
What are the ground rules for participation in the group?

If the group is to be effective, all group members must make a commitment to the rules and expectations of the group program. A highlight of these rules and expectations are as follows:

1. Group members are expected to be on time and to notify group leaders in advance if they must miss a session.
2. It is your responsibility to participate and talk about your problems, concerns and reasons for being in the group.
3. The group sessions are confidential. You, other members, and the group leaders are bound ethically and legally not to disclose the contents of the group sessions. Violating confidentiality is grounds for being asked to leave the group.
4. If you decide that you have gained as much as possible from the group or that it isn't working for you, we ask that you come to the group and say good-bye.
5. 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 as long as you are a member of that group.
6. Having feelings and thoughts and acting on them are quite different. Acting out your feelings upon yourself or on others is inappropriate. The way we most respect ourselves and others is by experiencing feelings and then allowing ourselves to talk about them.

Common Misconceptions about Group Therapy

1. "I will be forced to tell all of my deepest feelings and secrets."

In group therapy you control what, how much, and when you share with the group. Most people find that when they share what is bothering them, a group can be very helpful and affirming. We encourage you not to share what you are not ready to disclose. Even if you are hesitant to self-disclose, you can also be helped by listening to others and thinking about how their experiences might be applicable to your life.

2. "Group therapy will take longer than individual therapy because I'll have to share the time with others."

Group therapy is often more efficient than individual therapy for a couple of reasons. First, you can benefit from the group even when you say little but listen carefully to others. You will find that you have much in common with other group members, and as they work on a problem or concern, you can learn more about yourself. Secondly, group members will often bring up issues that strike a chord with you, but that you might not have been aware of or brought up yourself.

3. "I will be verbally attacked by the leaders or by other group members."

It is essential that group members feel safe. Group leaders are there to help develop a safe environment. Feedback is often difficult to hear. As group members come to trust and accept one another, they generally experience feedback and even confrontation as positive, as if it were coming from their best friend. One of the benefits of group therapy is the opportunity to receive constructive feedback from others in a supportive environment. It is rare to find friends who will gently point out how you might be acting in ways that hurt you or others, but this is exactly what group therapy offers. This type of feedback will be given in a respectful, gentle way, so that you may hear it and make use of it.

4. "Group therapy is second-best to individual therapy."

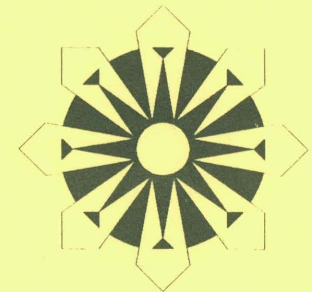
Group therapy is recommended when it is determined to be the best way to address individuals concerns. We recommend group therapy when it is the most effective method to assist clients resolve their problems and concerns.

5. "I have so much trouble talking to people; I'll never be able to talk about myself in a group."

Most people are anxious about being able to talk in group. Almost without exception, within a few sessions people find that they do begin to talk in the group. Group members remember what it is like to be new to the group, so you will most likely get a great deal of support for beginning to talk in the group.

Group Therapy

Often it's the treatment of choice! Are you curious?



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What is Group Therapy?

In group therapy, six to twelve people meet with one or more trained group therapists and talk about their issues and concerns. Group members also give feedback to each other by sharing their feelings and thoughts about what someone says or does in and out of the group. This gives group members new information and differing perspectives. This also provides members with the opportunity to experiment with new ways of behaving and to learn more about how others perceive them. This opportunity for change is unique because the group setting is a safe and supportive environment for personal growth and improving interpersonal skills. Group members contract to maintain confidentiality; what members talk about or disclose within the group is not discussed outside the group.

In the beginning sessions of group therapy developing trust is the general focus for the group. During this time, the group leaders and members work to establish a safe and trusting environment where group members will be able to talk openly and honestly. When all members make a commitment to the group a climate of trust and safety is solidified.

How does group therapy work?

When individuals come into a group and interact freely with other group members, they usually experience difficulties in relationships with group members which are similar to those problems which brought them into therapy in the first place. Utilizing their professional skills and training group facilitators assist the group to give support, offer alternatives, explore options, provide information, or sensitively confront the individual. In this way the difficulty is highlighted and resolution is possible through learning new behaviors, altering thought processes, experiencing emotions, developing new social techniques or ways of relating to others. As a result of group therapy, people begin to experience in a new way that they are neither alone nor unique. It is very encouraging to discover that other people have similar difficulties, struggle with common dilemmas, wrestle with the same feelings and thoughts. In the group setting people feel free to care about and help each other grow and achieve their goals.

For more information about group treatment or to schedule an intake appointment for group therapy, please call 305-348-2434.

What do people talk about in group therapy?

Group therapy is a laboratory for risk-taking. People talk about all their problems and concerns. They share what is bothering them. They disclose the things that they want and need from others. They risk asking for support, feedback, and advice. Group members are free to ask the group to meet their expectations. At some times support may be needed. At other times confrontation may be what the member needs and is seeking. It is important to tell people what you expect of them. Group therapy provides great opportunities to practice these difficult behaviors.

Unexpressed feelings and negative thoughts are major reasons why people experience difficulties. Revealing thoughts and feelings - self-disclosure - is an important part of group therapy. The degree of self-disclosure (and risk-taking) affects how helpful the group can be. The appropriate disclosures will be those that relate directly to your present difficulties. How much you talk about yourself depends upon your own comfort level. If you have any questions about what might or might not be helpful to discuss in group, you may always bring this up for group feedback.

