S.W. 624  
Interpersonal Practice with Groups  
Spring/Summer 2004  

Mondays 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm  
Room – 3001 SEB

Instructor: Debra Mattison  
Phone (w) (734) 712-2920; (h) (734) 995-3517  
(please call before 10:00 pm)  
E-Mail: mattisod@trinity-health.org

Office Hours: Please feel free to contact me throughout the semester to make an appointment if needed.

1. Course Description:

This course will build on the content presented in course 540 (i.e. Theory and Practice of Interpersonal Practice) and focus on the processes of intervention in task and individual change groups. Particular attention will be given to the recruitment and composition of group members, leadership structure of small groups, phases of group development, and such group processes as decision-making, tension reduction, conflict resolution, goal setting, contracting, and evaluation. Students will learn how to assess and address group problems, such as scapegoating, member resistance, low morale, over-active deviance, etc. They will learn to employ a variety of intra-group strategies and techniques, such as programs, structured activities, exercises, etc. Theories and methods consistent with the achievement of social justice through group work practice will be emphasized. This course will also consider how gender, ethnicity, race, social class, sexual orientation, and different abilities impact on various aspects of group functioning, such as purpose, composition, leadership, selection of intervention strategies, and group development.

2. Course Content:

This course briefly reviews the history of social group work practice in the United States and discusses the various kinds of task and individual change groups (e.g. teams, committees, consciousness raising, support, treatment, developmental, social action, self-help, internet, etc.) found in contemporary social work practice. This course will also discuss how groups can be used to promote well-being, to prevent social problems, to treat existing problems, and to rehabilitate clients with severe conditions that are not amendable to more time-limited interventions. The various factors associated with group effectiveness in both task and individual change groups will be presented as well as those factors that have been designed to reduce the potentially negative and deleterious consequences of group interventions.

Various models of stages of group development in both task and individual change groups and in both open-ended and closed-ended groups will be presented. The implications for leadership styles, the kinds of group dynamics, and the kinds of group interventions in each stage will be discussed. Various structural properties of groups such as sociometry, communication, norms, roles, status, power, and geography will be presented as they relate to the stages of group development. Group processes such as decision making, task achievement, conflict resolution, tension reduction, and contracting will also be related to stages of group development.
All phases of the treatment process from recruitment and composition to assessment, goal formulation, evaluation, intervention, and termination will be presented with special consideration of how these phases may be modified to account for the race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and ability of clients. Evaluation procedures designed to determine the effectiveness of various interventions that can be incorporated into small groups will be presented that also take into account the special needs of clients. Course content will include ethical issues that relate to the practice of social work with groups and those elements of the NASW code of ethics that especially impact on group practice.

3. Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the differences between task, individual change, promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation groups and how these groups are employed in contemporary social work practice.

2. Assess the effectiveness of various kinds of groups and the various interventions that group leaders and facilitators utilize.

3. Operationalize various models of group development in both open and closed groups and recognize how these various stages impact on group dynamics.

4. Identify common problems that emerge in group practice and intervene to resolve these problems.

5. Plan and carry out various structured activities and group interventions that take into account the phases of group development and the special needs of group members.

6. Describe the impact of race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, special abilities, and privilege on the dynamics of group structure and process in small groups.

7. Operationalize the NASW Code of Ethics as it applies to value dilemmas in social group work practice.

4. Course Design:

This course will employ a number of pedagogical strategies to promote knowledge and skill development, such as reading assignments, case analyses, interactive media simulations, in vivo exercises, role play simulations within the classroom, modeling and video demonstrations, and didactic presentations of theory/models/procedures. Whenever possible, graded assignments will be tied to the field placement experiences of students.

