

**COURSE  
GUIDE**

**EGC 813  
GROUP DYNAMICS & PROCESS IN COUNSELLING**

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COURSE**

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**MODULE 1**

Unit 1	Overview of Group Dynamics
Unit 2	Meaning and Characteristics of a Group
Unit 3	Group Formation and Organisation
Unit 4	Purposes and Responsibilities of Group Members
Unit 5	Types of Group and Group Processes

**UNIT 1 OVERVIEW OF GROUP DYNAMICS IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING****Unit Structure**

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Learning Outcomes
- 1.3 Overview of Group Dynamics in Guidance and Counseling
  - 1.3.1 Definition of Guidance and Group Guidance
  - 1.3.2 Definition of Counseling and Group Counseling
  - 1.3.3 Meaning of Group
  - 1.3.4 Group Dynamics
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 1.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

**1.1 Introduction**

To write any meaningful and worthwhile book on Group dynamics in Guidance and Counseling, it must discuss what the nature of the course is all about. These must include definitions and meaning of some terms, purposes of group dynamics, rationale for the group dynamics in Counseling, formation of the groups, nature of group Counseling, types of Counseling groups, group leadership characteristics and skills, facilitative skills and techniques in group interactions, leadership methods and productivity, differences between group Counseling and individual Counseling, advantages and disadvantages of group counseling etc.

Unit 1 will provide an overview of group Counseling; knowledge of the terminology is essential to facilitate deeper understanding of this course. Words and labels are very important to ensure clarity of communication. Some of the terminologies and primary concepts that are basic to group work will be presented in brief form in this unit. These are definitions and meanings of terms like: Guidance, Counseling, group, group dynamics, this will help to lay a good foundation for the course.

## **1.2 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- define Guidance and Group Guidance
- define Counseling and Group Counseling
- explain the term group
- explain Group Dynamics.

## **1.3 Overview of Group Dynamics in Guidance and Counseling**

### **1.3.1 The Meaning of Guidance and Group Guidance**

The term guidance is explained in different ways by different writers, but most conveying the same meaning. Guidance consists of the process of thinking and providing services aimed at helping individuals to understand how to help themselves realistically.

That is why Shertzer and Stone (1976) define guidance as the process of helping individuals to understand themselves and their world. Bakare (1996) refers to guidance as more directive or prescriptive form of assistance.

Akinade (2002) remarked that some specialists assert that guidance is a broad term used to cover a number of specialist services available in schools. Such services include the information service, testing service, placement service, follow-up service and Counseling service. However, looking at the modern-day global world, the provision of specialist services is no more limited to the school, it now includes the community in general.

Group guidance is often referred to that part of a school's total guidance programme conducted with groups of students rather than with one individual. Group guidance is conducted for the following reasons, among others (a) providing educational-vocational and personal-social information to students, (b) discussing personal and career planning activities with students and (c) investigating and discussing common problems, goals and solutions with students

### 1.3.2 The Meaning of Counseling and Group Counseling

Counseling is a process of helping individuals or group of people to gain self-understanding in order to be helpful to themselves and functional in their immediate environment. Olayinka (1972) defines Counseling as the process in which one person assists another person in a person-to-person or face-to-face encounter. This assistance, he stressed, may take many forms: It may be educational, vocational, social, recreational, emotional, and/or moral. Makinde (1985) defined Counseling as “an enlightened process whereby people help people by facilitating growth, development and positive change through an exercise of self-understanding.

Counseling is a process designed to help clients understand and clarify personal views of their life space and to learn to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices and a resolution of problem of emotional or interpersonal nature. It believes that every human individual has the potential for self-worth, self-development and self-actualisation.

The definition of Counseling in a nutshell is that, a counselor is a guide to help you understand your issues, to guide you through them, and to help you learn to do it on your own; In essence, something that provides direction or advice as to a decision or course of action.

In the case of group counseling, the counselor is involved in a relationship with a number of counselees at the same time. It is usually concerned with the developmental problems and situational concerns of members. It focuses on the attitudes, emotions, values, choices and feelings involved in interpersonal relationship. Through interacting with each other, helping relationships are established which help them to develop understanding and insight and awareness of self as a first step to effective functioning. This is achieved as members discuss their personal concerns while other members provide feedback about their perceptions in a non-judgmental manner. Group Counseling could be conducted to serve remedial, developmental or preventive purposes, as the case may warrant.

In summary, group guidance is informal, usually not given by a professional, however group Counseling is usually formal and structured often done by professionals in the field they are giving advice about. Group Guidance and Group Counseling are two distinctive terms – differing in three principal ways (Christened, 1965).

- (i) Group guidance deals with educational experiences mainly, involving giving of information and is recommended for every student.

- (ii) Group guidance makes indirect attempt at behaviour and attitude changes by providing information and stressing cognitive and intellectual functioning while group Counseling makes a more deliberate, direct attempt to change behaviour.
- (iii) Group guidance is applicable readily to classroom size groups while group Counseling applies to small intimate groups.

## **1.4 Meaning of Group**

The word group has many definitions. Webster's New World Dictionary cites six definitions, one of which states "a number of persons or things gathered together in a recognisable unit". A group is a conglomerate, or a gathering of persons (or things). The

Longman Family Dictionary (2009) defines a group as a number of individuals or objects assembled together or having some unifying relationship. Group member share some common attitudes and values, accept each other and relate to each other in many ways. They accept membership in the group to deal with the problems they have in common as well as to satisfy some individual needs. There is a common interest within a group no matter how momentary, the collection thinks of itself as a group, characteristics of a group norms, goals, procedure, same tenet, interest, same values, and exhibit cohesiveness.

Loeser (1957) describes the essential properties of a group as:

- (1) Dynamic interaction
- (2) A common goal
- (3) An appropriate number of members for the proposed function
- (4) Their volition and consent
- (5) Development of a capacity for self-direction.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise 1**

- 1. What is the meaning of the word 'group'?
- 2. What is the difference between group guidance and group counseling?

## **1.5 Group Dynamics**

The word 'dynamic' takes its root from the Greek 'Dunamis' which means 'inherent power', like a dynamo possesses. 'Group dynamics' is a term which refers to the interacting forces within groups as they organise and operate to achieve their objectives. Coffey suggests that the focus of group dynamics is the study of forces within the group that produce group productivity or the ways and means that members invest

themselves in problem solving. It refers to what goes on between and among the members as they interact with one other. The interaction is based on verbal and non-verbal communication, and as members of the group interact, each member is able to locate him or herself.

Group dynamics can also be defined as a sort of political ideology concerning the ways in which groups should be organised and managed. This ideology emphasises the importance of democratic leadership, the participation of members in decisions, and the gains both to society and to individuals to be obtained through co-operative activities in groups.

Group dynamics is a set of techniques such as role playing, buzz-sessions, observation and feedback of group process and group decision which have been employed widely during the past decade or so in training programmes designed to improve skills in human relations and in management. Example of this group is the task and training group. Group dynamics is the field of inquiry dedicated to achieving knowledge about the nature of groups, the laws of their development and their inter-relations with individual, other groups and larger institutions.

## **Self-Assessment Exercises 2**

Explain fully the term ‘group dynamics.’

### **1.6 Summary**

In this unit, you have been introduced to the meaning of some terms that will help in the understanding of the course, concepts like: guidance, group guidance, Counseling, group Counseling, group and group dynamics. This will, no doubt, help lay the necessary foundation as you work through the course for better understanding of the subject matter.

### **1.7 References/Further Reading/Web Resources**

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<https://content.wisestep.com/top-advantages-disadvantages-group-counseling>

## 1.8 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. A group is a number of individuals or objects assembled together or having some unifying relationship.
2. Group guidance is informal, usually not given by a professional; but group counseling is usually formal and structured; often done by a professional in the field they are giving advice about.

### Self-Assessment Exercise 2

Group dynamics can be defined as a sort of political ideology concerning the ways in which groups should be organised and managed. It is a term which refers to the interacting forces within groups as they organise and operate to achieve their objectives.

## **UNIT 2 MEANING AND CHARACTERISTICS OF A GROUP**

### **Unit Structures**

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Learning Outcomes
- 2.3 What a Group is – Psychology of Groups
  - 2.3.1 What is a Group?
  - 2.3.2 Types of Group
  - 2.3.3 Characteristics of Group
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 2.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### **2.1 Introduction**

A group is a number of people or things located, gathered, or classed together. A group has the quality and kind of interaction among members that will help eliminate barriers to effectiveness. The group must possess certain characteristics in order to function well.

### **2.2 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain what group is
- list types of groups
- list and explain characteristics of a group
- state the meaning and characteristics of group

#### **2.3.1 What a Group is - Psychology of Groups**

A group is a social unit which consists of a number of individuals who stand in (more or less) definite status and role relationships to one another and which possesses a set of values or norms of its own regulating the behaviour of individual members, at least in matters of consequence to the group. Keyton (2002) defines a group as three or more people who work together interdependently on agreed-upon activity or goal. Social psychologists consider a group to be composed of two or more people who interact and depend on each other in some way. Examples of groups include a baseball team, an Internet listserv, a college psychology class, and a cult. No two groups are identical to one another, but a group, by definition, is two or more individuals who are connected to one another by social relationships.

Groups vary in size from dyads and triads to very large aggregations, such as mobs and audiences. Group members are linked together by such interpersonal processes as communication, influence and identification. Groups are influential and often alter their members' attitudes, values, and perceptions and in some extreme cases cause radical alterations in personality and actions.

### 2.3.2 Types of Groups

(1) Encounter group	(11) Social group
(2) In group	(12) Personal growth group
(3) Primary group	(13) Laboratory Training group
(4) Secondary group	(14) Independent working group
(5) T group	(15) Encounter Group
(6) Task/work group	(16) Sensitivity Training group
(7) Mixed ability group	(17) Psyche group or Boys' gang
(8) Support group	(18) Continuous group
(9) Self-help group	(19) Marathon group
(10) Support group	(20) Traditional and Historical groups

### Self-Assessment Exercises 1

1. Groups are usually identical to one another. True or False?
2. List any 10 types of groups you know.

### 2.3.3 Characteristics of Effective Groups

There are several dimensions or characteristics of group effectiveness that can be used as a model for evaluating how well the group is functioning. Johnson and Johnson's (1975) model can be used to give a sense of direction to the building of an effective group. The model as presented by Johnson and Johnson (1975, pp. 3-4) is summarised as follows:

1. Group goals must be clearly understood, be relevant to the needs of group members, stimulate cooperation, and evoke from every member a high level of commitment to their accomplishment.
2. Group members must communicate their ideas and feelings accurately and clearly. Effective two-way communication is the basis of all group functioning and the interaction of its members.
3. Participation and leadership must be distributed among members. All should participate and all should be listened to. As leadership needs arise members should take turns meeting them. The equalisation of participation and leadership is necessary to make

certain that all members are involved in and satisfied with the group, and all are committed to practicalising the group decisions.

4. Appropriate decision-making procedures must be used flexibly in order to match them with the needs of the situation. There must be a balance between the availability of time and resources ( e.g. members' skill ) on the one hand, and the method of decision making used (e.g. consensus), on the other hand.
5. Power and influence need to be equal and be based on expertise, ability and access to information, not on authority.
6. Controversy and conflict must be seen as positive keys to members' involvement, the quality and originality of decisions, and the continuance of the group in good working condition. They must therefore not be ignored, denied, voided or suppressed.
7. Group norms supporting psychological safety, individuality, creativeness, acceptance, support and trust among members, growth and change are encourage as this help group cohesion to be at a high level.
8. Problem solving adequacy is high. Problems must be solved with minimal energy and in a way that eliminates them permanently. Structures and procedures should exist for sensing the existence of problems, inventing and putting into practice possible solutions, and evaluating the effectiveness of the solutions.
9. Interpersonal effectiveness of members is high. Self-actualisation and innovation are encouraged

There are some common characteristics of groups. Among these are:

1. People in groups interact with one another. This interaction includes activities that focus on the task at hand (task interaction) and activities that concern the interpersonal relations linking group members (relationship interaction).
2. The group always has norms that determine appropriate behaviour.
3. Groups create interdependence among the group member (unilateral, reciprocal etc.)

4. Groups seek goals, such as those specified in the circumflex model of group tasks (generating, choosing, negotiating, and executing) cohesion, or cohesiveness, determines the unity of the group.
5. Group cohesion, or cohesiveness, determines the unity of the group.
6. Groups have roles that are assigned to people that determine what behaviours and responsibilities people should take on.
7. A communication structure that determines who talks to whom.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise 2**

Identify any five common characteristics of groups.

### **2.4 Summary**

In this unit, you have been introduced to the meaning of some terms that will help you in the understanding of the course, concepts like groups and characteristics of groups.

### **2.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources**

Akinade, E. A., Sokan, B. O., & Oseremen N. (2005). *An Introduction to Guidance and Counseling: A Basic Text for Colleges and Universities*. Ibadan: Caltep Publications (Nigeria) Limited.

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## 2.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### Self-Assessment Exercises 1

1. False

2. Any 10 of the following are acceptable

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| (1) Encounter group     | (11) Social group                      |
| (2) In group            | (12) Personal growth group             |
| (3) Primary group       | (13) Laboratory Training group         |
| (4) Secondary group     | (14) Independent working group         |
| (5) T group             | (15) Encounter Group                   |
| (6) Task/work group     | (16) Sensitivity Training group        |
| (7) Mixed ability group | (17) Psyche group or Boys' gang        |
| (8) Support group       | (18) Continuous group                  |
| (9) Self-help group     | (19) Marathon group                    |
| (10) Support group      | (20) Traditional and Historical groups |

### Self-Assessment Exercise 2

- i. People in groups interact with one another.
- ii. The group always has norms that determine appropriate behavior
- iii. Groups create interdependence among the group members.
- iv. Groups seek goals (like generating, choosing, negotiating, and executing).
- v. Cohesiveness determines the unity of the group.
- vi. Groups have roles that are assigned to people, which determine what behavior and responsibilities people should take on.
- vii. A communication structure that determines who talks to whom.

## UNIT 3 GROUP FORMATION AND ORGANISATION

### Unit Structure

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Learning Outcomes
- 3.3 Group Formation and Organisation
  - 3.3.1 Factors in Group Counseling
  - 3.3.2 Formation of Counseling Group and Organisation
- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 3.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### 3.1 Introduction

Unit 3 will look briefly into three major factors in group counseling, also the knowledge of cohesiveness which reflects a maturity, which group members demonstrate in subsequent behaviour and group work is important in the unit. The detail explanations of the practical consideration in forming a group will be of great help to group leader/Counsellor for effective and smooth running of the group.

### 3.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain cohesiveness in group Counseling
- list factors in group Counseling
- list and explain practical considerations in forming a group
- define closed group.

### 3.3 Group Formation and Organisation

#### 3.3.1 Factors in Group Counseling

In the running of an effective group, **cohesiveness** is required as a prior condition for trust and awareness, and they in turn, become the precipitators of change. Cohesiveness is a mechanism through which people acknowledge both their individuality and their commitment to the group, and this phase acknowledges the inter-relatedness of each of the members to one another. Each individual is equal, can lead and be led, is active in decision- making, problem-solving and the work of the group generally. There is a balance of task and process, with people expressing their interdependency and satisfaction with being in the group. People will be able to move to the end of the group well, or to

continue by renewing the group. Cohesiveness reflects a maturity which group members demonstrate in subsequent behaviour and group work. Some groups may 'get stuck' in a stage or phase, while others may move more swiftly through each phase entering the stage of inter-relatedness for long periods where the needs are met and the group is working well.

An alteration/variation in certain factors, such as new members joining or new goals coming on line, may cast the group back to the beginning of the cycle once again.

Gill and Barry (1982) offer a three-stage framework to explain what happens in the group, in terms of the group leader's action:

1. Group formation i.e., facilitating cooperation toward common goals through development of group identity:
2. Group awareness i.e., facilitating a shared understanding of the group behaviour
3. Group action i.e., facilitating shared understanding of the group's behaviour.

### **Self-Assessment Exercises 1**

1. Fill in the missing word from the study material: 'In the running of an effective group, \_\_\_\_\_ is required as a prior condition for trust and cohesiveness.'
2. Identify the three-stage framework given by Gill and Barry (1982) to explain what happens in the group.

### **3.3.2 Formation of Counseling Group and Organisation**

There is need to devote considerable time to planning if a counselor will organise a result-oriented group counseling session. In order to achieve this, a lot of preparation ought to be made; the Counselor or group leader must take note of the following practical considerations in the formation of a group:

- (1) Group composition
- (2) Clarity of Purpose
- (3) Group size
- (4) Frequency and duration of the meetings
- (5) Place of group meetings
- (6) Voluntary versus involuntary membership
- (7) Open versus closed groups

- (8) Building evaluation into group work
  - (9) Length of group
  - (10) Time of day
- (1.) **Group composition:** - The composition of a group depends on what size of group it is. Should a Counseling group be homogeneous or heterogeneous? i.e., should it comprise sex, age, socio-economic level, or problem area as opposed to varying these factors with the same group? If the group is homogeneous, it becomes cohesive, have better attendance and less conflict, offer more immediate support to each other and provide symptomatic relief. Ohlsen (1970) suggested four areas to consider: age, intellectual ability, sex and common problems. The wide age range may impede the discussions because age variable is important in working with children and adolescents even with adults, because clients who feel much older or younger than the other group members feel left out and inappropriate.

