

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

S645 Social Work Practice III: Groups (3 credits)

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I. Course Rationale & Description

This is one of the three social work practice method courses in the Interpersonal Practice Concentration. Building on the foundation practice courses, this course focuses on client groups in social work practice, particularly in relation to the students' field practicum experience.

In the context of the ecological and empowerment perspectives, this course emphasizes the phases of social work with groups, including stages of group development. This approach allows for the incorporation of concepts and principles from a number of theoretical perspectives. Special attention is given to issues of values related to these theories and to the impact of inequality, discrimination, and differential access to opportunity within society on the development and functioning of both individuals and groups in which they hold membership.

The course will be instructed on the basis of the assumption of a major responsibility by students for defining their own learning needs. Thus, students are expected to involve themselves fully and openly in all course activities.

II. Objectives

The overall purpose of the course is to help students develop advanced competence for working with groups as a method in interpersonal social work practice. Specifically, in this course, students are expected to demonstrate achievement of the following objectives:

1. To apply social work values and ethics, including understanding of and respect for human diversity on the basis of such factors as gender, ethnicity, and sexual preference, for advanced social work practice with groups;
2. To understand and apply strategies and skills for the promotion of social and economic justice in advanced social work practice with groups;
3. To develop critical thinking skills, including ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate relevant theoretical frameworks for advanced practice with groups.

4. To understand differential use of communication skills with a variety of clients, colleagues, and members of the community in the professional relationship;
5. To evaluate and apply findings from relevant research studies to advanced practice with groups;
6. To formulate plans for evaluating interpersonal practice with groups;
7. To apply knowledge and skills from a range of theories (e.g., mainstream, structured) for social work with groups;
8. To understand and develop strategies for meeting the needs of diverse people and populations at risk through interpersonal practice with groups;
9. To understand of the professional use of self in the context of advanced practice with groups.
10. To understand the use of supervision and consultation in relation to advanced practice with groups.

III. Content Outline and Readings

A. Required Textbooks

Fatout, M.F. (1992). *Models for Change in Social Group Work*. New York. Aldine DeGruyter.

Gitterman, A. and Shulman, L. (1994) *Mutual Aid Groups, Vulnerable Populations, and The Life Cycle*. New York. Columbia University Press.

Jacobs, E., Harvill, R., and Masson, R. (1994) *Group Counseling: Strategies and Skills*. Pacific Grove, CA. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

B. Course Outline

January 11: Overview of the Course and Course Requirements
Form Task Groups

Berman-Rossi, T. (1992). "Empowering Groups through Understanding Stages of Group Development." *Social Work with Groups*, 15(2/3).

Davis, L. Galinsky, M. and Schopler, J. (1994). "RAP: A Framework for

Leadership of Multiracial Group.” Social Work, 40(2).

Har Paz, N. (1993). “Failures in Group Psychotherapy: The Therapist.” International Journal of Group Psychotherapy, 44(1).

January 18: Holiday - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. No class.

January 25: Mutual Aid and the Mainstream Model
Planning and Getting Groups Started
Activity: Task Group (1)

Jacobs, Harvill and Masson: Chapters 1 – 4
Fatout: pp. 14 –23.

Birnbaum, M., Catalina, J., Nisinzweig, S. and Abrams, V. (1989).
Institutionalization of a Group Service in an Individual-Oriented Agency. Social Casework, 70(8).

Waltman, D. and Zimpfer, D. (1988). Composition, Structure, and Duration of Treatment, Small Group Behavior, 19(2).

Middleman, R. (1981). “The Pursuit of Competence through Involvement in Structured Groups.” A Maluccio (Ed.), Promoting Competence in Clients. NY: The Free Press.

Papell, C. and Rothman, B. (1980). “Relating the Mainstream Model of Social Work with Groups to Group Psychotherapy and Structured Approach.” Social Work with Groups, 3(2).

Schopler, J. and Galinsky, M. (1983). “Meeting Practice Needs: Conceptualizing the Open-Ended Group.” Social Work with Groups, 7(2).

February 1: Group Leadership
Activity: Task Groups Meet (2)

Jacobs, Harvill and Masson: Chapters 5 and 6.
Gitterman and Shulman: Parts 2 through 5; depending upon task group topic

February 8: Leading in the Beginning Phase of the Group
Activity: Task Groups (3)

Jacobs, Harvill and Masson: Chapters 7 - 10

Stockton, R., Rohde, R., and Haughey, J. (1992). "The Effects of Structured Group Exercises on Cohesion, Engagement, Avoidance, and Conflict." Small Group Research, 23(2).