5. Relationship to Four Curricular Themes:

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity:** Race, gender, SES, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and disability have an impact on membership and composition, which in turn, influence various aspects of group dynamics. Leadership, status, sociometry, norms, conflict resolution, and communication in groups are dramatically affected by issues of diversity and must be accounted for by social workers in planning and facilitating various kinds of groups.
• **Social Justice and Social Change:** The history of social group work emerges from that part of social work’s history concerned with various reform movements in the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Though therapy groups have emerged as the primary venue in the last two decades, there are efforts to redirect group work to its more traditional roots. There is renewed interest in working with youth gangs, immigrants, homeless people, HIV/AIDS survivors, and with residents of SRO’s (Single Room Occupancy).

• **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation:** Though methods courses tend to emphasize treatment models, this course will examine at least one promotion and prevention model of groups and at least one rehabilitation model of groups. This course will also describe the similarities and differences between these kinds of groups.

• **Behavioral and Social Science Research:** This course will rely on group dynamic theory and on empirical research on the effectiveness of various group interventions and models.

6. **Relationship of Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:**

Social workers must understand when groups are contraindicated for particular clients and must be able to assertively intervene in group processes when group experiences are harming group members. Ethical issues such as client confidentiality, forced participation, and involuntary treatment are considered as they impact social work with groups.

**Course Texts:**

**Required:**


**Relevant Journals**
- Social Work with Groups
- Journal of Small Group Research
- Journal for Specialists in Group Work
- Small Group Research
- International Journal of Group Psychotherapy

**OTHER RELEVANT TEXTS AND REFERENCES:**


**OTHER TEXTS FOCUSING ON DIVERSITY/SPECIALIZED POPULATIONS:**


**GROUP WORK STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES RESOURCES**


**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**


Class Norms

1. Attendance and participation are expected. If absent, you are responsible for material covered in class and any class announcements and additional assignment information.

2. We will begin class promptly and resume class promptly after the designated break based on mutually agreed upon times to be discussed the first class session.

3. The class is structured to provide a variety of learning modalities. The class will include didactic presentation by the instructor and guest speakers. The remainder will consist of discussion and experiential activities in which participation is encouraged and expected.

4. Students are not required to be currently involved in facilitating groups to be in this class. All students can apply group work principles from past experiences and the assigned readings or seek out opportunities and assignments to help facilitate application of the material.

5. Other norms which may be important to the class will be discussed and incorporated.

Assignments and Grading

1. Readings are considered a foundation of the course and you will be expected to know the content of the readings. It is expected that assigned readings will be completed prior to each class to enhance discussion and interaction. Other course content will be disseminated through lecture, discussion and experiential activities. In addition to the assigned texts readings each week, you will be expected to read one additional article or chapter from an area of interest. This will allow each student to “specialize” their individual learning experience.

2. Written assignments (Instructions will be outlined in separate handouts).
   
   A. Group Proposal Part 1       June 7           15 points
   B. Group Assessment            July 5           20 points
   C. Group Proposal Part 2       July 26          20 points
   D. Group Exercise Facilitation As Assigned     15 points

3. In-class participation will account for 30% of your grade. Factors considered: attendance, completion of readings, sharing of pertinent information, ideas and clinical experiences; participation in small group exercises. (See rating form and group participation guide.)

4. Late receipt of the work will result in a 1/2 letter grade deduction. Exceptions will be made only in RARE and COMPELLING situations beyond busyness and scheduling conflicts. A specific plan for completion of missing work must be agreed to by the instructor and the student. Students who do not complete the required assignments will be given no credit on these assignments.

5. Grades will be letter grades defined by the School of Social Work as follows and my numerical point system is indicated in parentheses.

   A grades  Given for exceptional individual performance and mastery of the material. The use of A+, A, and A- should distinguish the degree of superiority.
               (A+ = 99-100   A = 94-98   A- = 90-93)

   B grades  Given to students who demonstrate mastery of the material. B+ indicates performance just above the mastery level but not in an exceptional manner.
              B- indicates just below the mastery level. (B+ = 87-89   B = 84-86   B- = 80-83)
C grades  Mastery of the material is limited. C- is the lowest grade which carries credit.  
(C+ = 78-80   C = 74-77   C- = 70-73)

D grades  Indicate deficiency and carry no credit.