Another view supports the group being heterogeneous, they believe there is a room for maximum interaction when the group is heterogeneous, each member receives greater stimulation and is forced to examine and understand what is different about the other group members. The heterogeneous group also provides greater opportunities for reality testing

- (2.) **Clarity of Purpose:** The single most important therapeutic force is clarity of purpose; that is, the leader and the members must clearly understand the purpose of the group. In unsuccessful groups, the leader often is unclear as to the purpose and, thus, confuses the members. For instance, a leader might say the group is educational but spend most of the time doing therapy, or the leader might say the group is for support but spend the majority of the time focusing on one person or on one topic that is not relevant for most of the members. Unfortunately, groups where members are unsure of the purpose are an all-too-common occurrence. It is important that both the leader and members clearly understand the purpose of the group.
- (3.) **Group Size:** Group size is one of the major factors that affect group dynamics, so the leader should pay close attention to the decision of how many members to have in the group. The size of the group will depend in part on its purpose, the length of time of each session, the setting available, and the experience of the leader. We suggest 5 to 8

as the ideal number of members for most groups. For multicultural groups, the leader and members may be more comfortable with groups of no more than 5. If the group is going to meet for 1 hour or less, the leader should keep the group relatively small (no more than 6), unless it is an education group. Education groups usually have from 5 to 15 members; discussion groups usually have from 5 to 8. Ideally, personal growth, support, and Counseling/therapy groups have from 5 to 8 members. Although there can be as few as 3 and as many as 12. The size of the group can definitely be ant therapeutic. If the group is too large, members very often hesitate to share or do not have time to share. Leaders form large groups out of necessity without realising that an antitherapeutic force is being created. Groups that are too small can cause members to feel too much pressure to participate, creating an equally negative force. On the other hand, some small groups (2 or 3 members) with a specific focus, such as members who attempted suicide or members who had been raped, can sometimes be quite valuable.

- (4) **Frequency and duration of the meetings:** The number of meetings per month depends on many different factors, the most important being the purpose of the group and the composition of the members. Should a group meet twice weekly for one-hour session? Or is an hour and a half to two hours once a week preferable? Groups in residential settings often meet daily or two to three times a week. Most outpatient groups meet once a week or once every 2 weeks. Support groups usually meet once or twice a month. The key to the frequency of meetings is that they must not be so frequent that they become boring and not so infrequent that each meeting is like a first session. A leader should pay attention to the effect of the interval between sessions and, if possible, adjust the frequency so that it is a positive rather than negative force.
- (5). **Venue of group meetings:** There are a number of things to consider regarding where the group meets. One is convenience. Members will tend to come regularly if the location is easily accessible. Of course, the choice of location is not always within the leader's control; but when it is, the leader should consider the convenience factor. Another consideration is the privacy of the meeting room, privacy is essential; the members must feel that they will not be overheard by people in adjoining rooms. Ideally, the group will meet in a room that is closed to any other traffic during the

meeting time. Sometimes, especially in schools and some institutions, this is not possible. When faced with an inadequate setting, the leader must do as much as possible to ensure privacy, recognising that an ant therapeutic force is operating. The leader should also continue impressing upon the administration the importance of having a private room for group work. We say this because, unfortunately, the setting for groups is often very poor—are prepared to deal with terrible spaces for conducting groups. Other things the leader needs to consider about the setting are whether the room is comfortable, what the wall decorations are like, what the lighting is like, and whether the seating arrangements and chairs are comfortable. Any of these can affect the therapeutic forces. The relative size of the chairs must also be considered. It is best when they are approximately the same size, especially in a Counseling/therapy group, because members sitting at various heights may create a negative group dynamic. An option in such a case is to have everyone sit on the floor. The leader would want to do this only if there is a comfortable carpet to sit on and the members agree. More than likely, a leader would not use the floor for education, discussion, or task groups. In most group situations, it is best that the chairs not be lounge chairs because members tend to simply relax and not get involved in the process. Another consideration is whether or not to use tables. In most cases, it is better not to, because tables tend to serve as barriers between members. But there will be times when the leader may want to have tables, particularly in certain education and task groups. Once these details are taken care of, the leader still has some other factors to consider. Usually, the best sitting arrangement is a circle, so that all members can see one another. The leader will want to make sure that all members can see and are not blocked so that no one feels excluded. A tighter circle often creates a more intimate feeling, and members may tend to share more.

- (6). **Voluntary versus involuntary membership:** Perhaps the most basic force to consider is whether the members are voluntary or involuntary. Naturally, it would be appropriate and beneficial if all groups could be held on a voluntary basis. However, the courts and settings such as correctional institutions, residential treatment centers, and schools often mandate group participation. When a leader must conduct a group where there are non-volunteers, it is important to adapt to this dynamic. Both Yalom (2005), and Corey (2008) state that negative attitudes about being in a group can be transformed by the leader's ability to prepare members for the group. Corey further states that the leader also has to believe in the group process. Often some non-voluntary

members change their negative attitude if the first couple of sessions go well. To make the first sessions successful, the leader must plan the group on the assumption that there will be negative attitudes.

- (7). **open versus closed groups:** The leader makes this important decision whether the membership will be open or closed. Many groups are conducted as closed groups— that is, no new members are admitted once the group is established until it ends; new members are not added. Closed groups can be time limited and goal oriented. Groups are also conducted on an open basis— members join and leave periodically. The purpose of the group and the population being served usually dictate the leader's choice. In most cases, especially for support and Counseling/therapy groups, a closed group is better because the members develop trust and comfort as the group evolves. The only time a closed group becomes detrimental to members is when the group is getting stale and additional members would add new life. In some settings, such as hospitals or residential treatment centers where there are new arrivals weekly, groups with an open membership are mandated. This does not have to constitute a negative force if the leader's style is adjusted for this dynamic. The leader must keep in mind that the group will not evolve through various stages because members will always be at different places in their feelings about the group. When introducing new members, the leader will want to develop methods that do not detract from the flow of the group. Often leaders will spend too much time introducing and orienting new members, thus creating a negative force.
- (8). **Building evaluation into group work:** The group leader must devise procedures for assessing the degree to which clients benefit from the group experience. Such evaluation can also help a group leader sharpen his leadership skills. Member-specific measures are used to assess changes in attitude and behaviours of individual clients. It is possible to develop your own devices for evaluating the degree to which members attain their goals. Group-specification measures and assess the changes that are common to all members of the group, such as increased self-awareness, decreased anxiety, and improved personal relationship. Many of these measures are available in standardised form, or you can adapt them to suit your needs
- (9). **Length of Each Session:** For members to feel connected to the group and to one another, enough time must be allotted for each session. If a group session is not long enough, members may feel

they did not get their chance to share. Another problem that arises when insufficient time is allowed is that the group never really accomplishes much and the sharing never gets very personal. For education, discussion, and task groups, the usual session lasts from 1 to 2 hours; it can be longer in certain instances. Groups in schools usually last a class period, which is 40 to 50 minutes. For groups composed of children, the length of time may be much shorter; 30 to 45 minutes is usually a good duration for younger children. For therapy, support, and growth groups, at least 1½ hours—and usually not longer than 3 hours—is advisable. However, there may be times when the leader and members decide to meet for a more extended period—5 or 6 hours or for as long as an entire weekend.

- (10). **Time of Day:** The time the group meets can be a critical factor. If the group meets right after lunch or late in the day, the leader and the members may be tired. When setting up a group, the leader should choose a time that is most suitable for the majority of those involved. This may seem like a simple matter, but often leaders find themselves leading a group where the members have little energy because of the meeting time.

### Self-Assessment Exercises 2

1. List at least five practical considerations in the formation of a group.
2. Explain what closed group entails.

### 3.4 Summary

In this unit, you have been introduced to the factors in group Counseling, cohesiveness as an important element in group Counseling. Practical consideration in forming a group, some important terms emerge in the process that will help the understanding of group Counseling i.e., closed group, open group, voluntary/involuntary membership.

### 3.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

Akinade, E. A., Sokan, B. O., & Oseremen N. (2005). *An Introduction to Guidance and Counseling: A Basic Text for Colleges and Universities*. Ibadan: Caltep Publications (Nigeria) Limited.

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Schmit E. *Group dynamics* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Retrieved August 8, 2014 from <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/management/Gr-Int/Group-Dynamics.html>

### **3.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises**

#### **Self-Assessment Exercise 1**

1. Cohesiveness
2. Group formation, group awareness, group action.

#### **Self-Assessment Exercise 2**

1.
  - i. Group composition
  - ii. Clarity of Purpose
  - iii. Group size
  - iv. Frequency and duration of the meetings
  - v. Place of group meetings
  - vi. Voluntary versus involuntary membership
  - vii. Open versus closed groups
  - viii. Building evaluation into group work
  - ix. Length of group
  - x. Time of day
2. It entails that no new members are admitted once the group is established until it ends/ new members are not added.

## **UNIT 4 PURPOSES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GROUP MEMBERS**

### **Unit Structure**

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Learning Outcomes
- 4.3 Purposes and Responsibilities of Group Members
  - 4.3.1 Why People join Groups
  - 4.3.2 Responsibilities of Group Members
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 4.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### **4.1 Introduction**

It is natural for every reasonable person to ask this question, why do people join groups? And also, why do people prefer joining one group over another? Members of a group play important part in the success of the group. Lack of clarity regarding the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the membership can impede the success of the group. This unit is designed to assist members of the group to better understand their own roles and responsibilities in relationship to the work of the group, and to provide them with an opportunity to share their expectations about the roles and responsibilities of others.

### **4.2 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain why people join groups
- explain responsibilities of group members,

### **4.3 Purposes and Responsibilities of Group Members**

#### **4.3.1 Why People join Groups/Reasons for becoming a Member of a Group**

Human beings form groups for different reasons; it may be as a result of searching for ways to understand their life experiences. In this search for meaning, the beliefs transmitted by a group or its world vision may help some people find the answers they are looking for or bring new meaning to their daily lives. There may be a group of friends who are all underachievers, in that case the class may function as a group, and with the teacher as a leader, within a single class, there may be several sub-groups, each with its own leader(s)

A group that has high social status may attract members to itself. A person may decide to become a member because the group is considered to be prestigious in the eyes of the community. A person who becomes a member of an influential group becomes, by association, a prestigious and important person. Limited spaces in a group may heighten some people's desire to join the group.

Another important reason why people join groups is in order to attain a common goal or to engage in common activities. People who enjoy singing, movies, business, concerts, or sports events may form a group to attend to these together. Also, a number of individuals who want a certain candidate elected may form group to attain that goal. As a rule, when individuals select a group to join, they seek out others who are similar to themselves in order to obtain information which will enable them to evaluate their own reactions.

People through the group interaction influence their members' behaviours most powerfully through their social norms. One must conform to the expectations of the group or suffer its disapproval.

People join groups in order to get relief during a crisis situation, becoming a member of a group enables a person to relieve the tension or stress they are feeling. By joining a group, individuals who have been confronted by a disturbing event, such as the death of a loved one or the end of a relationship, may be better able to understand the event and come to terms with it. For instance, becoming a member of a spiritual group that believes in the existence of life after death may provide an explanation for a person who is grieving the loss of loved one.

The group offers a framework to help people interpret their problems from a different standpoint. Once they have adopted the group's doctrine or philosophy, difficult challenges may no longer be perceived as insurmountable and, indeed, may take on a new meaning. In a crisis situation some people may find it easier to manage their emotions by being part of a group that provides plausible explanations for their problems and suffering. The group therefore responds to the needs of the person in exchange for the individual's commitment to join the other members in pursuit of the group's objectives.

For some people, belonging to a group allows them to adopt a more harmonious approach to daily problems. Unemployment, for instance, is no longer perceived as a disaster, but as a challenging opportunity for individuals to acquire new skills.

Integrating into group life offers some people a chance to better adapt to stress, physical and psychological exertion, ageing or death. Joining a

group can also help some people overcome drug addiction, alcoholism, maladaptive and other bad behaviour. People join a group to satisfy certain need i.e., people may have financial difficulties or may have material needs, the group can share its resources; Individuals may experience confusion with regard to their value system which they may consider to be contrary to socially accepted values. A group may provide them with another moral code to fill this gap.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise 1**

Give at least three reasons why people join groups.

### **4.3.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Group Members**

Members have important responsibilities to fulfill in the smooth running of the group. Responsibilities are the specific tasks or duties that members are expected to complete as a function of their roles. They are the specific activities or obligations for which they are held accountable, when they assume or are assigned to a role in a group. When a group member plays one of the roles that will be discussed below, he is performing an act of leadership as a team, group members can be expected to have a clear understanding of the group's purpose and goals; look ahead and plan ahead. A group member can serve as information giver, he plays this role when the group is to analyse the situation adequately, determine the alternatives and select the best alternative. Also, he can act as opinion giver in which the group member states his belief, attitude or opinion on the suggestion(s).

Group members also act as harmoniser by resolving conflict between members. When there is tension within the group, he may say something in jest to break the tension. '... I don't think John really meant that you didn't know anything, Joy. What he was trying to get across was ...'. He acts as compromiser by helping to maintain group cohesion by 'coming half way' or admitting an error. He will sacrifice status to maintain group harmony.

A group member also acts as an encourager; he offers praise, commends and agrees with or accepts the ideas of other group members; attempts to make other group members feel that their contributions are worthwhile. An encourager might say, 'That is a good idea, would you explain it a little more?' He acts as gate-keeper by attempting to keep the channels of communication open so that all group members are encouraged to participate. In summary, member's role is to participate in the group project, follow directions, research and prepare thorough work, meet deadlines, communicate as necessary, and meet all the specific requirements of the group. He recognises the special roles of other group

members, and gives them support, willingly participates in the group process and production of content. He is positive, and adds to (not retract from) the group functions as a whole. If conflicts arise, he works to resolve the issue before it gets out of hand. He is committed to the group process until the final project has been completed. He understands his role and the roles of others within the group and supports all group members.

The Communicator (2008) stated that as a team group members can be expected to:

- Achieve a high degree of inter-communication.
- Initiate and carry on problem solving.
- Be objective about the group's function.
- Strike a balance between group productivity and individual needs.
- Share leadership responsibilities.
- Feel free to express feelings and points of view.
- Have a high degree of cohesiveness.
- Make efficient use of differing abilities of the members.
- Stick to issues which are important.
- Recognise that means are inseparable from ends.
- Understand the values and limitations of democratic methods.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise 2**

List at least five of the roles as listed by the Communicator (2008) as expected of a team group member.

## **4.4 Summary**

In this unit, you have been introduced to why people join groups, reasons attached to people becoming members of group and also discussion in this unit is based on roles and responsibilities of group members.

## **4.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources**

- Akinade, E. A., Sokan, B. O., & Oseremen, N. (2005). *An Introduction to Guidance and Counseling: A Basic Text for Colleges and Universities*. Ibadan: Caltep Publications (Nigeria) Limited.
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Responsibilities of group members Retrieved on August 18, 2014

[03/26\\_Responsibilities\\_Group\\_Members.pdf](#)

#### **4.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises**

##### Self-Assessment Exercise 1

- i. To attain high social status
- ii. In order to attain a common goal
- iii. To get relief during a crisis situation
- iv. It offers a framework to help people interpret their problems from a different standpoint.
- v. Groups offer some people a chance to better adapt to stress, physical and psychological exertion, ageing or death.

## **UNIT 5      TYPES OF GROUPS AND GROUP PROCESS**

### **Unit Structure**

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Learning Outcomes
- 5.3 Types of Groups and Group Process
  - 5.3.1 The Group Counseling Process
  - 5.3.2 Types of Counseling Group
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 5.6 Possible Answers to Self – Assessment Exercises

### **5.1 Introduction**

Group process is a continuous, dynamic and directional movement that facilitates the smooth running of a group. Also, different types of group Counseling and their meanings will be discussed.

### **5.2 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain group processes
- list types of Counseling Group
- explain each one of them.

### **5.3 Group Processes**

Group process can be defined as a continuous, dynamic and directional movement. It refers to two or more people working together on some need or problem toward some end or goal. It is also referred to as the actions and interactions used by a group to develop and maintain its identity as a group and its effect upon individuals who compose the group. Hapkins (1970) said that in social behaviour, the movement is largely from individual to individual, whereas in group behaviour, there is a tangible qualitative interdependence of each upon others which operates in three ways: Individual to individual, individual to whole and whole to individual.

Group process therefore is the way people work together to release an emergent quality called psychological climate, group morale, esprit de corps or co-operative units through which each discovers and develops his inner capacities, realises better, the nature of his self, releases more of his past experience and learns how to create this emergent quality in all life situations.

