

COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE

GROUP COUNSELLING/ THERAPY

Group counseling is a form of therapy which help people from shared experiences. It usually focused on a particular or personal issue of group.

Example Emotion management while a therapist usually manages group counseling, contributions from other members in the group are considered valuable since all in the group share similar issues.

One of the main principals behind group counseling is to attempts to counteract the isolation by assembling people with similar issues to **enforce that difficulties are not singular to one person.**

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING

Individual counselling is a method of bringing about change in a person by exploring his or her feelings, attitude, thinking and behaviour. It is a process of meeting with counselor to assist a person in dealing with symptoms or problems a person is having.

Individual counselling is sometimes **called as psychotherapy**, talk therapy or treatment. It is a process through which clients work want-one on one with a trained mental health clinician in a safe, caring and confidential environment.

Counselling allows individual to explore their feelings beliefs, behaviour walk through challenging or influential memories, identities aspects of their lives that they would like to change and others set personal goals and work towards desired change.

PURPOSE OR GOAL OF INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING

- Individual counselling helps to remove or modify existing symptoms, mediate disturbed patterns of behaviour, It also helps in promoting positive personality growth and development.

TYPES OF INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING

1.	Abreaction therapy
2.	Reality therapy
3.	Hypnosis
4.	Supportive Psychotherapy
5.	Psychoanalysis

ABREACTION THERAPY

Abreaction therapy is a process by which repressed materials, particularly a painful experience or conflict is brought back a consciousness. The person not only recalls but also relives the experiences which is accompanied by the appropriate emotional response.

REALITY THERAPY

Reality therapy is a form of psychotherapeutic technique which focuses on present behaviours and development of a patient's ability to cope up with the stress of reality and take a great responsibility for the fulfilment of their needs.

HYPNOSIS

In this therapy a patient is put into an altered state of consciousness by giving them repetitive monotonous auditory stimuli to create a state of focussed attention and increased suggestibility. This therapy involves following three factors:

- Absorption
- Dissociation
- Suggestibility

SUPPORTIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY

In this therapy patient with chronic disabling psychiatric conditions for whom basic change is not seen as a realistic goal.

PSYCHOANALYSIS

This therapy focuses primarily on the influence of unconscious forces such as repressed impulses and memories, internal conflicts and childhood traumas on the mental life. The therapist helps the clients to identify unresolved conflicts and traumas from early childhood.

MERITS OF INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING

- It helps a person in understanding of their own self and emotions.
- It helps a person in discovering personal strength and weakness.
- It encourages a person in attempting at new way of thinking and behaviour.
- Sharing worries with the expert helps a person feel less alone with the problem and teaches them a better way to cope.
- It helps a person to identify their goals for themselves and how to progress towards those goals.
- Individual counselling can be set up quickly.

DEMERITS OF INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING

- Chances of getting too personal and emotionally attached to the counsellor are high
- The outcomes will be from one person only that is the counsellor.
- Sometimes counsellor have limited knowledge to tackle the situation
- It is expensive just for one session of counselling.
- Clients may talk but not make any changes.
- Some clients don't have interest in talking about their problems.

GOALS OF GROUP COUNSELING

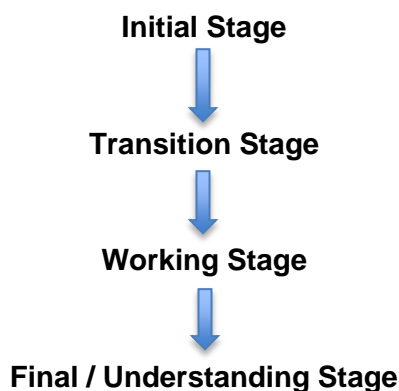
The goal of Group Counseling is to instill hope in clients and bring people together so that they can benefit from more support throughout the session. It helps clients who feel alone and isolated which can in turn result in depression and worsening behavioral issues. The goal is to initiate interaction between one another and help boost self esteem within the group. When the clients need to start using a new behavior as a part of their treatment, the group setting is a fitting place to begin because it is supportive. When a group unites with a similar goal in mind there is a sense of belonging during the sessions. Group counseling focuses on promoting interpersonal learning with others and providing feedback so that each client may have a deeper understanding of their own diagnosis.

WHEN IS GROUP COUNSELING USED?

There are various reasons as to why Group Counseling may be used. It's often chosen over individual psychotherapy for social reasons. Those who are in the group are there to improve throughout the treatment by observing others who are dealing with the same areas of health. Although the client doesn't partake in one-on-one interactions with the counselor there are advantages to the environment. Group counseling is used when the client is in need of an increased amount of feedback. It may be provided if the client benefits from modeling and social interaction. When the individual is able to see others improve they can use the model's coping methods for their own cognitive and behavioral growth.

PROCESS OF GROUP COUNSELING

Each stage has a purpose and there are different expectations that must be addressed as the group progresses through each stage. The counselors and group members have roles that they fall into that also change as the group transforms.



Group Therapy – Initial Stage

The first stage of a group is the initial stage. The purpose of the initial stage of a group is to establish expectations of what the group is going to be like. These expectations include trust, roles, and goals. Confidentiality and conflict need to be addressed immediately. Also, any culture concerns must be dealt with. The counselors are there to explain the process and to

support each member when dealing with confrontation. The group members must be participatory and involved. This can be tricky with court appointed group members but if the expectations of involvement are explained thoroughly they will learn that it is either participate in the group or face legal consequences.