E grades  Indicate failure and carry no credit.

DR grade  Unofficial drop

I  Incomplete when illness or other compelling reason prevents completion of work and there is a definite plan and date for completion approved by the instructor.

Written Assignments

Writing skills are essential to effective social work practice. Graduate level writing skills are expected in this course. Writing labs are available through the Sweetland Writing Clinic in Angel Hall for any student and through the Social Work office from Student Services for Students for whom English is a second language.
### Course Outline & Assigned Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[R]</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
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| **May 10 #1** | Introduction to the Course  
Definition of Group  
Nature & Value of Groups  
Types of Groups |
| [R] | Toseland & Rivas (text), Chapters 1, 2 |
| [R] | Corey & Corey (text), Chapter 1 |
| **May 17 #2** | Beginning Groups and Group Development  
Stages of Development  
Assessment  
Selection, Composition, Atmosphere  
Norms |
| [R] | Toseland & Rivas (text), Chapters 6, 7, 8 |
| [R] | Corey & Corey (text), Chapter 4 |
| **May 24 #3** | Roles within Groups  
Communication patterns  
Group Dynamics |
| [R] | Toseland & Rivas (text), Chapter 3; 232-242. |


### May 31

**Memorial Day - NO CLASS**

**June 7**

**#4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Conflict &amp; Conflict Resolution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Roles, Functions &amp; Guidelines</td>
<td>Use of Power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leader Effectiveness &amp; Styles</td>
<td>Conformity</td>
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<tr>
<td>GROUP PROPOSAL PART 1 DUE</td>
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[R] Toseland & Rivas (text), Chapter 4

[R] Corey & Corey (text), Chapter 5, Chapter 6 (pp. 184-214).


### June 14

**#5**

**Middle Phases of Groups**

**Group Transitions**

**Transference and Counter Transference**

[R] Corey & Corey (text), Chapter 6 (pp. 170-183); Chapter 7 (pp. 216-231).

[R] Toseland & Rivas (text), Chapter 9


### June 21

**#6**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Factors in Successful Groups</th>
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<tr>
<td>Specialized Groups and Application</td>
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<td>Treatment, Task, Self-Help</td>
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[R] Toseland & Rivas (text), Chapter 10

[R] Corey and Corey (text), Chapter 7 (pp. 232-249), and Chapters 9 & 10.


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 28</td>
<td>Diversity and Underrepresented Populations</td>
<td>Toseland &amp; Rivas (text), Chapter 5</td>
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<td>Cultural &amp; Ethnicity Considerations</td>
<td>Corey &amp; Corey (text) Chapters 11 &amp; 12</td>
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<td>#7</td>
<td>Specific Populations</td>
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<td>July 5</td>
<td>Worker Skills and Techniques</td>
<td>Corey &amp; Corey (text), Chapter 2 &amp; 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>Special Methods</td>
<td>Toseland &amp; Rivas (text), Appendix A1, A2, and A3 (pp. 485-496).</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 12</td>
<td>Group Assessment Assignment Sharing</td>
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<td>#9</td>
<td>Theory &amp; Practice Integration</td>
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<td>July 19</td>
<td>Group Processes: Task Achievement, Decision Making and Group Work</td>
<td>Toseland &amp; Rivas (text), Chapters 11 and 12.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Individual versus Group Performance</td>
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| July 26 #11 | Ending Groups  
Preparing for Termination  
Evaluation and Research  
GROUP PROPOSAL PART I & II DUE |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[R] Toseland &amp; Rivas (text), Chapters 14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[R] Corey &amp; Corey (text), Chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kacen, L. (1999). Anxiety levels, group characteristics &amp; members’ behaviors in the termination stage of support groups with patients recovering from heart attacks. <em>Research on Social Work Practice, 9</em>(6), 656-672</td>
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| August 2 #12 | Evaluation & Research  
The Future of Group Work  
Course Termination |
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<tr>
<td>[R] Toseland &amp; Rivas (text) Chapter 13</td>
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