Group process refers to the interaction and energy exchanged between members and leaders, how the leader reacts to the members, and how the members communicate to one another and the leader. Sociologists, social psychologists, therapists, and researchers have studied group process.

### Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. Fill in the blank space: ..... refers to two or more people working together on some need or problem toward some end or goal.
2. The actions or interactions used by a group to develop and maintain its identity as a group and its effect upon individuals who compose the group is referred to as .....

## 5.4 Types of Counseling Group

Some of the Counseling groups are as follows

1. Therapy group
2. Discussion group
3. Guidance group
4. Counseling group
5. Encounter or sensitivity group
6. Psychotherapy/personality Reconstruction group
7. Family group Counseling
8. Training group
9. Psychodrama
10. Task-group

Groups come in many forms. There are a number of group models appropriate for a wide variety of situations. The problem of overlapping makes many groups not to fall clearly in one category or another, therefore the counsellor needs to understand the basic differences among these groups, the terminology used, and the setting with which each type is normally associated. Bet-Wilbur and Roberts-Wilbur (1981) identified three categories of groups according to a conceptual model process involved: (1) task; (2) socio; and (3) psychological groups. The objectives of these 3 kinds of groups respectively are:

- (1) Extra personal - to accomplish a task;
- (2) Interpersonal – to cause examination of attitudes, values and beliefs and to inform or orient
- (3) Intrapersonal - to change or modify behaviour by focusing that behaviour in the group.

There are many types of groups listed below, but using these 3 general categories, the focus will be on four popular types of Counseling groups and differences between them.

### **5.4.1 Therapy Group**

Is defined as the application of therapeutic principle to two or more individuals simultaneously to clarify their psychological conflicts so that they may live normally. More often, group therapy is reserved for the more seriously disturbed and treats disordered personality problems. A psychiatrist or clinical psychologist serves as the group leader. Group therapy can be applied to young married couples, students experiencing high levels of death anxiety etc.

### **5.4.2 Task Group**

A task group has one specific task to accomplish, and it is clearly and specifically defined. It is designed more for prevention for working out feelings. It is also referred to as a work group, task force, planning committee or discussion group focuses on assigned task independent of member needs. An example would be a group in which teachers meet with the school Counsellor to discuss disciplinary problems they are experiencing with their students. The duration is a function of the time necessary for completing its task, and the sessions may vary from one hour to three hours (or before boredom sets in). The setting varies and is determined by the nature of the tasks.

### **5.4.3 Training Group**

A training group is a time limited group intended for achieving a specific learning goal or goals. An example of this would be a group designed to train some group of people e.g., student Counselors in appropriate Counseling skills over a short period for specific purposes.

### **5.4.4 Guidance Group**

It is a guidance programme that is conducted with groups of students rather than between an individual pupil and Counselor. Kirby (1971) suggests that group guidance provides information and data to facilitate health attitudes and behaviour. The approach of group guidance, according to Kirby, is preventive, and it is most directly concerned with acquiring information, gaining an orientation to new problems, planning and implementing student activities and collecting data for occupational and educational decisions. Such a group might be useful for example, in helping college student athletes talk about some of the common problems they are experiencing, share these experiences and work out

methods for preventing many of the problems to which student athletes are typically prone. Through the social interaction and the psychological processes in the group context, specific role-oriented goals are worked through in a guidance group.

### **5.4.5 Counseling Group**

Group Counseling is a process in which the counselor is involved in a relationship with a number of counselees at the same time. The number of counselees may vary but a minimum of six to a maximum of twelve has been advocated by many counselors as a social experience that deals with developmental problems and attitudes of individuals. The primary goal is the creation of an interpersonal helping climate (Counseling atmosphere) which will allow such individuals to develop insight into themselves and to achieve their personal adjustment.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise 2**

List any five types of Group Counseling.

## **5.5 Summary**

The unit discusses meaning of group process, different types of groups and detailed explanations of some of the types of the groups are also discussed in the unit.

## **5.6 References and Further Reading/Web Resources**

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## **5.7 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises**

### **Self-Assessment Exercises 1**

1. Group Processes
2. Group Processes

### **Self-Assessment Exercise 2**

Any five of the following are acceptable:

- (i) Therapy group
- (ii) Discussion group
- (iii) Guidance group
- (iv) Counseling group
- (v) Encounter or sensitivity group
- (vi) Psychotherapy/personality Reconstruction group
- (vii) Family group Counseling
- (viii) Training group
- (ix) Psychodrama
- (x) Task-group

## MODULE 2

Unit 1	Group Theories
Unit 2	Application of Group Theories to Practice
Unit 3	Facilitative Skills and Techniques in Group Interactions
Unit 4	Group Leadership Characteristics and Skills
Unit 5	Leadership Methods and Productivity

### UNIT 1 GROUP THEORIES

#### Unit Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Learning Outcomes
- 1.3 Meaning of a Theory
  - 1.3.1 What is a Theory?
  - 1.3.2 The Place of a Theory in Group Counseling
  - 1.3.3 Major Functions of Group Theory
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 1.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

#### 1.1 Introduction

The usefulness of theories in group Counseling cannot be overemphasised. Counseling theories serve as guideline for producing desirable changes in clients, it also helps the Counselor understand what he or she is doing. A group Counselor who subscribes totally to the tenets of a single theoretical viewpoint is limiting himself/herself and thereby limiting his/her effectiveness as a group Counselor.

#### 1.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- define a theory
- explain the place of theory in group Counseling
- state major functions of group theory.

## **1.3 Meaning of a Theory**

### **1.3.1 What is a Theory?**

The Advanced Oxford English Dictionary defines theory as “a concept of mental scheme of something to be done, or the method of doing it; and systematic statement of rule or principles to be followed. Theory also has been defined as a set of propositions that are systematically interpreted and which serve as a means of predicting and explaining observable phenomena (Snelbecker, 1974). It has also been defined as a device which enables us to see relationships between one event or fact and another (McCabe, 1958). Steffire (1972) has called theory “a human convention for keeping data in order”. Ohlsen (1993) defined a theory as a set of conventions created by the theorist, thus they are not predetermined by nature. It is a set of reasoned ideas intended to explain facts or events. Theory is not a data in that while data is already a fact, it is still an opinion, supposition through which facts are established. A theory helps the Counselor to understand what he is doing. It gives the Counselor a structural basis for judging how much progress is being made toward desired outcome.

### **1.3.2 The Place of a Theory in Group Counseling**

The importance of theory in group Counseling cannot be overemphasised; as Counseling theories should be guidelines for producing desirable change. Through good theory, the Counselor understands what he/she is doing. It gives the Counselor a structural basis for judging how much progress is being made towards a desired outcome. Theories regarding the purpose and process of counseling start from conception of the nature of human beings, what they should do, to how they change.

A theory must be considered as a conceptual model used to make sense out of the events we observe. Group Counseling theories are systematic ways of understanding the participants’ behaviour, as well as systematic ways of viewing the Counseling process and providing a guideline for the Counselor’s behaviour. A theory, then, is a map – a few points are known but the road between them is inferred.

A theory can help group leaders clarify issues that are not clear to them i.e. what is the basic nature of human beings? How specific should the goal be? What are the functions of group members? What techniques are the best? Why? etc.

A theory affords procedures for modifying behaviours. A Counseling theory is not remote and impractically or merely idealistic. It is part of

Counseling practice. Theory should become more clinically useful and generate predictions about client's behaviour that prove to be accurate through empirical verification.

### **Self-Assessment Exercises 1**

1. Distinguish between theory and data.
2. How would you describe group counseling?

### **1.3.3 Major Functions of Group Theory**

Shertzer and Stone (1974) have delineated four major functions of theory

- (1) A theory serves to summarise and generalise a particular body of knowledge. It brings together a body of related knowledge and, in shorthand fashion, attempts to put the separate findings into a meaningful and useful package.
- (2) A theory serves to increase the understanding of a particular body of knowledge. It attempts to order data and to demonstrate those pieces of the puzzle that are the most important.
- (3) A theory provides tools by which predictions may be made. It is like a diagram that depicts the various points and what may be expected to occur at those points. For the practitioner, it acts as a guide to the particular pathways that are possible and what may result if certain routes are followed.
- (4) A theory serves to encourage further research into the area. It makes no difference whether the theory is proved correct or incorrect; the importance of theory is that it stimulates further investigations into the particular phenomena with which it is concerned. This is the point of which we refer when we state that a theory is always in the process of becoming. As new research evidence is accumulated, the theory is substantiated, revised, or simply rejected.
- (5) Theory gives Counselors operational guidelines by which to work and helps them evaluate their development as professional. Theory helps Counselors focus on relevant data and tells them what to look for.
- (6) It helps Counselors assist clients in the effective modification of their behaviour. Theory helps Counselors evaluate both old and new approaches to the process of Counseling. It is the base from which new Counseling approaches are constructed.

A good theory can be measured against certain formal attributes: **Comprehensiveness**, that is, it should be complete in terms of covering the area of interest including all known data in the field. **Clarity**, it must be clear, simple and be easily understood, it should be less complex in definitions, proposition and hypothesis. **Explicitness** which means its concepts be clearly defined

operationally, it should generate research because of its design. **Parsimonious**, not verbose, not using many words. A theory that possesses the attributes mentioned can be used to stimulate research, which in turn can validate the theory and contribute to its modification.

## Self-Assessment Exercises 2

1. List four major functions of theory.
2. In four words, identify four formal attributes by which a theory can be measured.

### 1.4 Summary

This unit acquainted the reader with the meaning of theory, the place of theory in group counseling, major functions of group theory and attributes of theory. This will, no doubt, help lay the necessary foundation as you work through the course for better understanding of the subject matter.

### 1.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

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## 1.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. While data are already facts, theory is still an opinion for suppositions through which facts are established.
2. Group Counseling theories are systematic ways of understanding the participants' behavior, as well as systematic ways of viewing the Counseling process and providing guidance for the Counselor's behavior.

### Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1.
  - (1) A theory serves to summarise and generalise a particular body of knowledge.
  - (2) A theory serves to increase the understanding of a particular body of knowledge. It attempts to order data and to demonstrate those pieces of the puzzle that are the most important.
  - (3) A theory provides tools by which predictions may be made.
  - (4) A theory serves to encourage further research into the area.
  - (5) Theory gives Counselors operational guidelines by which to work and helps them evaluate their development as professional.
  - (6) It helps Counselors assist clients in the effective modification of their behaviour.
2.
  - (i) Comprehensiveness
  - (ii) Clarity
  - (iii) Explicitness
  - (iv) Parsimonious

## **UNIT 2 APPLICATION OF GROUP THEORIES TO PRACTICE**

### **Unit Structure**

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Learning Outcomes
- 2.3 Theories of Group Counseling
  - 2.3.1 Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy in Groups
  - 2.3.2 Reality Therapy in Groups
  - 2.3.3 Transactional Analysis
  - 2.3.4 Gestalt Therapy
  - 2.3.5 Behavioural Group Therapy
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 2.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### **2.1 Introduction**

Group Counseling is one option available to people seeking help and support through Counseling. There are several group Counseling theories used in practice. Each theory provides a Counselor or therapist with direction on how to work effectively with a group of people, making sure every person gets the most he can out of the experience. Counseling theories are essential in any Counseling practice. The unit looks at some vital theories such as REBT in Group, Reality Therapy in Group, Transactional Analysis, Gestalt Therapy, The Psychoanalytic Approach to Group Counseling

### **2.2 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain in detail theory of Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy in group Counseling
- explain in detail theory of Reality Therapy in group Counseling
- discuss in detail theory Transactional Analysis in group Counseling
- describe in detail theory of Gestalt Therapy in group Counseling
- state the Psychoanalytic approach to group Counseling.

## 2.3 Application of Group Theory to Practice

### 2.3.1 Rational-Emotive Behaviour Therapy

**Introduction:** In the mid-1950s American psychologist Albert Ellis developed one of the first cognitive approaches to therapy, Rational-Emotive Therapy, now commonly called Rational-Emotive Behaviour Therapy. Trained in psychoanalysis in the 1940s, Ellis quickly became disillusioned with psychoanalytic methods, viewing them as slow and inefficient. Influenced by Alfred Adler's work, Ellis came to regard irrational beliefs and illogical thinking as the major cause of most emotional disturbances. In his view, negative events such as losing a job or breaking up with a lover do not by themselves cause depression or anxiety; rather, emotional disorders result when a person perceives the events in an irrational way, such as by thinking, "I'm a worthless human being." It is based on the premise that whenever we become upset, it is not the events taking place in our lives that upset us; it is the beliefs that we hold that cause us to become depressed, anxious, enraged, etc. The idea that beliefs upset us was first articulated by Epictetus around 2,000 years ago: "*Men are disturbed not by events, but by the views which they take of them.*" At the heart of REBT are the concepts of unconditional self-acceptance, unconditional other-acceptance, and unconditional life-acceptance.

It focuses on helping people change irrational beliefs they hold which generally lead to negative behaviours. Therapists and group members listen to another member's problem and help by pointing out the false or irrational beliefs that led to an acting-out behaviour. The group can assist the person in challenging the negative belief and provide guidance in thinking about things in a more positive and rational way.

Although Rational-Emotive Behaviour therapists use many techniques, the most common technique is that of disputing irrational thoughts. First the therapist identifies irrational beliefs by talking with the client about his or her problems. Examples of irrational beliefs, according to Ellis, include the idea that unhappiness is caused by external events, the idea that one must be accepted and loved by everyone, and the idea that one must always be competent and successful to be a worthwhile person.

REBT theory mainly focuses on how irrational thoughts affect people to the extent of causing detrimental effects and how these thoughts act as barriers to a happy self-fulfilling life (Dryden, 2003). Usually, the irrational thoughts held by a person are often congruent with their behaviour as can be reflected in the person's attitude which also has the cognitive, affective and behavioural components similar to those of REBT theory (Cacioppo & Petty, 1981).

### **2.3.2 An Overview of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy's View of Human Nature**

Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy assumed that people are born with dual potential of both healthy and unhealthy thought processes. The healthy processes, rational thinking is viewed as effective and productive whereas unhealthy variety is irrational thinking which result in unhappiness and non-productivity. Rational thinking as would be expected means objectively seeing things as they really are. Rational thinking distorts reality by misinterpreting things that happen. Therefore if an individual has number of irrational beliefs, he/she is likely to experience much emotional pain throughout life as various challenges are encountered. Contrarily, if one's beliefs are rational, then he/she can handle the disappointing events of life with skills or confidence that is one's feelings are primarily determined by his thought.

Batte (1996) defined rational thoughts as true thoughts and irrational thoughts as the false thoughts a person may have about themselves, others and how things in general must function to suit their needs. She goes on to explain that all thoughts, be they rational or irrational are the central of self-talk (intrapersonal speech) though rational thoughts will foster positive self-talk, cognitions, emotions and behaviour whilst irrational thoughts breed negative intrapersonal speech which do not foster growth but rather have negative consequences on the person. This notion is also supported by Hassin, Uleman and Bargh (2005) who believed that irrational thoughts are subconscious, act as motivation barriers and also interrupt rational thought patterns. In their perspective, Ellis and Blau (1998) considered irrational thoughts as cognitions which contain words such as should and must. They believed that these types of self-talks are irrational because if they do not go according to the person's plans and expectations; then negative consequences are inevitable as the likely end product.

Once the negative self-talk enters the person's head, it affects everything they do from cognition, emotion and behaviour and how they cope with the ups and downs of life (Epstein, 1998). After these irrational thoughts take over a person's thinking, the person is bound to act on them as evident in the individuals self-fulfilling prophecy, Epstein (1998). The irrational self-talk does not stop there as is evident in people who project their irrational thoughts onto other people and the world around them (Ellis & Harper, 1997). More evidence supporting the notion of the devastating effects of self-talk comes from authors of self-help books such as those by Dennis Waitley and Wayne Dyer which have explicitly acknowledged the role of irrational self-talk as a barrier to goal achievement and particularly, positive self-talk as the main factor which

distinguishes successful people from those who are less successful in life.

As a result of this self-talk, several implications can arise for instance, avoiding responsibility and blaming others for their downfall and incompetence or for other negative aspects in the person's life, as opposed to taking responsibility and being in control of one's life (Ellis et al., 1997, 1998; Batte, 1996). As a result, the person can end up feeling frustrated since they are unable to self-actualise due to all the cognitive, behavioural and emotional barriers they have built up, Ellis et al (1997). Other severe consequences that can arise as a result entail procrastination, underachievement, blaming and psychological, emotional and behavioural problems (Batte, 1996); which Ellis 1997 summarised with the word 'disturbances'.

REBT theory states that humans also have a strong tendency to be influenced by their environment. This is particularly during childhood, when family, peers and culture have an enormous impact on their belief, emotions and actions. Some of the self-sabotaging irrational beliefs are learnt from other people during childhood, and one concocts the rest on his own. This is the only way in which the past matters in REBT: current beliefs are learnt from the past experiences. The past cannot be changed and REBT places very little emphasis on discussing it. Instead, REBT works to replace the illogical beliefs with logical ones. Ellis is convinced that if clients hope to make a profound philosophical change, they had better change their irrational, self-defeating belief system (Ellis, 1980, 1992, 1993). Olayinka (1993) contended that the illogical thought can be reversed.

