

GROUP COUNSELING

EDP 381
Mondays 4:30- 7:30

Fall, 2014
SZB-268

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Or by appointment

COURSE SYLLABUS

Overview

This graduate-level course has as its purpose the exploration and understanding of a wide range of group therapy and treatment interventions. It is a "survey" course in the sense that it will address two major categories of group counseling interventions and their associated principles, therapeutic factors, design considerations, and leadership issues.

Course Methodology

Our primary course methodologies will be a combination of experiential learning, lecture, discussion of assigned and supplemental readings; as well as practice in group leadership skills.

Rationale for Course

As a professional counselor or psychologist, you will be called upon to help people cope with and resolve a wide range of problems and dilemmas. For some of these difficulties, group counseling will be the treatment of choice, meaning that it is the treatment modality with the greatest chance of providing effective and lasting assistance. Through this course, it is hoped that you will become more resourceful and effective in applying the appropriate group treatment to the needs of people who utilize your services.

Course Aims and Objectives

To help you acquire the foundational knowledge essential to effective group counseling
To provide the experiences that will enable you to acquire the functional competencies associated with successful group leadership
To deepen understanding of group functioning through your participation in an in-class or alternate experiential growth group
To help you acquire the basic skills essential to develop and lead each of the two categories of groups covered in this course
To cover the unique ethical dilemmas group leaders encounter
To address special cultural and diversity considerations essential to attuned practice and other best practice guidelines

Behavior elements required for satisfactory learning in this course
Include:

Timely reading of assignments
Collaborative participation in creation and maintenance of a learning environment within the class
Evidence of integration of foundational knowledge with functional competencies

Beliefs that Influence how I teach

My role as the instructor is primarily as a course organizer, knowledge and skills consultant, and facilitator to the learning process.

Problem-based learning helps us understand abstract ideas and conceptual models more clearly than an approach that is based strictly on lectures.

Collaborative learning, as compared to competitive and isolated learning, produces superior results in terms of both process and acquired skill and knowledge.

Trust and respect are central ingredients to a healthy classroom environment in which ideas can be freely exchanged, confusion clarified, and beliefs examined.

Class Requirements

Attendance is Essential

Since much of what we learn in this course will occur in class, it is vital that you attend and be mentally present in class. In the course, I plan to use a variety of instructional methodologies, including discussion of assigned readings, lectures, guest experts, team presentations, and skill building activities. Due to the experiential nature of this course and the variety of methodologies utilized, it will be difficult to "make up" missed opportunities and your absence will interfere with the

development of an inclusive, cohesive classroom and group environment.

If you fail to attend a class, you will be expected to consult with your classmates to learn what material you missed. Should you miss more than one class, you will need to contact me to develop a plan for "making up" missed material and to convince me that you are committed to this course and your classmates. My intent with this policy is not to be punitive, but rather to reassure myself that you are getting the most out of this class and are on the right path to becoming a responsible professional practitioner.

Experiential Group

As part of this course, you will have the opportunity, not obligation, to participate in an in-class experiential group designed to provide you with personal insights into group process and the experience of being a group member. Should you choose not to participate in the in-class group, please initiate a discussion with me to work out an acceptable alternative group experience. If you choose to participate in the in-class experiential group, it is important to note that it will be "growth centered" and focus on issues important to your development as a person and an emerging professional therapist. Of course, you will establish your own personal goals. I, therefore, recommend that each of you begin the group experience with a self-selected interpersonal goal that is related to your development as a professional and can be addressed within the group format. Examples of goals might include:

To become more comfortable with disclosing feelings and giving feedback in a group

To become more self aware through shared group observations

To become more self accepting and/or more accepting of others

To explore trust issues that could interfere with your professional work

To increase comfort in exploring aspects of yourself in the presence of others

Your in-class group experience will be consistent with the professional training guidelines, objectives and ethical standards of the American Counseling Association and the American Psychological Association. During the first class, you will be asked to review a statement about your rights and responsibilities before deciding to participate in the in-class or an alternate group experience.

Learner Evaluation and Grading

Due to the nature of this course, students will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Assignments of grades will be based on satisfactory performance in each of three areas: a) commitment to the work of the

course; b) journal entries; and c) your team project. To receive credit, you must demonstrate satisfactory performance in all three areas. While your participation in the in-class experiential group or an alternative group experience is important to your development as a group leader, the nature of your participation will NOT be considered in the assignment of grades.