Wood, G. and Middleman, R. (1989). The Structural Approach to Direct Practice in Social Work, NY: Columbia University Press.

February 15: Leading in the Middle Phase of Group
Activity: Task Groups (4)

****Group Prospectus Due**

Jacobs, Harvill and Masson: Chapter 11

Rose, S. (1983). "Use of Data in Identifying and Resolving Group Problems in Goal-Oriented Treatment Groups." Social Work with Groups, 7(2).

February 22: Skills used in leading during the middle phase of group - continued
Activity: Task Groups (5)

March 1: Dissatisfaction, Conflict, and Difficult Situations or, **NOW WHAT????**
Activity: Task Groups (6)

Jacobs, Harvill and Masson: Chapter 14

Hagen, B. (1983). Managing Conflict in All-Women Groups, Social Work with Groups 6(3/4).

Unger, R. (1990). Conflict Management in Group Psychotherapy, Small Group Research 21(3).

March 8: Psycho-educational Groups
Activity: Task Groups (7)

March 15: Spring Break - enjoy your week!!!

March 22: Catch up
Activity: Task Groups (8)

March 29: Group Models.
Activity: Task Group Presentation

Fatout: Chapters 2 through 8.
Jacobs, Harvill and Masson: Chapter 12

Wood, G. and Middleman, R. (1992). "Groups to empower battered women." AFFILIA: Journal of Women and Social Work, 7(4): 82-95.

April 5: Continued discussion of group models.
Activity: Task Group Presentation

Fatout: Chapters 2 through 8.

April 12: Working with Special Populations
Activity: Task Group Presentation

****Term Paper Due**

Behroozi, C. (1992). "A Model for Social Work with Involuntary Applicants in Groups." Social Work with Groups, 15(2/3).

Jacobs, Harvill and Masson: Chapter 15

April 19: Evaluating Groups
Activity: Task Group Presentation

Jacobs, Harvill, and Masson: Chapters 13 and 16

April 26: Evaluating and analyzing **Your** Group Skills
Activity: Task Group Presentation

May 3: Termination, Separation and Endings

IV. Course Expectations and Assignments

Class activities include discussions, exercises, and role-play. Because of the nature of these activities, **regular attendance and participation in the class are indispensable to the success in the course and, thus, are expected.**

Each student will work with a client group in her/his field practicum, employment, or another community agency. Such a group will serve as the primary source for experiential learning for the

course. At the same time, the course will serve as a source of support for enhancing the student's competence in practice with the group. For this purpose, the first part of each class session will be devoted to a discussion of students' current practice with groups generated through their participation in groups through their practicum, employment, or another community agency.

The **task groups** will be formed on the basis of students' current interest regarding practice with a special population group. The task teams will meet for eight sessions to plan their presentations to the class. Each presentation should follow the format attached. (see Item 1)

As will be discussed, the course written assignments include **Group Prospectus**, and **Term Paper**. (Please see Item 2).

V. **Evaluation & Grading**

In relation to the educational objectives of the course, the instructor will provide feedback regarding various aspects of students' performance in the course. However, their grades for the course will be based on outcomes of **Group Prospectus (30%)**, **Term Paper (35%)**, and **Task Team Presentation and Participation (35%)**. Students will participate in the evaluation of task team presentations.

****All assignments that are submitted after due dates will be penalized at a rate of five (5) percentage points for every class day late. If special circumstances prevent the student from turning in work on time, it is the student's responsibility to discuss these issues with the instructor in a timely manner.**

There will be two opportunities for the students' written evaluation of the course experience and its instruction. The first is the mid-term evaluation and the second is the standardized School of Social Work evaluation form administered at the end of the semester.

VI. **Additional Information**

I will be available to talk with students before and after most class sessions. Also, please feel free to contact me if you would like to schedule time to discuss any of the class materials, assignments, or experiences. I welcome any ongoing discussion and feedback. Messages may be left on my telephone voice mail or, on my e-mail.

Item 1

Task Groups

1. Students will form groups based on their interests in working with a particular population.
2. Each group will decide on their method of operation including defining leadership rotation, group rules, group goals, methods for work, etc.
3. Each group will make a presentation in class. Presentations should be no more than 60 minutes in duration. This includes time for questions.
 - A. A description of the population and any significant issues with regard to group formation. This would include any special needs re: materials, space, etc. The description should be brief.
 - B. Material should be included about group work with the population and the types of approaches used by class members with that population. Each task team should not have more than 3 approaches to focus upon. This section should also mention typology of the group (mainstream, open-ended, involuntary, structured, etc.).
 - C. Identify goals set, skills used and means used to evaluate the outcome of the group. Group members should teach the class about specific techniques. Discussion and demonstration are useful methods. **Feel free to be creative.**
4. Evaluation - the presentations will be evaluated on content and style.
 - A. Included in content are clarity, organization, depth of coverage.
 - B. Included in style are use of methods such as discussion, demonstration, video, audio, examples, role play, etc.
 - C. Class members will have input regarding grades for these projects.