In REBT thought, irrational beliefs are the cause of human neuroses, including depression and anxiety. Irrational beliefs tend to ignore the positive, exaggerate the negative, distort reality, and/or over generalise. People tend to overuse 'should', 'must' and 'ought'. Many of these self-defeating beliefs are indoctrinated in early life and grow stronger as a person continually revisits them. Olayinka (1993) contended that these irrational behaviours were acquired from one's culture and parents during the process of socialisation or during day-to-day interaction with other persons. Ellis believes that irrational emotional ideas are taught by parents and absorbed from social agencies.

### **2.3.3 The ABC of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy**

The ABC theory of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy was invented by Albert Ellis, the key concept in REBT is that emotional problems descend from childhood, and as a result, invented the ABC theory of personality. In the proposed model of personality, **A** -refers to the

trigger or event such as having an argument with a significant other. **B**- serves as the clients' belief system about the event. For instance, the person who had an argument might believe that the rest of their day has been ruined because of the argument they had earlier on. On the other hand, **C**- represents the consequence which can either be adaptive or maladaptive depending on whether the A or event is perceived rationally or irrationally and the emotions arising as a result, (Corey, 2009). **D** - this is the stage of self-talk or internalised sentence, **E**- Positive effect, is the point of changed verbalisation and behaviour after some therapeutic sessions, he or she would now change the verbalisations and irrational behaviour to rational and logical thinking. **F**- is the change of positive thinking or feeling. If the event is perceived rationally, then adaptive or constructive behaviour is portrayed e.g. relaxation, meditation or effective coping strategies, and the person moves on with the rest of the day (Willson et al., 2006).

### 2.3.4 REBT Goals

Since REBT theorists believe that peoples' problems are caused by the beliefs they hold, it is no wonder that their therapeutic goal is to help clients develop a more positive outlook and the maintenance of positive cognitions by restructuring the irrational thoughts and beliefs they hold (Corey, 2005).

Another method used to combat these irrational goals is the tracking of cognitions so that the person may know when they start thinking irrationally and to take immediate action before these thoughts lead to maladaptive behaviour, by schema restructuring (Corey, 2005).

This is a strong point in REBT theory since they do not only focus on the present situation but also teach the student how to deal with future irrational thinking to avoid putting themselves in the same situations as they previously had, which is unlike other theories (Corey, 2009).

Since REBT therapists believe that restructuring thoughts dramatically changes the persons behaviour and feelings, during therapy, the practitioner takes on the role of a teacher focusing on generating insight in the student in order for them to see how their irrational thoughts and negative self-talk have contributed to the problems they are currently experiencing, better known as psycho education (Corey, 2005).

REBT therapists aimed to change negative self-talk which they believe will also change subsequent behaviour and the emotions or feelings associated by both cognitions and behaviour.

**Strengths**

- Cognitive-behavioural therapy focuses on assisting people in changing their thought process as a means to changing their behaviour. This approach works well in group therapy because other people can provide advice and guidance, especially if they have been through the same or a similar situation.
- The group also holds the individual accountable for following through on his planned changes in action, and it can assist the person in overcoming barriers keeping him from making positive changes.
- The strength of REBT is that it is deemed to be the most effective form of Psychotherapy when combined with medication, in quite a number of clinical disorders and especially when it comes to treating depression (Bennett, 2003).
- Another crucial aspect of this theoretical orientation is that it is also very confrontational, and especially during the first session (Corey, 2009).
- The time limited aspect of REBT is therefore a great strength. REBT is also the preferred therapy type due to its goal oriented and short term therapeutic nature (Batte, 1996).

**Weaknesses**

- Corey (2009) has also criticized REBT since the theory tends to ignore catharsis. REBT practitioners may be criticised under the premise that avoiding catharsis is directly harming a client by stopping the client from venting their emotions.
- Another shortfall for this theory is that the therapist does not indulge in exploring the background of the emotional issues presented by their clients bearing in mind that they could be potential precipitators of the current situation (Corey, 2009).
- Another shortfall of REBT theory is that it completely ignores the role played by individual differences bearing in mind that each one of us has our own individual threshold for succumbing to these irrational thoughts (DiGiuseppe, 1996).

## **Counseling Techniques and Procedures**

- The Counselor uses relation building techniques such as being supportive, being accepting and showing warmth at the initial stages of Counseling in order to involve the client and to gain his or her confidence.
- An important aspect of treatment is the execution of homework by clients.
- In emotive techniques, the students are taught how to dispute their irrational beliefs by teaching the clients how to unconditionally accept themselves despite their personal weaknesses (Corey, 2009).
- Journaling is also very crucial at this point as it also helps the client see where they are and where they are going together with events that occur in their daily lives and their cognitive, affective and behavioural implications (Ankrom, 2009).
- Meditation is also taught as a behavioural relaxation technique (Ankrom, 2009).
- Role playing also brings out people's underlying emotions for the events in question and is highly encouraged as an explorative and assessment tool (Corey, 2009).
- Ellis also believed in using humour to show clients that they should not take life too seriously and also to enable them to laugh at themselves. He also used humour to confront his clients which is a subtle way of confronting and reduces the chances of the client being defensive since it is done in a non-threatening way (Nelson-Jones, 2000).
- The RET Counselor therefore uses active direct teaching, confrontation, reasoning with the client, suggestion, persuasion, encouragement and prescription of behaviour to help a client change his irrational ideas and attitude and replace them with more rational ones. The Counselor goes further to help the client adopt a more rational philosophy of living so that he or she does not in future become a victim of other irrational ideas.
- Several behavioural techniques are used by REBT clinicians. A good example of this is relaxation techniques commonly used in the treatment of phobias and anxiety disorders (Bennett, 2003; Willson et al., 2006).

### Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. There are several group counseling theories used in practice. Name any **four** of them.
2. The Rational-Emotive Behaviour Therapy was developed by .....
3. State **three** identified weaknesses of the REBT.

### 2.3.5 Reality Therapy

**Introduction:** Reality therapy was developed by William Glasser, a psychiatrist, who was trained in (but later rejected) the concepts of psychoanalysis and views of behaviour developed by Sigmund Freud. Reality Therapy is a cognitive-behavioural approach to therapy, Counseling and problem solving which focuses on the here-and-now and how we can plan for a better future instead of concentrating at length on the past. It emphasises making decisions, and taking action and control of one's own life. In a caring, trusting environment clients discover what they really want and whether what they are currently doing (how they are choosing to behave) is actually bringing them nearer to, or further away from, that goal.

Glasser holds the view that people who are behaving in inappropriate ways do not need help to find a defense for their behaviour. Instead, they need help to acknowledge their behaviour as being inappropriate and then to learn how to act in a more logical and productive manner. Reality therapy attempts to help people control the world around them more effectively so that they are better able to satisfy their needs.

The principles involved in counseling session in Reality Therapy were conceptualised by Glasser (1981) in eight steps as follows:

1. **Involvement:** - Establishing a relationship with the client is believed to be the most important factor in all types of therapy. Without this relationship, the other steps will not be effective.
2. **Behaviour:-** Behaviour, in Reality Therapy and in William Glasser's Choice Theory terms is composed of four aspects or vectors: Thinking, Acting, Feeling, and Physiology. We can directly choose our thoughts and our acts; we have great difficulty in directly choosing our feelings and our physiology (sweaty palms, headaches, nervous, racing pulse, etc.). Emotions (feelings) are wonderful, immediate and source of information about how we are doing and whether we are happy with what is going on in our lives. But it is very hard to choose and to change

our emotions directly. It is easier to change our thinking - to decide.

3. **Current behaviour and evaluating your behaviour:** - While traditional psychoanalytic and Counseling often focus on past events, Reality Therapy and Choice theory solutions lie in the present and the future. The focus of the practitioner of Reality Therapy is to learn what needs to be learned about the past but to move as quickly as feasible to empowering the client to satisfy his or her needs and wants in the present and in the future. The therapist asks the client to make a value judgment about his current (present) behaviour (which presumably is not helping, otherwise the client may not have negative consequences from behaviour motivating enough to seek therapy).
4. **Commitment to the plan:** - The client must make a commitment to carry out the plan. This is important because many clients will do things for the therapist that they would not do just for themselves. In some cases it can be helpful to make the commitment in writing.
5. **No Excuses, No Punishment, Never Give Up:** - If there is no punishment, then there is no reason to accept excuses. The therapist insists that the client either carry out the plan, or come up with a more feasible plan. If the therapist maintains a good relationship with the client, it can be very hard to resist carrying out a plan that the client has agreed would be feasible. If the plan is too ambitious for the client's current abilities, then the therapist and the client work out a different plan.
6. **Control:** - Control is considered a key issue in Reality Therapy. To meet their needs human beings need control: one person seeks control through position and money; another wants to control his or her physical space, like the teenager who bans all parents and parent-like persons from her room; another wants to chair the committee. Control gets us into trouble in two primary ways: when we try to control other people, and when we use drugs and alcohol to give us a false sense of control. At the very heart of Choice Theory is the core belief that the only person I can really control is I.
- 7 **Role of the Therapist:** Glasser (2005) added that in order to create the relationship vital to Reality Therapy, the Therapist is expected to fulfill some conditions:

- Focus on the present and avoid discussing the past because all human problems are caused by unsatisfying present relationships.
- Avoid discussing symptoms and complaints as much as possible since these are often the ineffective ways that counselees choose to deal with (and hold on to) unsatisfying relationships.
- Understand the concept of total behaviour, which means focus on what counselees can do directly-act and think. Spend less time on what they cannot do directly; that is, changing their feelings and physiology.
- Feelings and physiology can be changed indirectly, but only if there is a change in the acting and thinking.
- Avoid criticising, blaming and/or complaining and help counselees to do the same. By doing this, they learn to avoid these extremely harmful external control behaviours that destroy relationships.
- Remain non-judgmental and non-coercive, but encourage people to judge all they are doing by the Choice Theory axiom: Is what I am doing getting me closer to the people I need? If the choice of behaviours is not getting people closer, then the Counselor works to help them find new behaviours that lead to a better connection.
- Teach counselees that legitimate or not, excuses stand directly in the way of their making needed connections.
- Focus on specifics. Find out as soon as possible who counselees are disconnected from and work to help them choose reconnecting behaviours. If they are completely disconnected, focus on helping them find a new connection.
- Help them make specific, workable plans to reconnect with the people they need, and then follow through on what was planned by helping them evaluate their progress. Based on their experience, Counselors may suggest plans, but should not give the message that there is only one plan. A plan is always open to modification or rejection by the counselee.
- Be patient and supportive but keep focusing on the source of the problem. **Approach:** In the book published by Glasser (1989), Reality therapy is centered on human five basic, genetically endowed needs. These needs are classified under five headings.
- **Survival** (including food, clothing, nourishment, shelter, personal security).
- **Connecting, belonging, love** (including groups as well as families or loved ones).

- **Power** (including learning, achievement and feeling worthwhile, winning, and competence).
- **Freedom** (including independence, autonomy, one's own 'space').
- **Fun** (including pleasure and enjoyment).

According to Pdraig (2005) one of the core principles of reality therapy is that, whether we are aware of it or not, we are acting (behaving) to meet these needs all the time. But we don't necessarily act effectively. Socialising with people is an effective way to meet our need for belonging. Sitting in a corner and crying in the hope that people will come to us is generally an ineffective way of meeting that need - it may work, but it is painful and carries a terribly high price for ourselves and others.

So if life is unsatisfactory or we are distressed or in trouble, this approach advocates that one basic approach or strategy is to check carefully, whether we are succeeding in meeting our basic psychological needs for power, belonging, freedom and fun (Glasser, 2005). In this society the survival need is normally being met - it is in how we meet the four psychological needs that we run into trouble. Reality therapy holds that the key to behaviour is to remain aware of what we presently want. This is because it maintains that what really drives us as social beings is our wants. We don't think of our needs as such. We think of what we want, we behave to get what we want; we fantasise about what we want, etc. But we often are not aware of either our real desires, or how our present actions are linked to these. It is very much a therapy of hope, based on the conviction that we are products of the past but we do not have to go on being its victims.

## 8. **Transactional Analysis**

Transactional analysis (TA) was developed by Eric Berne (1910-1970). It is an interactional therapy grounded on the assumption that we make current decisions based on past premises: premises that were at one time appropriate to our survival needs but that may no longer be valid. Berne (1961, 1964) proposed that individuals have the innate ability to control their lives and destinies but that few have adequate self-awareness. Therefore TA is oriented toward increasing awareness with the goal of enabling people to make new decisions and thereby alter the course of their life. To achieve this goal, TA Group participants learn how to recognise the three ego states within each person: Parent, Adult and Child People. They also learn how their current behaviour is being affected by the rules and regulation they received and incorporated as children and how they can identify

the 'life script' that is determining their actions. The Goal of TA therapy is to help people to relate to others as adults. The theory analysed different aspects of group members' interactions. TA is swift-moving, action oriented approach.

The salient feature at transactional analysis is that it basically views people as products of relationship and their behaviour as the functions of the past interactional fearing experience. It holds the view that people are responsible for what they do. If a man understands what is wrong with him and has enough motivation he can become a winner. It is usually practiced in groups.

Dusay and Dusay (1989) identified four phases in the development of Transactional Analysis **First phase** (1955-1962): The phase which began with Berne's identification of the ego states Parent, Adult and Child (P-A-C), which provided a perspective from which to explain thinking, feeling and behaving. When we are in parent ego state, it refers to the parental and cultural influences, and we react to situations as we imagine our parents might have reacted, or we may act toward others the way our parents acted toward us. Parental ego states are in two forms, they are controlling parent and nurturing parent. The adult is oriented toward current reality, is objective in gathering information, and is not related to chronological age. It helps us to make use of our mental and physical capabilities to meet the challenges that we face day after day. It discards unrealistic inappropriate messages and feelings and makes his own decisions. The important characteristics are organisation, intelligence, processing, probability and decision making. It is devoid of feelings. The child ego state consists of feelings, impulses and spontaneous actions. According to TA, people are constantly shifting from one of these states to another, and their behaviour at any other time is related to the ego state of the moment. TA has identified three different forms of child ego state they are (1).The Natural child (2).The Adaptive child (3).The Little professor.

**Second Phase (1962 – 1966):** This is the second stage of the Counseling. It helps the client to understand the three distinct types of transactions. They are complementary, crossed and ulterior. It focused on transactions and 'games' A game is an on-going series of transactions seemingly complementary, covertly ulterior which leads to a well-defined pay off. Pay off are usually negative feelings like fear, anger, sadness for one or both the players. Game is defined as a series of complementary transactions, progressing to a well-defined predictable outcome. Most of what happens in life is game. The client is encouraged to learn more satisfying ways of structuring time and acquiring strokes.

**Third Phase (1966 - 1970):** This phase gave attention to life scripts and script analysis. A life script is an internal plan that determines the direction of one's life. Script analysis is the analysis of life dramas that people without awareness act out compulsively some of the impressions which get imprinted in the earlier experiences will influence our behaviour. It is a tool of TA. It tells us how we got the impression and how we can get rid of it. Scripts are two (1) Winning script (2) Losing script **Fourth Phase (1970 to the present):** This phase is characterised by the incorporation of new techniques into Transactional Analysis practice.

The eight Counseling techniques delineated by Achebe (1988) are as the follows: interrogation, specification, confrontation, explanation, illustrations, confirmation, interpretation, crystallisation.

### **The Philosophy of TA**

Transactional analysis embraces a positive view of human nature. Some basic assumptions are:

- All people are important and their concerns are valid.
- All people should be treated as equals and with respect.
- With a few exceptions, all people have the ability to think as adults.
- All people decide their own destiny and can make changes to it.

From these assumptions TA creates a form of therapy that is not only problem-oriented, but also goal-oriented. It aims to free the client from maladaptive patterns of behaviour based on past thinking. In doing so, they will be able to choose a new direction in life. In fact, the basic goal of transactional analysis is to help a client make new decisions about their current behaviour and change the direction their lives are taking. In other words, a person will learn to write their own life story instead of allowing it to be written for them.

**Goal:** The ultimate goal is to ensure clients regain absolute autonomy over their lives.

### **Role of the Counselor**

In transactional analysis the Counselor and the client work together to establish the specific goals of therapy. In other words, the counselor will use their knowledge to address a concern introduced by the client rather than telling the client what issues they need to focus on.

### **Gestalt Groups**

Gestalt therapy is a phenomenological-existential therapy founded by Frederick (Fritz) and Laura Perls in the 1940s. It focuses on the individual's experience in the present moment, the therapist-client

relationship, the environmental and social contexts in which these things take place, and the self-regulating adjustments people make as a result of the overall situation. It emphasises personal responsibility. Explanations and interpretations are considered less reliable than what is directly perceived and felt. Patients and therapists in Gestalt therapy *dialogue*, that is, communicate their phenomenological perspectives. Differences in perspectives become the focus of experimentation and continued dialogue. The goal is for clients to become aware of what they are doing, how they are doing it, and how they can change themselves, and at the same time, to learn to accept and value themselves.

