

Group FAQ:

"JUST WHAT IS GROUP THERAPY ANYWAY?"

In group therapy, approximately four to ten individuals meet face-to-face with one or more group therapists and talk about what is troubling them. Group members will have the opportunity to learn skills and tools to make positive changes and feel better. Members also give feedback to each other by expressing their own feelings about what someone says or does. This interaction gives group members an opportunity to try out new ways of behaving and to learn more about the way they interact with others. The content of the group sessions is confidential; what people talk about or disclose is not discussed outside the group.

The first meeting is called an "Information Session" and is a time for you to meet the group leader(s) and the other students who will be in the group. Group leaders will describe in detail what to expect in group and potential group members will have a chance to ask any questions they may have about group. There is no commitment necessary to attend an Information Session. Students are welcome to come to the Information Session even if they are not certain they want to join the group.

For the students who decided that group is right for them, the next few sessions of a group usually focus on the establishment of trust. During this time, members usually work to establish a level of trust that allows them to talk personally and honestly. Group trust is enhanced when all members make a commitment to the group.

"WHY DOES GROUP THERAPY WORK?"

When people come into a group and interact freely with other group members, they usually recreate those difficulties that brought them to group therapy in the first place. Under the skilled direction of a group therapist, the group is able to give support, offer alternatives, or gently confront the person. In this way the difficulty becomes resolved, alternative behaviors are learned, and the person develops new social techniques or ways of relating to people. During group therapy, people begin to see that they are not alone. Many times people feel they are unique in their problems, and it is encouraging to hear that other people have similar difficulties. In the climate of trust provided by the group, people feel free to care about and help each other.

"WHAT DO I TALK ABOUT WHEN I AM IN GROUP THERAPY?"

Talk about what brought you to the Counseling Center in the first place. Tell the group members what is bothering you. If you need support, let the group know. If you think you need to be challenged, let them know this also. It is important to tell people what you expect of them.

Unexpressed feelings are a major reason why people experience difficulties. Revealing your feelings, self-disclosure, is an important part of group and affects how much you will be helped. The appropriate disclosures will be those that relate directly to your present difficulty. How much you talk about yourself depends upon what you are comfortable with. If you have any questions about what might or might not be helpful, you can always ask the group.

"ARE THERE ANY GROUND RULES FOR MY PARTICIPATION IN THE GROUP?"

If group is to be effective, your commitment to the following is essential:

1. If you must miss a session, please let one of the leaders know.
2. The group meeting times have been set by the group leaders, and you are asked to adhere to those times.
3. Having a feeling and acting on it are two different things. Acting out your feelings is not acceptable whether you act them out upon yourself or another member of the group. The way

we most respect ourselves and others is by experiencing feelings and then allowing ourselves to talk about them.

4. It is your responsibility to talk about your reasons for being in the group.
5. The group sessions are confidential. You and other members are asked not to disclose the contents of the group sessions.
6. If you decide that you have gained as much as possible from the group or that it isn't the most appropriate treatment method for you, we ask that you come to the group and say good-bye.
7. The work of the group needs to be done in the group during group time. Therefore, we ask that you not socialize with other members of your group during the time when you are a member of that group.