) April 3 Beginning Groups
14) 10 Groups in Transition
15) 17 Ending and Evaluating Groups
COURSE OUTLINE

I. KNOWLEDGE BASE OF GROUPS AND GROUP WORK

SESSION 1: (January 9)

A. Introduction: Definition of Group

Garvin (TEXT):
Chapter 1: Contemporary Group Work: An Overview

OPTIONAL:
Forsyth (TEXT):
Chapter 1: The Science of Group Dynamics
Chapter 2: Studying Groups


SESSION 2: (January 16)

B. Social Work with Groups: From Theory to Practice

Garvin (TEXT)
Review Chapter 1: Contemporary Group Work: An Overview
Chapter 2: Group Work Activities and Settings
Chapter 6: Enhancing the Member’s Use of Therapeutic Factors in Groups

OPTIONAL:


SESSION 3: (January 23)

C. Social Work with Groups: Values, Ethics and Professional Guidelines


OPTIONAL:
Toseland & Rivas (TEXT):
Chapter 1: Values and Ethics in Group Work Practice (pp 7-10)
Appendix A: Guidelines for Ethics (pp. 441-443)
Ethical Guidelines for Group Counselors (pp. 445-450)


SESSION 4: (January 30)
D. Group Work and Underrepresented Populations

Garvin (TEXT)
Chapter 15: Working with Oppressed People in Groups

OPTIONAL:

SESSION 5: (February 6)
II. ACHIEVING CHANGE THROUGH SMALL GROUPS

A. Group Structure and Formation

Garvin (TEXT)
Chapter 3: The Pregroup Phase
Chapter 4 Beginning the Group


OPTIONAL:
Forsyth (TEXT)
Chapter 3: Joining and Leaving Groups
Chapter 5: Structure


SESSION 6: (February 13)
B. Group Process and Development

Garvin (TEXT):
Chapter 5: Achieving Group Purposes through Changes in Group Conditions

Chapter 5: Initial Stage of a Group

OPTIONAL:


Forsyth (TEXT)
Chapter 4: Development and Socialization
Chapter 10: Decision Making
Chapter 12: Conflict


SESSION 7: (February 20)

C. Group Leadership: Roles, Functions and Guidelines

Corey and Corey
Chapter 3: The Group Counselor

Forsyth (TEXT)
Chapter 12: Leadership

OPTIONAL:


Toseland & Rivas (TEXT): Chapter 4: Leadership

SESSION 8: (February 27) - SPRING BREAK

SESSION 9: (March 6)

D. Task Groups: Foundation and Specialized Methods

Garvin: (TEXT)
Chapter 16: Working with Committees and Other Task Groups

OPTIONAL:

Toseland & Rivas (TEXT):
Chapter 10: Task Groups: Foundation Methods (pp 295-327)
Chapter 11: Task Groups: Specialized Methods (pp. 329-360)


SESSION 10: (March 13)

E. Working With Groups

Garvin (TEXT):

Chapter 11: Working with Groups for Identity Formation
Chapter 12: Working with Groups To Enhance Skill Attainment

SESSION 11: (March 20)

Working with Groups (Cont.)

Garvin (TEXT)

Chapter 13: Working with Groups in Social Control Situations
Chapter 14: Working with Groups for Rehabilitation

III. PHASES OF GROUP WORK PRACTICE

SESSION 12: (March 27)

A. Pre-Group

Garvin (TEXT)

Chapter 3: The Pregroup Phase

OPTIONAL:


SESSION 13: (April 3)

B. Beginning Groups

Garvin (TEXT)

Chapter 4: Beginning the Group

Corey and Corey (1997)

Chapter 5: Initial Stage of a Group

SESSION 14: (April 10)

C. Group Transitions


OPTIONAL:

SESSION 15: (April 17)
D. Ending and Evaluating Groups

Garvin (TEXT)
- Chapter 10: The Group and Endings
- Chapter 9: The Evaluation of Group Work Practice

OPTIONAL:
Toseland & Rivas (TEXT):
- Chapter 7: Assessment (pp. 201-230)
- Chapter 12: Evaluation (pp. 365-388)
- Chapter 13: Ending the Group's Work (pp.391-409)