Gestalt therapy focuses more on process (what is happening) than content (what is being discussed). The emphasis is on what is being done, thought and felt at the moment rather than on what was, might be, could be, or should be.

Gestalt therapy has developed into a form of therapy that emphasises medium to large groups, although many Gestalt techniques can be used in one-on-one therapy. Gestalt therapy probably has a greater range of formats than any other therapy technique. It is practiced in individual, couples, and family therapies, as well as in therapy with children.

Ideally, the patient identifies current sensations and emotions, particularly ones that are painful or disruptive. Patients are confronted with their unconscious feelings and needs, and are assisted to accept and assert those repressed parts of themselves.

The most powerful techniques involve role-playing. For example, the patient talks to an empty chair as they imagine that a person associated with an unresolved issue is sitting in the chair. As the patient talks to the 'person' in the chair, the patient imagines that the person responds to the expressed feelings. Although this technique may sound artificial and might make some people feel self-conscious, it can be a powerful way to approach buried feelings and gain new insight into them. Sometimes patients use *battacca* bats, padded sticks that can be used to hit chairs or sofas. Using a *battacca* bat can help a patient safely express anger. A patient may also experience a Gestalt therapy marathon, where the participants and one or more facilitators have nonstop group therapy over a weekend. The effects of the intense emotion and the lack of sleep

### **Key concepts of Gestalt therapy**

Gestalt therapy works through the interconnection of key concepts. These offer insight into the processes involved in therapy sessions between the therapist and client(s).

- **Person-centered awareness** - Focusing on the future, and imagining it divorced from the present and past is considered essential. The process follows an individual's experience in a way that does not involve seeking out the unconscious, but staying with what is present and aware.
- **Respect** - Clients, whether an individual, group or family, are treated with profound respect by a Gestalt therapist. Providing a balance of support and challenge is key to helping those taking part to feel comfortable about opening up and acknowledging areas of resistance.
- **Emphasis on experience** - The Gestalt approach focuses on experience in terms of an individual's emotions, perceptions, behaviours, body sensations, ideas and memories. A therapist encourages the client to 'experience' in all of these ways, vividly in the here and now.
- **Creative experiment and discovery** - There is a range of experimental methodology used by therapists to test their client's experience. These involve highly creative and flexible techniques to help them open up and acknowledge hidden feelings.
- **Social responsibility** - The Gestalt approach recognises that humans have a social responsibility for self and for others. It demands respect for all people and acknowledges that everyone is different. Ultimately it encourages individuals to adopt an egalitarian approach to social life.
- **Relationship** - Relating is considered central to human experience and gestalt therapy considers individuals as 'whole' when they have a good relationship with themselves and others around them. The interpersonal relationship between the individual and therapist that is developed and nurtured in sessions is a key guiding process if therapy.

### Goals

In Gestalt therapy, the major goal is self-awareness. Patients work on uncovering and resolving interpersonal issues during therapy. Unresolved issues are unable to fade into the background of consciousness because the needs they represent are never met. In Gestalt therapy, the goal is to discover people connected with a patient's unresolved issues and try to engage those people (or images of those people) in interactions that can lead to a resolution. Gestalt therapy is most useful for patients open to working on self-awareness.

### Strengths

Ultimately, Gestalt therapy is considered to help individuals gain a better understanding of how their emotional and physical needs are connected. They will learn that being aware of their internal self is key to understanding why they react and behave in certain ways. This

journey of self-discovery makes the approach beneficial for individuals who can be guarded when it comes to their emotions, and finds it difficult to process why they feel and act the way they do. It can also provide support and a safe space for individuals going through times of personal difficulty.

Gestalt therapy is considered particularly valuable for helping to treat a wide range of psychological issues - especially as it can be applied as a long-term therapy or as a brief and focused approach. It has been found effective for managing tension, anxiety, addiction, post-traumatic stress, depression and other psychological problems that can prevent people from living life to the full. Overall, people who participate in gestalt therapy tend to feel more self-confident, calm and at peace with themselves.

### **Weakness**

Disturbed people with severe mental illness may not be suitable candidates for Gestalt therapy. Facilities that provide Gestalt therapy and train Gestalt therapists vary and there are no set national standards for Gestalt therapy

### **Techniques**

The most basic technique in working toward awareness is simple observation. Other techniques used in group counseling with gestalt therapy include awareness Experiments, unfinished business, exaggeration, reversals, making the rounds, fantasy, approaches and rehearsal. Gestalt therapy has proven to be effective in time-limited situations. It is applicable to a variety of problems and is used with children, adolescents, and adults. It provides a perspective on growth and enhancement while focusing on current behaviors. Group members are given the opportunity to do their own seeing, feeling, sensing, and interpreting.

### **The Psychoanalytic Approach to Group Counseling**

Wolf (1963, 1975) developed group applications of basic psychoanalytic techniques. In this theory members of group often free associate to each other without therapist, report dreams analyse resistance and transference of feelings towards therapist and other group members. Gives improved levels of self-expression and to the development of heightened social skills. Focus is still on free association, transference of resistance and working through. The experience gives deeper analytic experience as individual learns anxiety tolerance in group. Wolf's groups consist of eight (8) to ten (10) (equal males and females) met for ninety minutes thrice a week. The Counselor tells the clients that it's a problem of self-understanding, learning what unconscious motives excite us to behave.

## Goals

The goal of the analytic process is the restructuring of the client character and personality system. This goal is achieved by making unconscious conflicts conscious and examining them. It specifically reenacts the family of origin in a symbolic way via the group, so that the historical past of each group member is repeated in the group's presence.

Other Goals of psychoanalytic theory are increased satisfaction with one's self and greater improvement in social behaviour. Finally one may experience all sorts of positive and negative attitudes about one another. Authority and intimacy may develop within a group

## Self-Assessment Exercises 2

1. .... is a phenomenological-existential therapy founded by Frederick (Fritz) and Laura Perls in the 1940s.
2. State one goal of the psychoanalytic approach to Group Counseling (the analytic process).

## 2.4 Summary

The unit looks at some vital theories such as REBT in Group, Reality Therapy, Transactional Analysis, Gestalt Therapy, and The Psychoanalytic Approach to Group Counseling.

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## 2.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### Self-Assessment Exercises 1

1. (i) Rational-Emotive Behaviour Therapy (ii) Reality Therapy (iii) Transactional Analysis (iv) Gestalt Group Therapy (v) Psychoanalytic Approach
2. Albert Ellis (an American psychologist).
3. (i) The theory tends to ignore catharsis which could directly translate to harming a client by stopping the client from venting their emotions. (ii) The therapist does not indulge in exploring the background of the emotional issues presented by the client. (iii) It completely ignores the role played by individual differences.

### Self-Assessment Exercises 2

1. Gestalt therapy
  - (i) The goal is the restructuring of the client's character and personality system
  - (ii) Increased satisfaction with oneself and greater improvement in social behavior.
  - (iii) Experiencing all sorts of positive and negative attitudes about one another.
2. Development of authority and intimacy within the group.

## **UNIT 3      FACILITATIVE SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES IN GROUP INTERACTIONS**

### **Unit Structure**

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Learning Outcomes
- 3.3 Facilitative Skills and Techniques in Group Interactions
  - 3.3.1 Defining Facilitation Skills
  - 3.3.2 Facilitative Skills and Techniques in Group Interactions
- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 3.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### **3.1 Introduction**

It is important for the group Counselor to get himself equipped and learn the essential strategies and skills for helping groups to solve their problems resolve conflicts and build consensus. Effective facilitation unlocks the power of the individual and show groups how to reach their desired goals. When leaders model skillful facilitation, they put their commitment to participation and collaboration into practice. As facilitation skills improve throughout an organisation or community, everyone involved becomes more creative and productive, and is better able to seize opportunities for dramatic improvements in how work is done in order to achieve more ambitious results.

### **3.2 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- define facilitation
- explain facilitation skills and techniques in group interactions.

### **3.3 Facilitative Skills and Techniques in Group Interactions**

#### **3.3.1 Defining Group Facilitation**

The definition of “facilitate” is “to make easy; lessen the labour of; help forward a process” (World Book Dictionary, 2004). When applied to groups, to facilitate means to make the work of the group easier and more effective. Group facilitation is what a leader says or does to create an experiential and relational environment in which diverse individuals develop as a group. This definition can be divided into distinct statements referring to different conceptual bases:

- Facilitation skills promote experiential learning.
- Group facilitation addresses the needs of diverse individuals.
- Facilitation guides groups through different stages of development.
- Facilitative leadership fosters inclusive, empowering, purposeful, ethical, and process-oriented relationships within a group.
- Facilitative leadership fosters an inclusive and non-hierarchical approach to the educational process.

Facilitation skills are not synonymous with teaching and classroom management, or attending skills. The traditional teaching dynamic posits the teacher/leader as the expert and students as recipients of externally-located knowledge. The unilateral transmission of ideas from teacher to student often fails to engage students by focusing on the product rather than the process of education. Experiential learning, which emphasises the fluid nature of knowledge in relation to social contexts, is dynamic, multidirectional, and inclusive. Experiential facilitation includes being able to move from being a “sage on the stage” to being a “guide on the side.”

To put it another way, facilitating actually means:

- Understanding the goals of the meeting and the organisation
- Keeping the group on the agenda and moving forward
- Involving everyone in the meeting, including drawing out the quiet participants and controlling the domineering ones
- Making sure that decisions are made democratically

### Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. Facilitation skills are synonymous with teaching and classroom management, or attending skills. TRUE or FALSE?
2. Identify two things that facilitation skills entail.

### 3.3.2 Techniques in Group Interactions

**Attending and listening skills** are essential to the creation of positive interpersonal relations in any context. Examples of these skills include: active listening, attending and encouraging, open questions, closed questions, paraphrasing and summarising. While these communication skills provide the cornerstone of any positive interaction, they are more generalised than facilitation skills, which are used specifically in the creation of productive group dynamics.

**Climate and Environment:** The environment and general "climate" of a meeting or planning session sets an important tone for interaction and

participation. Is the location a familiar place, one where people feel comfortable? Is the space the right size? Is the meeting site accessible to everyone? Too large? Too small? This depends on number of the members of the group.

**Logistics and Room Arrangements:** The logistics of the meeting should be of great concern to the Counselor, whether he is responsible for them or not. Some things to consider are: arranging chairs in a circle or around a table encourages discussion, arranging for refreshment, microphones and audio-visual equipment are necessary.

**Rules and Regulations:** Some common ground rules that will facilitate the group are: One person speaks at a time, raise your hand if you have something to say, listen to what other people are saying, no mocking or attacking other people's ideas, be punctual returning from breaks (if it's a long meeting), respect each other

**Watch the group's body language:** Are people shifting in their seats? Are they bored? Tired? Looking confused? If members seem restless or in a haze, you may need to take a break or speed up or slow down the pace of the meeting. And if you see confused looks on too many faces, you may need to stop and check in with the group, to make sure that everyone knows where you are in the agenda and that the group is with you.

**Be aware of your own behaviour:** Take a break to calm down if you feel nervous or are losing control. Watch that you're not repeating yourself, saying "ah" between each word, or speaking too fast. Watch your voice and physical manner. (Are you standing too close to folks so they feel intimidated, making eye contact so people feel engaged?) How you act makes an impact on how participants feel.

**Watch your speech:** Be careful you are not offending or alienating anyone in the group. Use swears words at your own risk!

**Use body language of our own:** Using body language to control the dynamics in the room can be a great tool. Moving up close to a shy, quiet participant and asking them to speak may make them feel more willing, because they can look at you instead of the big group and feel less intimidated. Also, walking around engages people in the process. Don't just stand in front of the room for the entire meeting.

**Don't talk to the newsprint, blackboard or walls--they can't talk back!** : Always wait until you have stopped writing and are facing the group to talk.

## Self-Assessment Exercise 2

State at least **three** common ground rules that will facilitate the group in facilitative skills.

### 3.4 Summary

Facilitation is both a skill and an art. It is a skill in that people can learn certain techniques and can improve their ability with practice. It is an art in that some people just have more of a knack for it than others. Group leaders are required to facilitate meetings although he can draw on members who have the skill and the talent.

### 3.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

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### 3.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

#### Self-Assessment Exercises 1

1. FALSE
  - (i) They entail understanding the goals of the meeting and the organisation
  - (ii) Keeping the group on the agenda and moving forward
  - (iii) Involving everyone in the meeting
  - (iv) Making sure those decisions are made democratically.

#### Self-Assessment Exercise 2

- i. One person speaks at a time
- ii. Raise your hand if you have something to say
- iii. Listen to what other people are saying
- iv. No mocking or attacking other people's ideas
- v. Be punctual returning from breaks
- vi. Respect each other.

## UNIT 4    **GROUP LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS**

### Unit Structure

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Learning Outcomes
- 4.3 Characteristics of Effective Group Leaders and Skills
  - 4.3.1 Characteristics of Effective Group Leaders
  - 4.3.2 Essential Skills for Effective Group Leadership
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 4.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### 4.1 Introduction

In this unit, you will learn about the characteristics of effective group leaders and also the skills needed for effective group leadership. However group leadership skills cannot be separated from the leader's personality. The knowledge from this unit will help you to be an effective Counselor and effective group leader.

### 4.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- list and explain characteristics of effective group leaders
- list and explain essential skills required for effective group leadership.

### 4.3 Effective Group Leadership

#### 4.3.1 Characteristics of Effective Group Leaders

The following are some characteristics that are important elements of the group leader's personality:

1.    **Courage:** Courage is one of the most important personal traits of effective group leaders. They show courage in their willingness
  - (i)    To be vulnerable at times, admitting mistakes and imperfections and taking the same risks that they expect group members to take;
  - (ii)    To confront another, even though they might not be sure that they are right;
  - (iii)    To act on their beliefs and hunches;
  - (iv)    To continually examine their inner self;

- (v) To be direct and honest with the members;
- (vi) To express to the group their fears and expectations about the group process.

Leaders should not use their special role to protect themselves from honest and direct interaction with the rest of the group.

2. **Willingness to Model:** One of the best ways to teach desired behaviour is by modeling those behaviours in the group. Group leaders would do well to recognise the extent to which their behaviour influences the group. Through their behaviour, and the attitudes conveyed by it, leaders can create such group norms as openness, seriousness of purpose, acceptance of others, and the desirability of taking risks. Leaders exercise this influence on the group process by virtue of their position as leader.
3. **Presence:** The ability to be emotionally present with group members is extremely important. It involves being touched by others' pain, struggles, and joys. Some members may elicit anger in a group leader, and others may evoke pain, sadness, guilt, or happiness. Leaders can become more emotionally involved with others by paying close attention to their own reactions and by permitting these reactions to become intense. To increase the ability to be present, it is important for the leader to spend some alone before leading a group and to shut out distractions as much as possible. The leader can then prepare for the group by thinking about the group members and preparing to become involved with them.
4. **Goodwill and Caring:** A good leader must have a sincere interest in the welfare of others. Caring involves respecting, trusting, and valuing people. The leader's care about the members must be demonstrated to the group; merely saying it is not enough. Various ways for leaders to exhibit a caring attitude are: giving warmth, concern, and support when, and only when, he or she feels it toward a person. Another way to show caring is not to tolerate dishonest behaviour but rather to encourage people to be what they could be without their masks and shields.
5. **Belief in Group Process:** Some group leaders really don't believe that groups can effect significant change in clients, yet they continue to lead therapy groups. Belief in group process gives a sense of hope to potential and current group members. To lead successfully, leaders must believe in the value of what they are doing and trust the therapeutic forces in a group. Group leaders who do not genuinely believe in the value of

therapeutic group work, and who do it only for money or power are considered unethical.

6. **Openness:** To be effective, group leaders must be open to others in groups, open to new experiences, and open to lifestyles and values that differ from their own. Leaders must not only openly reveal their own experiences but also openly show their reactions to members in the group. Openness does not mean that leaders reveal every aspect of their life; it means that they reveal enough of themselves to give the participants a sense of the person. Leader openness tends to foster a spirit of openness within the group; it permits members to become more open about their feelings and beliefs, and it lends certain fluidity to the group process. Self-revelation cannot be manipulated as a technique, however; it is best done spontaneously, when it seems appropriate.
7. **No defensiveness in Coping with Attacks:** Dealing frankly with criticism is related to openness. In order not to encounter problems in trying to carry out a leadership function, group leaders should not be easily threatened, they should feel secure in their work of leading, not overly sensitive to negative feedback, and not depend highly on group approval. Members sometimes accuse leaders of not caring enough, of being selective in their caring, of being too harsh, and so forth. The crucial thing is for the leader to non-defensively explore with the group the feelings that are behind the criticism and to differentiate between feelings that are produced by the leader and the feelings that mainly represent transference.
8. **Personal Power:** Personal power is the dynamic and vital quality of the leader, it involves a sense of confidence in self not domination of members or manipulation of them toward the leader's end, it involves a certain charisma; the members like the personal qualities of the group leader and want to develop some of these same characteristics.
9. **Stamina:** Group leading can be tasking and draining as well as exciting and energising. Therefore a leader needs physical and psychological stamina and the ability to withstand pressure in order to remain vital throughout the course of a group. They need to have outside sources of psychological and emotional nourishment; if they depend primarily on their group's progress for this, they run the high risk of being undernourished and thus of losing the stamina so vital to their success as leaders. Unrealistically high expectations can affect a leader's stamina.