Item 2

Description of Written Assignments

In relation to the course objectives, these assignments have been designed to facilitate your understanding of social work practice with groups and to help you develop cognitive skills. These are opportunities for you to make connections among various class experiences and your independent efforts (e.g., readings).

I. Group Prospectus (about six pages)

In relation to the group that you are forming or that you have already formed, please develop a prospectus answering the questions in the Outline for Group Prospectus (attached). Please provide a rationale for your answers on the basis of class discussions and your readings, including the required readings. In answering the questions, please give your rationale as much as possible.

II. Term Paper (about twelve pages)

The purpose of this paper is to help you synthesize your learning in the course, including your task team experience and presentation. Furthermore, the paper is to facilitate your connecting theory and practice experience by integrating the course learning with your group work practice in your field practicum. As such, the paper should incorporate at least one of the required texts and at least five readings from current professional journals on social work practice with groups. The paper is to be organized according to the following outline:

- A. A description of the group, including its purpose and objectives and other significant characteristics. (about two pages.)
- B. A discussion of the typology of the group (e. g., mainstream, structured, open-ended, involuntary) and the practice method that you used in terms of the whole group experience (about two pages).
- C. An analysis of the implications of the above considerations (#A and B) for you as the worker. In other words, as the worker, what goals did you try to achieve throughout the group experience and what skills did you use to achieve those goals, and what means did you use to evaluate your service (about four pages)?
- D. A self-evaluation of your performance as the group worker and a summary of what you learned from the group experience (about two pages).
- E. A discussion and evaluation of your experience in your task group. This would include any comparisons of your role in the task group to those in your practice group. (about two pages)

(Item 2 cont.)

Format and Evaluation

Please organize your papers according to the above outline, type them double-spaced leaving one margin wide enough for the instructor's comments, and cite all references and quotations. The papers will be evaluated in terms of the following criteria: (a) adequacy, clarity, and organization of content; (b) analysis; and (c) selection, integration, and citation of theoretical concepts and principles.

Item 3

Outline for Group Prospectus

A. General Information

1. What is the mission of the agency sponsoring the group?
2. What is the general purpose of the group and how does the purpose relate to the need of prospective members and to the agency mission? When was the group started?
3. What are tentative objectives for the group? Why were these objectives formulated?

B. Group Typology and Recruitment of Members

1. What is the group type (e.g., mainstream, structured, open-ended, involuntary) and on what basis has this type been selected? How many sessions will the group meet?
2. What are criteria for the group composition?
3. How will members be recruited for the group and what is the purpose of worker's contacts with prospective group members during the pre-group phase?
4. What will be included in the service contract and how will it be communicated to group members?

C. Group Attributes

1. What is the group size?
2. What are the initial rules (explicit norms) for the group membership and participation? How will these rules be converted into group norms?
3. What are the initial roles (i.e., membership, leadership, solo worker/co-worker)?
4. What content and program activities are appropriate for the group? How are such content and activities determined?

D. Temporal and Physical Factors

1. How often will the group meet?
2. How long will the group meet and when are the meetings scheduled?
3. What kind of space and physical arrangements are needed for the group meetings.

E. Organizational Arrangement

What are implications of the group service for the sponsoring agency as a whole and for other departments and staff, and how will such implications be addressed?

F. What is your plan for the evaluation of the group service?

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Primary Reference Books

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Overview

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Chang, V. N. (1993). Prevent and empower:: A student-to-student strategy with alcohol abuse. Social Work in Education, 15, 207-213

Chorcora, M., Jennings, E., and Lordan, N. (1994). Issues of empowerment: Anti-Oppressive groupwork by disabled people in Ireland. Groupwork, 7(1), 81-101.

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Korda, L. & Pancrazio. (1989). Limiting negative outcomes in group practice. Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 14 (2).

Lee, J. A. (1991). Empowerment through mutual aid groups: A practice grounded conceptual framework. Groupwork, 4 (1), 5-21.

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The Worker: Function and Skills

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Gitterman, A. (1989). Building mutual support in groups. Social Work with Groups, 12 (2), 17-32.

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Phases of Group Work

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Working with Diversity

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