Group Therapy – Transition Stage

The transition stage is a very difficult stage to get through. This stage comes after the initial stage and is when most of the group members feel anxious about sharing their feelings with strangers. Some members become defensive and resistant while others may be shy and fearful. It is the role of the counselor to keep the transition period on track and as pleasant as possible. This stage can be extremely uncomfortable for the counselor as they may be confronted, belittled, or attacked. If the counselor is good at leading groups the group will learn to trust and respect the counselor during this stage by leaving the negativity out. For the members to get the most out of the group they must participate cordially and this includes listening and giving advice.

Group Therapy – Working Stage

Once the transitional stage has settled, group members **will start to feel comfortable** enough to really get into the deeper issues that the group was designed for. This is called the working stage. This stage comes after all the kinks get worked out during the transition stage and is when each member is able to explore their thoughts and emotions which may be triggered by someone else's words. The counselor in this stage will guide the group through this process using techniques and challenges that bring out emotions.

A good counselor will know how to guide by using minimal words themselves. Counselors should be able to read each group members verbal and non-verbal language. Group members in this stage need to be honest about their feelings and not be afraid to speak their mind. They should not feel as though they are being judged or criticized and if they are, it is the counselor's job to address these issues.

Group Therapy – Final / Understanding Stage

Lastly, the final stage is when the group understands that they are no longer going to be together. This stage allows the group members to reflect on their experience and decide how they will use the knowledge that they acquired in their future occurrences. This stage often comes with feelings of sadness and separation. During this stage, **feedback is very important**. It is the role of the counselor to educate on what each member should expect from the experience which includes reminders of confidentiality and change that may not be noticeable immediately. Group members will be encouraged to give feedback to other group members as well and in the end it is up to each member to decide what to do with the experience that they received.

TYPES AND MODELS OF GROUP THERAPY

**Psychoeducational
groups**

**Skills development
groups**

**Cognitive-behavioral
therapy groups**

support groups.

**Interpersonal
process groups**

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1. **Psychoeducational groups.** The primary focus of these groups are to educate and inform individuals generally about substance abuse, mental health, related behaviors, and the consequences of those behaviors.
 2. **Skills development groups.** This model is flexible. The therapist can adapt the the teaching of skills based on the needs of the individuals in the group. Skills focus on maintaining abstinence from drugs or alcohol and involve more interaction among the group members.
 3. **Cognitive-behavioral therapy groups.** The therapist works to identify the problematic thinking and behaviors that contribute to the substance misuse and teaches group members new thinking and behavior patterns. These groups focus on relapse prevention training as well.
 4. **Support groups.** Just as the name suggests, this model provides support and care for the members while teaching them interpersonal skills through group discussion, shared experiences, and collaborative problem-solving.
 5. **Interpersonal process groups.** In this model, the therapist observes group interactions, functionality, and performance. The therapist helps members with their emotional development and addresses their childhood concerns that may lead them to poor decision-making and impulsive tendencies.

LIMITATIONS OF GROUP COUNSELING

- **Loss Of Trust:**

Trust within therapeutic environments is very important, often clients will have to feel some trust towards a practitioner before ever attempting to disclose sensitive or/and personal information about themselves.

- **Clashes between personalities:**

In groups there will often be a variety of people who have different personalities, with some individuals having markedly different personalities than others. One example, might be that some sensitive or/and introverted individuals may feel intimidated by other individuals who are very assertive or speak loudly and frequently, this can often be interpreted or misinterpreted by others as ignorance or aggression. Another example, might be that when the group is sharing their thoughts there is a difference of opinion and viewpoint, this can often result in disputes between group members who have a different moral or ethical stance on an issue that is raised. Some individuals opinions on a matter can contrast with the values of another group member.

- **Some individuals can interpret rejection:**

An individual can feel less of a bond with a therapist if they are in a group. Some individuals may have experienced rejection in their past or are currently experiencing perceived or actual rejection within their lives, they may experience social anxiety when being around others and in some occasions may have low self esteem, this may result in some individuals being highly sensitive to perceived or actual rejection from the group, which could make them feel uncomfortable, upset and anxious and in some cases could cause an angry reaction and outburst.

- **Limitations regarding privacy:**

A person who is invited to take part in group therapy may feel a loss of privacy. Some people may not feel comfortable discussing past or present issues, feelings, thoughts and opinions that they feel are personal and that they are sensitive about. Some individuals may feel much more comfortable discussing such issues and feelings in the privacy of a quiet room with one individual, in which they have built trust and a bond with.

- **Social Phobia and speaking in front of a group:**

For individuals with social phobia it might be difficult to speak in front of a group of people. For people who have experienced a significant amount of real or perceived rejection, the group may remind them of this and thus enhance these feelings of rejection.

SUMMARY

Group therapy can provide an excellent support system for some individuals and can give them a place to share their thoughts and opinions, they may also build important relationships within group therapy sessions that could provide them with a support network in which they can turn too in times of distress.

However, group therapy can be a bit overwhelming for some people who experience social anxiety or are experiencing significant distress related to psychological difficulties.

The effectiveness of group therapy and whether an individual would be best suited to group or individual therapy will depend on the previously stated factors. Some individuals may benefit greatly from group therapy and some people will not.