10. **Willingness to Seek New Experiences:** A therapist's personhood is partly determined by his or her experiences with various facets of living. A narrow range of life experiences restricts the capacity of a leader to understand the psychological worlds of clients, who may have different values resulting from different life experiences. If a group leader has lived a fairly settled life and has known little pain and struggle, how can he/she empathise with clients who have suffered and have made dramatic life choices? Can those therapists who have never experienced loneliness, joy, anguish, or uncertainty understand these conditions in their clients? Although it is not possible for leaders to experience directly everything they may encounter in others, they should at least be willing to identify ways in which they can draw on their own emotions in working with group members.
11. **Self-Awareness:** A good leader should have awareness of self, including one's goals, identity, motivations, needs, limitations, strengths, values, feelings and problems. A leader who has no self-awareness of who he is will not be able to facilitate this kind of awareness among the participants. Leaders should expand their awareness by being open to new life experiences and divergent lifestyles. Awareness of why they choose to lead groups is crucial. What needs are served by being a group leader? Group leaders should be committed to becoming increasingly aware of their own needs and motivations. They have a rich source of information about themselves; all they need to do is reflect on interactions they have had with members of the group.
12. **Sense of Humour:** The leader who can enjoy humour and infuse it effectively into the group process has an invaluable asset, although therapy is serious business, there are many truly humorous dimensions of the human condition. The ability to laugh at oneself and to see the humour in one's human frailties can be extremely useful. At times, people take themselves so seriously that they miss an opportunity to put into perspective the importance of their problems.
13. **Inventiveness:** The most important characteristic of group leaders is the capacity to be spontaneously creative, approach each group with fresh ideas. He must somehow avoid becoming trapped in ritualised techniques or a programme presentation of self that has lost all life. Leaders who are good at discovering new ways of approaching a group and who are willing to suspend the use of established techniques are unlikely to grow stale.

Inventiveness in leaders involves the ability both to detect clues that someone gives them and to create some way of exploring with the person the problem that is hinted at. In this regard it is important for group leaders to have a theoretical perspective, for this will guide their selection of techniques.

### 4.3.2 Essential Skills for Effective Group Leadership

Successful leadership requires specific group-leadership skills and the appropriate performance of certain functions; it entails learning and practicing the skills. These skills are important for a good leader to be able to function effectively; a group with a poor leader will not function at optimum effectiveness.

- (1) **Active Listening:** Attending fully to both verbal and nonverbal aspect of communication without judging or evaluating. It involves absorbing the content, noting gestures and subtle changes in voice or expression and sensing underlying messages. The skilled group leader is sensitive to the congruent (or lack of it) between what a member is saying in words and what he/she is communicating through body gestures, postures, mannerisms and voice inflections.
- (2) **Reflecting Feelings:** Reflecting feelings is the skill of responding to the essence of what a person has communicated. The purpose is to let members know that they are being heard and understood. It is a skill depended on active listening, interest, understanding, and respect for the persons. When reflection is done well, it fosters further contact and involvement; feeling understood and achieving a clearer grasp of one's feelings are very reinforcing and stimulate the person to seek greater self-awareness.
- (3) **Clarifying:** It is also an extension of active listening, it involves grasping the essence of a message both the feeling and thinking levels; simplifying client statements by focusing on the core of message. Clarification helps clients sort out conflicting and confused feelings and thoughts so as to be able to arrive at a meaningful understanding of what is being communicated.
- (4) **Summarising:** The group process can get bogged down or fragmented and the skill of summarising is useful. If the interaction seems to be turning into a debate, the group leader might interrupt and have each person state briefly how he/she feels about the issue. The leader can then summarise and offer possible alternatives. At the end of the session leader might make

some summary statement by putting together the important elements of an interaction or session.

- (5) **Facilitating:** Facilitation skills involve opening up clear and direct communication among the participants and helping them assume increasing responsibility for the direction of the group. The group leader also assists members to openly express their fears and expectations and actively working to create a climate of safety and acceptance in which people will trust one another and therefore engage in productive interchanges.
- (6) **Empathising:** The skill of the empathy lies in the leader's ability to sensitively grasp the subjective world of the participants and yet retain his or her own separateness. Identifying with clients by assuming their frames of reference, the aim and desire is to foster trust in the therapeutic relationship, to communicate understanding, to encourage deeper levels of self-exploration.
- (7) **Interpreting:** The leader interprets when he/she offers possible explanations for a participant's thoughts, feelings, or behaviour. It requires a great deal of skill. Interpreting too soon, presenting an interpretation in a dogmatic way, and encouraging the members to become dependent on the leader to provide meanings and answers are some of the common mistakes. Timing is especially important.
- (8) **Restating:** It is an extension of listening. It is a way of recasting or paraphrasing what a participant has said into different words so that the meaning is clearer to both the speaker and the group. Restating effectively brings into sharper focus the meaning of what was said, and thus eliminate ambiguity.
- (9) **Confronting:** Confrontation can be a powerful way of challenging members to take an honest look at themselves. If it is handled poorly, it also has the potential of being detrimental both to the person being confronted and to the group process. Many beginning leaders shy away from confrontation, because they fear its possible repercussions: blocking the group interaction, hurting someone or becoming the target of retaliation. The problem with confrontation is that it can easily be seen as an uncaring attack.
- (10) **Supporting:** It means providing group members with encouragement and reinforcement, especially when they are disclosing personal information, when they are exploring painful feelings, and when they are taking risks. A leader can provide support by being fully present at the appropriate time. This full

presence requires a combination of skills: listening actively to what is being said, being psychologically present with the client, and responding in a way that encourages the client to continue working and to move forward.

- (11) **Initiating:** Good initiating skills on the leader's part keep the group from floundering without direction. These skills include using catalysts to get members to focus on meaningful work, knowing how to employ various techniques that promote deeper self-exploration, and providing links among the various themes being explored in the group. Whereas appropriate leader direction can give the group a focus and keep it moving, too much direction can lead to passivity on the part of the members.
- (12) **Setting Goals:** Productive goal setting is at the core of group counseling. The group leaders do not set goals for the clients, but they rather help group members to select and clarify their own specific goals. Goal setting is important during the initial stages, leaders need to encourage the members to take another look at their goals, to modify the frequently if necessary, and to determine how effectively they are accomplishing them.
- (13) **Questioning:** Questioning skill is important for a group leader; there are problems with ineffective use of questioning. Avoid closed questions, which requires a mere "yes" or "no" response, they are generally fruitless. And so are "why" questions, because they usually lead to intellectual ruminating. Instead, open questions – questions that open up alternatives and new areas of self-investigation can be of real value e.g. "How are you dealing with your fear in this group". Therefore, it is important that leaders ask questions that, instead of merely probing endlessly, explore issues in greater depth.
- (14) **Evaluating:** The skill of evaluating is important for an effective leader, after each session the leader needs to assess what is happening in the group as a whole and within individual members. Leaders must also teach participants how to evaluate themselves and how to appraise the movement and direction of their group.
- (15) **Giving Feedback:** A skilled group leader gives specific and honest feedback based on his or her observation of and reaction to the members' behaviours and encourages the members to give feedback to one another. One of the great advantages of groups is that the participants can tell other members their reactions to what they observe

- (16) **Suggesting:** Suggestion is a form of intervention designed to help participants develop an alternative course of thinking or action. Suggestions need not always come from the leader, members can make suggestions for others to consider.
- (17) **Protecting:** Leaders need to be able to safeguard members from unnecessary psychological or physical risks associated with being in a group. Although he needs to take caution, if leaders are overprotective, the members' freedom to experiment and learn for themselves is unduly restricted. If leaders fail to be protective enough, members may suffer from negative outcomes of the group experience.
- (18) **Modeling:** Group members learn by observing the leader's behaviour. If leader value honesty, respect, openness, risk taking, and assertiveness, they can foster these qualities in the members by demonstrating them in the group.
- (19) **Disclosing oneself:** The leader needs skill in revealing personal information to the group; he must present the information in such a way that the members are encouraged to share more of themselves. The skill consists of knowing what, when, how and how much to reveal. If the leader shares too much too soon, the effects are likely to be adverse, because the members may not be able yet to handle such openness comfortably. The most productive disclosure is related to what is taking place within the group.
- (20) **Linking:** The group leader must have the skills of linking the group together by encouraging members to address others in the group directly, rather than looking at the leader and talking about others who are present. Members often have shared concerns, and through effective linking they can be helped to work through their problems by talking to others with similar concerns. Through linking several members together, the leader is also teaching them how to take responsibility for involving themselves in the work of others. If the members learn how to bring themselves into group interactions, they become more independent of the leader and are also likely to feel a greater sense of belongings by being connected to others.
- (21) **Blocking:** This skill relates to effort of the group leader in intervening to stop counterproductive group behaviour to protect members and also to enhance the flow of group process. Some of the behaviour that group leaders needs to watch for and block are: invading a member's privacy, storytelling, gossiping, offering

support inappropriately, breaking confidences, perpetually giving advice, and making inaccurate or inappropriately interpretation. Whatever the behaviour, blocking must be carried out gently and sensitively.

- (22) **Terminating:** The skill on how and when to terminate the work with individuals as well as groups is important for effective leadership. The skills required in closing a group session or ending a group session successfully including encouraging the members to apply what they have learned in the group to their daily lives, provide evaluation and follow –up service and being available for individual consultation should the need arise.

### Self-Assessment Exercises

1. List the characteristics of effective group leaders.
2. Identify at least 10 essential skills for effective group leadership.

### 4.4 Summary

In this unit you have been introduced to the characteristics of an effective leader and the essential skills for effective leadership.

### 4.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

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### 4.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

Courage, willingness to model, Presence, Goodwill and caring, Belief in group process, Openness, Non-defensiveness, Personal power, Stamina, Willingness to seek new experience, Self-awareness, Sense of humor, Inventiveness.

Any 10 of the following skills are acceptable:

(i) Active listening (ii) Reflecting feelings (iii) Clarifying (iv) Summarising (v) Facilitating (vi) Empathising (vii) Interpreting (viii) Restating (ix) Confronting (x) Supporting (xi) Initiating (xii) Setting goals (xiii) Questioning (xiv) Evaluating (xv) Giving feedback (xvi)

suggesting (xvii) Protecting (xviii) Modelling (xix) Disclosing oneself  
(xx) Linking (xxi) Blocking (xxii) Terminating

## **UNIT 5 LEADERSHIP STYLES/METHODS AND PRODUCTIVITY**

### **Unit Structure**

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Learning Outcomes
- 5.3 Leadership Style/Methods and Productivity
  - 5.3.1 What Leadership is
  - 5.3.2 Leadership Styles
  - 5.3.3 Factors which ensure a Group Productivity
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 5.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### **5.1 Introduction**

The success of any group to a large extent depends on the leadership style adopted by the group leader. The authoritarian leader in fear of followers being unproductive keeps close supervision and feels this is necessary in order for anything to be done. The democratic leader unlike the authoritarian refuses to accept sole responsibility for either direction of the group or the final solution of the members concerns. The laissez – faire is like no leader at all.

### **5.2 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of leadership
- explain each leadership style
- list and explain factors that ensures leadership productivity.

### **5.3 Meaning of Leadership**

#### **5.3.1 What is Leadership?**

A leader is a person who has a vision, a drive and a commitment to achieve that vision, and the skills to make it happen. Leadership is a vital role in any organisation or group. It involves defining the direction of a team and communicating it to people, motivating, inspiring and empowering them to contribute to achieving organisational success. Leadership requires being strategically focused and applying behavioural techniques to build commitment and attain the best work from your people.

The ingredients of effective leadership are complex and are widely agreed to depend on the specific leadership situation, considering the difficulty of tasks, the degree of a leader's authority and the maturity and capabilities of subordinates. Leadership skills often take time to acquire, because they are multi-faceted, behavioural and context dependent.

### 5.3.2 Leadership Styles

#### (a) **Authoritarian Leadership (Autocratic)**

Authoritarian leaders, also known as autocratic leaders, are those who feel that the group members, by themselves, are not able to develop the necessary insights or group behaviours that will bring about necessary changes, the belief is that the members got themselves into their particular difficulty because they could not direct themselves; therefore, it is to be expected that they need expert guidance. It is therefore the leader who provides clear expectations for what needs to be done, when it should be done, and how it should be done. There is also a clear division between the leader and the followers. As the process unfolds, the authoritarian leader holds that he or she is the one person able to understand the significance of the material presented, and it is through his or her interpretive feedback to the group members that the individuals will develop an understanding of their own behaviour. Authoritarian leaders make decisions independently with little or no input from the rest of the group.

Researchers have found that decision-making was less creative under authoritarian leadership. Lewin also found that it is more difficult to move from an authoritarian style to a democratic style than vice versa. Abuse of this style is usually viewed as controlling, bossy, and dictatorial. Some leaders adhere to this position on theoretical grounds; many also adopt it because it appears to be a form of leadership in which the Counselor is protected from self-disclosure to the group. Authoritarian leadership is best applied to situations where there is little time for group decision-making or where the leader is the most knowledgeable member of the group.

Bass & Bass (2008) asserted that "The autocratic-authoritarian cluster encompasses being arbitrary, controlling, power-oriented, coercive, punitive, and close-minded. The cluster has often been described in pejorative terms. Stripped of negatives (emphasised by so many social scientists), it means taking full and sole responsibility for decision and control of followers' performance. Autocrats stress obedience, loyalty, strict adherence to roles.

They make and enforce the rules. They see that decisions are carried out. Powerful autocratic leaders throughout history have often been praised for their ability to develop reliable and devoted followers and to act as the principal authority figures in establishing and maintaining order."

(b) **Participating Leadership (Democratic)**

Participative leadership, also known as democratic leadership, group-centered or non-directive is generally the most effective leadership style. Democratic leaders offer guidance to group members, but they also participate in the group and allow input from other group members. Rather than a complete reliance on their own potential and the potential of its members, the democratic leader uses clarification, synthesis, feedback and evaluation of process as the chief tools. The aim of this leader is to involve members to such an extent that each participant contributes to the welfare of other individuals within the group. The implication here is not that the democratic leader lets the group go anywhere it desires. Rather, it means that the democratic leader works in cooperation with the group in establishing goals, directions, and procedures. Unlike the authoritarian leader, the democratic leader views himself or herself not as an expert with all the answers, but rather as an individual who can facilitate the process of human development.

In Lewin's study, children in this group were less productive than the members of the authoritarian group, but their contributions were of a much higher quality. Participative leaders encourage group members to participate, but retain the final say over the decision-making process. Group members feel engaged in the process and are more motivated and creative. Those who adhere to a more humanistic or phenomenological theoretical position tend to operate from this end of the leadership continuum.

Bass & Bass (2008) assert that "The democratic or egalitarian leadership cluster reflects concern about the followers in many different ways. Leadership is considerate, democratic, consultative and participative, employee-centered, concerned with people, concerned with maintenance of good working relations, supportive and oriented toward facilitating interaction, relationship oriented, and oriented toward group decision making."

(c) **Delegative (Laissez-Faire) Leadership**

The laissez-faire leadership style is where all the rights and power to make decisions is fully given to the group. This was first described by Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1938), along with the autocratic leadership and the democratic leadership styles. The laissez-faire style is sometimes described as a "hands off" leadership style because the leader delegates the tasks to their followers while providing little or no direction to the followers. If the leader withdraws too much from their followers it can sometimes result in a lack of productivity, cohesiveness, and satisfaction. Laissez-faire leaders allow followers to have complete freedom to make decisions concerning the completion of their work. It allows followers a high degree of autonomy and self-rule, while at the same time offering guidance and support when requested. The laissez-faire leader using guided freedom provides the followers with all materials necessary to accomplish their goals, but does not directly participate in decision making unless the followers request their assistance, the leader is simply another member of the group. Researchers found that groups under delegated leadership were the least productive of all three group categories. The children in this group also made more demands on the leader, showed little cooperation and were unable to work independently. Delegative leaders offer little or no guidance to group members and leave decision-making up to group members. While this style can be effective in situations where group members are highly qualified in an area of expertise, Followers have pride in their work and the drive to do it successfully on their own, outside experts, such as staff specialists or consultants are being used, Followers are trustworthy and experienced. It often leads to poorly defined roles and a lack of motivation.

**Self-Assessment Exercise 1**

1. Define a leader.
2. List three different leadership styles.

**5.3.3 Group Productivity: Factors which ensures it**

There are numerous therapeutic factors which enhance the chances of a group going beyond the stage of cohesiveness into the stage of productive work. Corey (1995) has outlined them as follows.