Major Performance Elements

In lieu of any exams, your performance will be evaluated on the following performance elements:

Class participation

Your score on this performance measure will reflect the quantity and quality of your in-class participation, your preparedness, attendance, and contribution to developing a productive classroom environment in which respect and trust abound.

Journal Entries

A commitment to making thoughtful deliberative entries on a weekly basis in your journal is an important learning activity for the class. While each journal entry should be important to your development, the primary purposes of the journal are:

To reflect on what you are learning about the intricacies and complexities of group counseling,

To record your thoughts and feelings about the ethical, legal and personal issues involved in the type(s) of interventions under discussion, and

To help consolidate and integrate what you are learning.

Team Projects

During the semester you will team up with three or four other class members to develop a leader's manual for a theme group. A portion of three class periods have been reserved so that each team has an opportunity to make a presentation to the class describing the group's purpose, goals, and change strategy, as well as to lead the class through several key experiential activities.

Course Texts

Yalom, I. D. & Leszcz, M (2005). The theory and practice of group psychotherapy. (5th ed.). New York: Basic Books.

Course Schedule

The schedule and tasks elucidated in this syllabus may be revised as required by either judgment or circumstances. Changes will be posted on Blackboard and announced in class. It is your responsibility to make note of all changes.

| Date | Topic | Assignments |
|-------------|--|---|
| 09/01/14 | Labor Day | no class |
| . | Module 1: Theme Groups | |
| 09/08/14 | Course overview, format and experiential group participation. Differences between theme and interpersonal groups | Read the short story "The Bound Man" for next class |
| . | | |
| 9/15/14 | Theme groups: design and change Strategies Body Acceptance Group Manual | Drum, Becker, & Hess Drum and Knott article |
| 9/22/14 | Selecting and planning your Theme group project Practice theme group leadership | Yalom: Chapter 1, 2, & 3 Read Body Acceptance Group Manual |
| . | Module 2: Interpersonal Psychotherapy Groups | |
| 9/29/14 | Therapeutic Factors at the heart of the Change Process | Yalom: Chapters 4, 5, & 6 |
| 10/06/14 | Guiding the Interpersonal process in groups: what the leader must "do" and "be" | Yalom: Chapters 7, 8, & 9 |
| 10/13/14 | Module 3: Theme Group Leadership practice Lead Theme Group Session-1 | |
| 10/20/14 | Lead Theme Group Session-2 | Yalom: Chapters 11 & 12 |

| | | |
|----------|---|-------------------|
| 10/27/14 | Lead Theme Group Session -3 | |
| 11/03/14 | Lead Theme Group Session-4 | |
| 11/10/14 | Issues to consider in creating an effective interpersonal therapy group | Yalom: Chapter 13 |
| 11/17/14 | Student Theme Group Presentations | Group 1 presents |
| 11/24/14 | Student Theme Group Presentations | Group 2 presents |
| 12/01/14 | Student Theme Group presentation | Group 3 presents |
| 12/10/14 | Student Theme Group manuals due | |

Important Statements

The University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

University Electronic Mail Notification Policy (Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students)

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address.

Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at

<http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

In this course e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class work and announcements. Note: If you are an employee of the University, your e-mail address in Blackboard is your employee address.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

In compliance with the UT Austin policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations. Students who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259- voice or 471-4641 – TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. Five business days before an exam the student should remind the instructor of any testing accommodations that will be needed. See Web site below for more information:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/providing.php>

Use of Blackboard in Classes

This course uses Blackboard, a Web-based course management system in which a password-protected site is created for each course. (Student enrollments in each course are updated each evening.) Blackboard can be used to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to take online quizzes and surveys.

You will be responsible for checking the Blackboard course site regularly for class work and announcements. As with all computer systems, there are occasional scheduled downtimes as well as unanticipated disruptions. Notification of these disruptions will be posted on the Blackboard login page. Scheduled downtimes are **not** an excuse for late work. However, if there is an unscheduled downtime for a significant period of time, I will make an adjustment if it occurs close to the due date.

Blackboard is available at <http://courses.utexas.edu>. Support is provided by the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400 Monday through Friday 8 am to 6 pm, so plan accordingly.

Religious Holidays

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time **after** the absence. It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin that **you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent** to observe a religious holy day.