1. Trust and acceptance
2. Empathy and caring
3. Hope

4. Freedom to experiment
5. Commitment to change
6. Intimacy
7. Catharsis
8. Cognitive restructuring
9. Self-disclosure
10. Confrontation
11. Feedback

1. **Trust:** Group members must trust one another and the leader, or at least they openly express any lack of trust. Trust is manifested in the participants' attitude of acceptance and in their willingness to take risks by sharing meaningful here-and-now reactions.
2. **Empathy and Caring:** It means caring, and it is expressed in a group by genuine and active involvement with the other members. It is also expressed by compassion, support, tenderness and even confrontation. It bridges the gap between peoples of different ethnic and cultural groups and allows them to share in universal human themes.
3. **Hope:** Hope is therapeutic in itself, members must believe that change is possible, that they need not remain trapped in their past, and that they can take active steps to make their lives richer.
4. **Freedom to experiment:** It is good for a group at working stage to do experimentation with different modes of behaviour, after such experiments members can decide what behaviours they want to change.
5. **Commitment to change:** Members must believe that change is possible, and not that alone but a firm resolve to actually do whatever is necessary in order to change. This means deciding what to change and how to change it. They need to formulate a plan of action, commit themselves to it, and use the tools offered by the group process to explore ways of carrying it out.
6. **Intimacy:** Intimacy occurs and increases as people work through their struggles, anxieties and problem together. When members learn that others have similar problems, they no longer feel isolated; identification with others eventually brings about closeness, which allows the members to help one another work through fears related to intimacy.
7. **Catharsis:** This is one of the therapeutic factors which enhance the chances of a group going beyond the stage of cohesiveness

into the stage of productive work. The expression of pent-up feelings can be therapeutic, because it releases energy that has been tied up in withholding certain threatening feelings, it makes the person feeling freer, expression of joy, affection, delight and enthusiasm start emerging

8. **Cognitive restructuring:** The cognitive component includes explaining, clarifying, interpreting, providing the cognitive framework needed for change, formulating ideas, and making new decisions. Groups offer members many opportunities to evaluate their thinking and to adopt constructive beliefs in place of self-limiting ones.
9. **Self-disclosure:** Self disclosure is an effective means of ensuring open communication in a group. It should not be limited to some topics which are considered safe neither should it be erroneously seen as exposing secrets. Corey (1990) further explained that self-disclosure involves two levels which are:
  1. Sharing of a person's persistent reaction to happening in the group and
  2. Revealing current struggles, unresolved personal issues, goals, aspirations, strengths and weaknesses etc.

Individuals have inner barriers which inhibit them from disclosing themselves. Some of these barriers are fear of the resultant intimacy following self-disclosure; avoidance of responsibility and the accompanying challenge; our feelings of guilt and change which may be attributed to self-disclosure; after disclosure, there is the fear of being rejected and of course, cultural taboos which prevent people from disclosing themselves. For effective group work to take place, there must be the willingness, readiness and preparedness on the part of group members to overcome these barriers. The level of group participation will be limited unless these obstacles to self-disclosure are eliminated through challenge by clients

10. **Confrontation:** Confrontation like self-disclosure is a basic ingredient in effective group work. It should open up the channels of communication and not close them. The absence of confrontation in any working group results into stagnation, when it is given in a supportive manner within a group depicts a genuine sense of caring. A negative style of confrontation, which is confrontation done in a hostile, indirect or attacking way should be avoided, because it may leave people judged and rejected. It is therefore suggested

that group leaders should endeavour to help group members change their poor and negative perception of confrontation at the same time; learn what and how to confront constructively. One of the tested, efficient and effective ways of teaching constructive confrontation is for the group leaders to devise ways of modeling the behaviour in their interactions within the group. The group members will observe the group leader's behaviour.

11. **Feedback:** Most feedback entails self-disclosure, and sometimes feedback can be confrontational. Morrah, Stockto & Bond (1991) assert that the exchange of feedback among group members is widely considered to be a key element in promoting interpersonal learning.

Gilbert (1978) does not see feedback as capable of taking away the responsibility of the group member, rather, it can be:

- (a) Confirmatory – affording the group member the opportunity to know when he is on course
- (b) Corrective – When the group members who have veered away from the course are made to realise this, by providing them with the information which will enable them achieve success
- (c) Motivating- Suggestions for improvement are provided analysing the consequences that may follow in case of failure.

Nevertheless, when clients are not motivated to improve, whatever feedback given becomes meaningless. But when feedback is given as a corrective measure with all sincerity of purpose, the client often accepts it as quite rewarding.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise 2**

List the factors ensuring group productivity.

## **5.4 Summary**

In this unit, you have been introduced to what leadership means, different types of leadership and also factors that can facilitate and ensure effective group productivity.

## 5.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

- Akinade, E. A., Sokan, B. O., & Oseremen, N. (2005). *An Introduction to Guidance and Counseling: A Basic Text for Colleges and Universities*. Ibadan: Caltep Publications (Nigeria) Limited.
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## 5.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1. A leader is a person who has a vision, a drive and commitment to achieve that vision and the skills to make it happen.
2.
  - i. Authoritarian leadership
  - ii. Democratic leadership
  - iii. Delegative (laissez-faire) leadership.

### Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. Trust and acceptance
2. Empathy and caring
3. Hope
4. Freedom to experiment
5. Commitment to change
6. Intimacy
7. Catharsis
8. Cognitive restructuring
9. Self-disclosure
10. Confrontation
11. Feedback

**MODULE 3**

Unit 1	Group Counseling and Group Dynamics: Meaning and Purposes
Unit 2	Processes of Group Counseling
Unit 3	Principles and Characteristics of Group Counseling
Unit 4	Differences between Group Counseling and Individual Counseling
Unit 5	Issues, Challenges, Advantages and Disadvantages of Group Counseling

**UNIT 1 GROUP COUNSELING AND GROUP DYNAMICS: MEANING AND PURPOSES****Unit Structure**

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Learning Outcomes
- 1.3 Meaning of Group Dynamics , Group Counseling and Purposes of Group Counseling
  - 1.3.1 Meaning of Group Dynamics
  - 1.3.2 Meaning of Group Counseling
  - 1.3.3 Purposes of Group Counseling
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 1.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

**1.1 Introduction**

The unit is based on detailed explanations of group dynamics, group counseling and purposes of group counseling.

**1.2 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the unit, you will be able to:

- discuss group dynamics
- explain group counseling
- list purposes for group counseling.

## **1.3 Meaning of Group Dynamics, Group Counseling and Purposes of Group Counseling**

### **1.3.1 Group Dynamics: Meaning and Purposes**

A group can be defined as several individuals who come together to accomplish a particular task or goal. Oxford English Dictionary defined group dynamics as the processes involved when people in a group interact. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, Group dynamics is a system of behaviours and psychological processes occurring within a social group (intragroup dynamics), or between social groups (intergroup dynamics). The study of group dynamics can be useful in understanding decision-making behaviour, tracking the spread of diseases in society, creating effective therapy techniques, and following the emergence and popularity of new ideas and technologies.

Group dynamics refers to the attitudinal and behavioural characteristics of a group. Group dynamics concern how groups form, their structure and process, and how they function. Group dynamics are relevant in both formal and informal groups of all types. In an organisational setting, groups are a very common organisational entity and the study of groups and group dynamics is an important area of inquiry in organisational behaviour. Group member interactions appear simple but they are not. They are complex social processes that occur within groups and that affect actions and outcomes (Lewin, 1948). Group dynamics occur in all groups, and involve the interactions of group members and leaders over time, including the roles the members and the leaders take. Individuals have an impact on groups just as groups influence members. The number of group interactions increases exponentially as the size of groups grows. Therefore, keeping track of communication patterns in counseling groups is a demanding job.

The complexity of interaction is magnified by the fact that messages are sent within counseling groups on a verbal as well as a nonverbal level. The nature of this communication is crucial to comprehending what is happening within groups. For example, a member who physically or emotionally distances from a group influences how the group operates as clearly as if he or she makes a statement. As groups develop, members frequently switch roles and patterns of interaction.

### **1.3.2 Group Counseling: Meaning and Purposes**

A counseling group is a collection of individuals who are in close interaction; members share common goals and are present on their consent and volition. It is a form of therapy, which posits that people benefit from shared experiences. Usually, it's focused on a particular

issue, like obsessive-compulsive disorder or anger management. While a Counselor usually manages the group, contributions from other members are considered valuable since all in the group share similar issues. One of the main principals behind group counseling is the idea that dealing with specific issues may cause isolation, and a feeling that one is alone in facing his or her problems. This form of counseling attempts to counteract isolation by assembling people with similar issues to enforce those difficulties that are not singular to one person. Additionally, knowing other people with similar challenges can be comforting to individuals who may not have access in their own family and friends to people with the same problems.

Group counseling may be highly organised, with people doing specific activities together and then sharing the results. Alternately, it may be more freeform, where members share their current issues related to the group's purpose. One person's verbal contributions to a group might be discussed, validated, and provoke problem solving by other group members in a session. It might also be an entry into a discussion regarding a certain aspect of an illness or condition that is then primarily led by the therapist.

Many large therapy businesses now offer group therapy as an alternative to private counseling. Such groups might address subjects like living with anxiety, parenting the special needs child, living with grief, or living with depression. Some people find the group counseling experience a better alternative than private therapy because it tends to cost less. Frequently, this form of counseling is covered by insurance, and many groups offer sliding scale fees for those without insurance.

The length of group therapy also varies. Some counseling groups take place for a defined period of time, while others are open-ended, allowing people to drop in as needed. Usually, more freeform groups are open to drop-ins, and they may last for an indefinite period of time. More organised groups can last for a specific period of time, and require materials, study books, or the like. These groups may require a time commitment and payment upfront.

Not all group counseling efforts are completely successful. Occasionally, therapy suffers if a group is too large or small. It may also become problematic when one person appears to monopolise the group. Usually, the counseling works best when an experienced therapist can redirect a person who is sharing too much, and allow equal time for people to share their ideas, problems, or opinions.

People may vary in their need for therapy, and generally those who monopolise a group should not be looked down on but should be redirected to private counseling, where he or she can be the sole focus of

attention. After some time in private sessions, a person may feel less need to monopolise a group session.

### **1.3.3 Purposes of Group Counseling**

The purpose of group counseling is to enable clients to resolve their issues so that they can have more happiness and joy in life. In the counseling sessions the client can explore various aspects of their life and feelings, talking about them freely and openly in a way that is rarely possible with friends or family. To achieve some of the objectives of counseling more economically – and some more effectively – than will be possible in a completely individualised approach. An atmosphere in which the members achieve a sense of belonging seems to be an earnest request of people today and that is what group counseling creates. Sing and listen to the words of popular songs, read contemporary literature and poetry, or attend the latest movies over and over again; the endless search of people for others is reiterated.

Group counseling attempts to counteract this isolation by assembling people with similar issues to enforce those difficulties that are not singular to one person. Additionally, knowing other people with similar troubles can be comforting to each individual, who may not have access in their own family and friends to people with the same problem.

Group counseling is an invaluable tool for self-learning and experimenting with different ways of behaving. If you have never dared to show a certain side of yourself before, this may be the place to start.

Group counseling provides opportunity for clients to become deeply involved in social interaction with less direction from outside.

Group counseling provides opportunity for ideas and suggestions to be accepted since they are made by one's mates; It also provides a realistic life-like social situation useful for the modification of habits, attitudes and judgment of group members.

A group reduces default through collective risk taking; and Groups provide a channel for information.

#### **Self-Assessment Exercises**

1. What is a counseling group?
2. State at least five purposes of group counseling.

## 1.4 Summary

This unit acquainted the reader with some terminology and concepts of group work. This will, no doubt, help lay the necessary foundation as you work through the course for better understanding of the subject matter. Knowledge of group counseling and group dynamics help you to have solid background of the course content and building on it appropriately will afford you the opportunity of being a good group Counselor.

## 1.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

Corey, G. (1995). *Theory and Practice of Group Counseling*. (4th ed.). California: Books/Cole Publishing.

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## 1.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. A counseling group is a collection of individuals who are in close interaction, members share common goals and are present on their consent and volition.
2.
  - i. To enable clients to resolve their issues.
  - ii. To achieve some of the objectives of counseling more economically.
  - iii. To create an atmosphere in which the members achieve a sense of belonging.
  - iv. To assemble people with similar issues to enforce those difficulties that are not singular to one person.
  - v. Knowing other people with similar troubles can be comforting to each individual.
  - vi. A tool for self-learning and experimenting with different ways of behaving
    - i. To provide opportunity for clients to become deeply involved in social interaction with less direction from outside.
    - ii. It provides opportunity for ideas and suggestions to be accepted since they are made by one's mates.

- iii. It provides a realistic life-like social situation useful for the modification of habits, attitudes and judgment of group members.
- iv. It reduces default through collective risk taking.
- v. It provides channel for information.

## **UNIT 2 PROCESSES OF GROUP COUNSELING**

### **Unit Structure**

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Learning Outcomes
- 2.3 Processes of Group Counseling
  - 2.3.1 What Group Process is
  - 2.3.2 Processes of Group Counseling
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 2.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### **2.1 Introduction**

This unit explains what group process is and also mentions different views on process of group counseling.

### **2.2 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain what group process is
- discuss the processes of group counseling.

### **2.3 Meaning of Group Process and Process of Group Counseling**

#### **2.3.1 What Group Process is**

Group process according to Shertzer and Stone (1980) refers to the actions and interactions used by a group to develop and maintain its identity and their effects on individuals who compose the group. The idea of process incorporates the sequence by which certain experiences and activities occur, the methods used to provide these experiences, as well as the approaches to others utilised by group members. While in social functioning, the process used is largely from individual to individual, in group functioning, the process results in a three-way interdependence of members; Viz: (a)

Individual to individual (b) individual to the whole group, and (c) the whole group to the individual. It is this quality in the relationship of individuals in the group and the way they work together to produce it that is referred to as the process.

### 2.3.2 Processes of Group Counseling

The process of group counseling varies according to the leader's perceived role and the clients' needs. Lacoursiere (1980) offers an essential eclectic model of the process which he differentiated into 5 cycles: (1) Orientation, (2) dissatisfaction, (3) resolution, (4) production and (5) termination. Corey (2008) offers a six-stage model:

(1) Formation, (2) orientation, (3) transition, (4) working, (5) consolidation, and (6) follow-up. While Johnson and Johnson (2009) suggest a seven-stage model that explains members' development within a group (1). Defining and structuring procedures (2). Conforming to procedures (3). Recognising mutuality and building trust (4). Rebellious and differentiating (5). Committing to and taking ownership for the goals, procedures, and other members (6). Functioning maturely and productively (7). Terminating

The steps in group formation imply that groups do not usually perform at maximum effectiveness when they are first established. They encounter several stages of development as they strive to become productive and effective. Most groups experience the same developmental stages with similar conflicts and resolutions. According to Tuckman's theory, there are five stages of group development: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. During these stages group members must address several issues and the way in which these issues are resolved determines whether the group will succeed in accomplishing its tasks.

#### **Forming:**

This period is described as the beginning stage according to Corey. At the forming stage, there is a lot of confusion and uncertainties and also the major goals of the group have not been established. The nature of the task or leadership of the group has not been determined (Luthans, 2005). Thus, forming is an orientation period when members get to know one another and share expectations about the group. Members learn the purpose of the group as well as the rules to be followed. The period where members get comfortable with being in a group and figure out what is expected and what is going to happen. Cohesion and commitment increase during the forming stage (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). The forming stage should not be rushed because trust and openness must be developed. These feelings strengthen in later stages of development. Individuals are often confused during this stage because roles are not clear and there may not be a strong leader.

#### **Storming:**

The storming stage (which is also in our beginning stage and in Corey's a transition stage) occurs in groups where there is tension due to the

makeup of the group, the commitment of the members, the purpose of the group, and/or the approach of the leader (Gladding, 2008). In this stage, the group is likely to see the highest level of disagreement and conflict. Members often challenge group goals and struggle for power. Individuals often vie for the leadership position during this stage of development. This can be a positive experience for all groups if members can achieve cohesiveness through resolution. Members often voice concern and criticism in this phase. If members are not able to resolve the conflict, then the group will often disband or continue in existence but will remain ineffective and never advance to the other stages.

Many education, discussion, growth, and counseling groups do not have this kind of tension, so there is no need for a storming stage. Leaders who provide too little structure often see their groups go through a storming stage because the members are frustrated due to lack of leadership on the part of the leader. The more skilled the leader, the less likely there will be a storming stage, because the leader will do what is necessary to reduce the tension in the group. However, in groups where members are forced to come or in groups where the goal may be team building or learning to get along, the storming stage will most definitely be present. Sometimes leaders want the members to learn to work together, such as in certain task groups and some residential groups, so they more or less precipitate a storming stage by not providing much direction during the early stage of the group. Corey (2008) and Gladding (2008) describe in detail some of the dynamics that occur during the storming stage. One sign of the storming stage is a lot of conflict between members. Testing the leader is often a characteristic of the storming stage. Resistance is another sign that the group is going through a storming stage. The key for leaders is to recognise what is happening. Leaders who use an active, creative approach to groups usually do not create a storming stage. Skilled leaders curtail many of these occurrences by making sure the members clearly understand the purpose of the group, and by making the group valuable, relevant, interesting, and meaningful. In certain kinds of groups, particularly task groups, there are times when storming is a desired or necessary stage, especially when there are powerful personalities and some disagreement as to how things should be done. Great skill is required to guide the unpredictable interactions among members through the storming period, bringing members to a point where they can work together.

**Norming:**

This stage is characterised by the recognition of individual differences and shared expectations. Hopefully, at this stage the group members will begin to develop a feeling of group cohesion and identity. Cooperative

effort should begin to yield results. Responsibilities are divided among members and the group decides how it will evaluate progress.

**Performing:**

Which is also referred to as productiveness stage, performing occurs when the group has matured and attains a feeling of cohesiveness. During this stage of development, individuals accept one another and conflict is resolved through group discussion. Members of the group make decisions through a rational process that is focused on relevant goals rather than emotional issues.

**Adjourning:**

The closing, or ending, stage is devoted to terminating the group. During this period, members share what they have learned, how they have changed, and how they plan to use what they have learned. Not all groups experience this stage of development because it is characterised by the disbandment of the group. Some groups are relatively permanent (Luthans, 2005). Reasons that groups disband vary, with common reasons being the accomplishment of the task or individuals deciding to go their own ways. Members of the group often experience feelings of closure and sadness as they prepare to leave.

**Self-Assessment Exercise**

1. Identify the stages of group counseling process.

**2.4 Summary**

This unit acquainted the reader with the meaning of group process and talk about the group process which can also be referred to as the stages of group counseling. Different views were looked into and Tuckman's theory was looked into in details, according to him, there are five stages of group development: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. During these stages group members must address several issues and the way in which these issues are resolved determines whether the group will succeed in accomplishing its tasks or not.

**2.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources**

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## **2.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise**

- i. Forming
- ii. Storming
- iii. Norming
- iv. Performing
- v. Adjourning

## UNIT 3 PRINCIPLES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF GROUP COUNSELING

### Unit Structure

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Learning Outcomes
- 3.3 Principles and Characteristics of Group Counseling
  - 3.3.1 Principles of Group Counseling
  - 3.3.2 Characteristics of Group Counseling
- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 References/Further Reading/ Web Resources
- 3.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### 3.1 Introduction

Group Counseling gives human beings ability to share their feelings with others especially if the others are in a similar position. Human beings learn about themselves very quickly when they are forced to share their feelings with others, especially if the others are in a similar position. It is mandatory for the group to have principles and possesses certain characteristics so as to be able to function effectively and benefit from sharing the experiences with one another.

### 3.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- state and explain principles of group counseling
- explain characteristics of group counseling.

### 3.3 Principles and Characteristic of Group Counseling

#### 3.3.1 Principles of Group Counseling

Irvin Yalom was partially responsible for the continued development of group counseling after the Second World War. He came up with twelve therapeutic principles that describe the different factors of counseling that can positively affect the clients. The rest of this article focuses on listing and describing the seven main counseling factors:

1. **Universality:** Universality describes the shared experiences among clients. It helps the clients overcome their sense of isolation, validate their experiences, and raise self-esteem.

2. **Altruism:** Group counseling is a place where members are able to help each other. This improves their own self-esteem and develops better coping styles and interpersonal skills.
3. **Instillation of hope:** Counseling in a group of mixed members can help newer members and longtime members maintain hope while they are still struggling.
4. **Cohesiveness:** Cohesiveness is often referred to as the most therapeutic factor from which all of the other factors flow. Humans have an instinctive need to belong in groups, and some personal development can only occur in interpersonal relationships. Cohesiveness bring belonging, acceptance, and validation to the counseling process
5. **Corrective recapitulation of the primary family experience:** Clients will often unconsciously identify other members of the group as their own immediate family. The Counselor can then help the client overcome unhelpful patterns in their relationships.
6. **Self-Understanding/Interpersonal learning:** Members of group counseling may achieve a bigger level of self-awareness through interactions. They may also achieve greater levels of insight about what stems one's problems through counseling.
7. **Catharsis:** Catharsis is defined as the experience of relief from emotional distress by expressing emotion. Counseling can help the client overcome his or her shame and guilt by telling their story. *Adapted from Tim Du Counselor Network Writer*

### Self-Assessment Exercise 1

List the seven main counseling factors.

#### 3.3.2 Characteristics of Group Counseling

1. **There is a clear unity of purpose.** A sense of unity is essential for every group. Group members are tied by sense of unity, by virtue of such a sense, members develop loyalty or a feeling of sympathy among themselves. Members have a common purpose but work independently, sometimes competitive with one another. There was free discussion of the objectives until members could commit themselves to them; the objectives are meaningful to each group member. All group members work toward the building of a "learning team." This becomes the "shared vision." A learning team constantly works to have good

group process which they believe leads to maximised learning for each and every group member.

2. **Common interest:** The interests and ideas of a group are common. In fact, people form the group for the fulfillment of their common objectives or interests.
3. **The group is self-conscious about its own operations:** The group has taken time to explicitly discuss group process -- how the group will function to achieve its objectives. The group has a clear, explicit, and mutually agreed-upon approach: mechanics, norms, expectations, rules, etc. Frequently, it will stop to examine how well it is doing or what may be interfering with its operation. Whatever the problem may be, it gets open discussion and a solution found.
4. **The group has set clear and demanding performance goals:** For itself and has translated these performance goals into well-defined concrete milestones against which it measures itself. The group defines and achieves a continuous series of "small wins" along the way to larger goals.
5. **The atmosphere tends to be informal, comfortable, relaxed:** There are no obvious tensions, a working atmosphere in which people are involved and interested.
6. **There is a lot of discussion in which virtually everyone participates:** But it remains pertinent to the purpose of the group. If discussion gets off track, someone will bring it back in short order. The members listen to each other. Every idea is given a hearing. People are not afraid of being foolish by putting forth a creative thought even if it seems extreme.
7. **People are free in expressing their feelings as well as their ideas:** For a group to move forward and make progress, people are free in expressing their feeling as well as their ideas without feeling anyhow. They work for collaboration believing that collaborative individuals can meet their personal goals while simultaneously improving personal relationships and group process.
8. **There is disagreement and this is viewed as good:** Disagree openly with any group member, but in an agreeable manner. They understand that conflict helps them get to know each other's view which is a learning experience. Knowing this, members openly express their disagreements with any other

member, regardless of differences in position or status. Disagreements are not suppressed or overridden by premature group action. The reasons are carefully examined, and the group seeks to resolve them rather than dominate the dissenter. Dissenters are not trying to dominate the group; they have a genuine difference of opinion. If there are basic disagreements that cannot be resolved, the group figures out a way to live with them without letting them block its efforts.

9. **Most decisions are made at a point where there is general agreement:** However, those who disagree with the general agreement of the group do not keep their opposition private and let an apparent consensus mask their disagreement. The group does not accept a simple majority as a proper basis for action.
10. **Each individual carries his or her own weight:** Everyone feels and takes responsibility for the group's success meeting or exceeding the expectations of other group members. Each individual is respectful of the mechanics of the group: arriving on time, coming to meetings prepared, completing agreed upon tasks on time, etc. When action is taken, clear assignments are made (who-what-when) and willingly accepted and completed by each group member.
11. **Criticism is frequent, frank and relatively comfortable:** The criticism has a constructive flavour -- oriented toward removing an obstacle that faces the group.
12. **The leadership of the group shifts from time to time:** The issue is not who controls, but how to get the job done.
13. **Group Norms:** Every group has its own rules and norms, which the members are supposed to follow, the group exercises control over its members through the norms.
14. **Similarity of Behaviour:** As the interests, ideas and values of the persons of a group are common; they behave in more or less similar ways for the achievement of common interests
15. **Leader:** A counselor functions as a leader but functions from within the group.

### Self-Assessment Exercise 2

State any ten characteristics of group counseling.

### 3.4 Summary

In this unit you have been introduced to the therapeutic principles that describe different factors of counseling that can positively affect the clients in group counseling and also the expected characteristics that a counseling group must possess before it can function effectively

### 3.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

Eight most important characteristics of a Social Group. Retrieved August 10, 2014 from <http://www.preservearticles.com/201104306150/8-most-important-characteristics-of-a-social-group.html>.

Oladele, J. O. (1987). *A Functional Approach: Focus on the 6-3-3=4 Educational System*. Lagos: Johns-Lad Publishers Ltd.

The Human Side of Enterprise, by Douglas MacGregor the Wisdom of Teams, by Kaztenbach and Smith

### 3.6 Possible Answers to the Self-Assessment Exercises

#### Self-Assessment Exercise 1

1.
  - i. Universality
  - ii. Altruism
  - iii. Installation of hope
  - iv. Cohesiveness
  - v. Corrective recapitulation of the primary family experience
  - vi. Self-understanding/interpersonal learning
  - vii. Catharsis

#### Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. There is a clear unity of purpose.
2. Common interest.
3. The group is self-conscious about its own operations.
4. The group has set clear and demanding performance goals.
5. The atmosphere tends to be informal, comfortable, relaxed.
6. There is a lot of discussion in which virtually everyone participates.
7. People are free in expressing their feelings as well as their ideas.
8. There is disagreement and this is viewed as good.
9. Most decisions are made at a point where there is general agreement.

10. Each individual carries his or her own weight.
11. Criticism is frequent, frank and relatively comfortable.
12. The leadership of the group shifts from time to time.
13. Group Norms
14. Similarity of Behaviour.
15. Leader

## **UNIT 4      DIFFERENCES      BETWEEN      INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING AND GROUP COUNSELING**

### **Unit Structure**

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Learning Outcomes
- 4.3 Differences between Individual and Group Counseling
  - 4.3.1 Types of Counseling
  - 4.3.2 Individual Counseling
  - 4.3.3 Group Counseling
  - 4.3.4 Differences between Individual Counseling and the Group Counseling
  - 4.3.5 Similarities between Individual and Group Counseling
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 4.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### **4.1 Introduction**

This unit provides the list of some of the types of counseling, detailed explanation of individual counseling and group counseling, knowledge of the terminology is essential to facilitate deeper understanding of this unit and it will also help in differentiating between individual counseling and group counseling, similarities between individual and group counseling.

### **4.2 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- list types of counseling
- explain group counseling
- discuss individual counseling
- state differences between group counseling and individual counseling
- identify similarities between Individual and Group Counseling.

### **4.3 Differences between Individual and Group Counseling**

#### **4.3.1 Types of Counseling**

There are many types of counseling. They are as follows:

1. Individual counseling
2. Group counseling

3. Biblical counseling
4. Pastoral counseling
5. Child counseling
6. Marriage counseling
7. Grief counseling
8. Christian counseling
9. Family counseling
10. Relationship counseling
11. Mental Health counseling
12. Substance Abuse counseling
13. Teen counseling
14. Divorce counseling

The two major types that will be considered in this unit are: Individual counseling and Group counseling

### **Self-Assessment Exercise 1**

List at least 10 types of counseling

#### **4.3.2 Individual Counseling**

This is a counseling relationship provided on individual basis. It is basically a collaborative effort between client and Counselor. The goal is to provide an open, supportive and confidential environment for client to address the issues that are of concern to him/her. The goal of this is to help the client to understand himself, clarify and direct his thought in order to make a worthwhile decision. Some clients may prefer to start seeing a Counselor individually because it gives them an opportunity to talk about their problems with a non-judgmental listener, and also to clarify what their issues might be. Developing a therapeutic alliance between the Counselor and the client accounts for 30% of the positive outcome of treatment (Miller, 1997). The one-on-one counseling approach is expensive; it is clearly more involving and time consuming than the group modality of counseling.

#### **4.3.3 Group Counseling**

Group counseling is a form of therapy where people with similar experiences/issues come together with a professional Counselor. The Counselor runs the session, but generally everyone contributes in some way, listening to others and talking themselves and people benefit from shared experiences. Usually group counseling is focused on a particular issue, for example anger management, addiction, bereavement, eating disorders, depression etc. While a Counselor usually manages group counseling, contributions from other members in the group are

considered valuable since all in the group share similar issues. The responsibility of the counselor during group counseling is to help remove the marks covering the problem. He helps open up the problem with the professional competence and knowledge he possesses. The Counselor is to direct the affairs and situations, he is not a member of the group. Number of people in this group should not be more than seven or at least ten in order to have a cohesive group and an effective well controlled counseling session. One of the main principles behind group counseling is the idea that it deals with specific issues, and a feeling that one is not alone in facing one's problems. Group counseling attempts to counteract this isolation by assembling people with similar issues to enforce those difficulties are not singular to one person. Additionally, knowing other people with similar troubles can be comforting to each individual, who may not have access in their own family and friends to people with the same problem.

Some forms of group counseling take place in psychiatric hospitals. The success of such therapy often depends upon the diversity of people's conditions. Other group counseling is more like drug addicts meetings and may not be Counselor directed, but may merely be a group of people meeting to help find their way out of addiction. Group counseling is about:

**Learning about yourself:** A counseling group consists of between seven and ten people, supported by a facilitator. Members meet together regularly to learn more about themselves and how they relate to others. **Self-learning and Experimenting:** Group counseling is an invaluable tool for self-learning and experimenting with different ways of behaving. If you have never dared to show a certain side of yourself before, this may be the place to start.

**Sharing experiences:** Group counseling is a form of therapy which posits that people benefit from shared experiences. Usually group counseling is focused on a particular issue, for example obsessive-compulsive disorder or anger management. While a Counselor usually manages group counseling, contributions from other members in the group are considered valuable since all in the group share similar issues.

#### 4.3.4 Distinctions between what Individual Counseling and Group Counseling indicated for

	Individual Counseling	Group Counseling
1.	Crisis situation complicated by a quest for	Individuals who need to learn to better

	Causes and possible solutions.	understand a variety of people and how others Perceive things.
2.	Situation in which confidentiality is needed to protect client and others	Individuals who need to learn deeper respect for others, particularly those who are different.
3.	Interpretation of test data in respect to self Concept	Individuals who need to gain social skills (talking and relating to others
4.	Individuals who exhibit extreme fear of talking in a group	Individuals who need to share with others (need to experience belongingness)
5	Individuals who are so grossly ineffective in relating to peers that they may not be accepted by group members	Individuals who are able to talk about Concerns, problems, values.
6.	Individuals whose self-awareness is limited	Individuals who need others' reactions to their problems and concerns
7.	Situation in which sexual behaviour, particularly of a deviant nature, is involved	Individuals who find support from peers helpful
8.	Individuals who have compulsive need for attention and recognition	Individuals who prefers to involve themselves slowly in counseling and who can withdraw If it becomes threatening.

\*\*Adapted from Clarence A. Mahler, *Group Counseling in the Schools* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), pp 18-19

### 4.3.5 Similarities between Individual and Group Counseling

We have found that there are considerable areas of commonality in the two approaches.

Group and individual counseling are similar in several ways:

Both require and mobilise therapeutic climate such as empathy, unconditional positive regard, interpersonal warmth, genuineness, mutual trust and support as well as techniques such as clarification of contents, reflection of feelings, restatement of content etc., as the vehicle of therapeutic behaviour change.

The objectives of both are similar. Both techniques aim at helping the client over his/her problems. Counseling whether provided individually or on group basis aims at positive behavioural change in client.

In both situations, the counselor adopts an accepting, permissive, and non-judgmental approach for the client to participate freely such that the defenses are reduced. Both techniques aim at clarifying feelings and re-evaluation of thought content. The counselor helps the client to become aware of their feelings and attitudes and also to examine them.

Both approaches provide for privacy and confidentiality of relationship (Yalom, 1995).

#### Self-Assessment Exercise 2

List the similarities between individual and group counseling.

### 4.4 Summary

In this unit, you have been introduced to the types of counseling, meaning of and detail explanation of individual and group counseling, distinctions between individual counseling and group counseling and also similarities between individual and group counseling

### 4.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

Akinade, E. A., Sokan, B. O., & Oseremen, N. (2005). *An Introduction to Guidance and Counseling: A Basic Text for Colleges and Universities*. Ibadan: Caltep Publications (Nigeria) Limited.

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## **4.6 Possible Answers to the Self-Assessment Exercises**

### **Self-Assessment Exercise 1**

Individual counseling, Mental Health counseling, Group counseling, Substance Abuse counseling, Biblical counseling, Teen counseling, Pastoral counseling, Divorce counseling, Child counseling, Marriage counseling, Grief counseling, Christian counseling

### **Self-Assessment Exercise 2**

- i. Both require and mobilise therapeutic climate such as empathy, unconditional positive regard, interpersonal warmth, genuineness, mutual trust and support as well as techniques such as clarification of contents, reflection of feelings, restatement of content etc., as the vehicle of therapeutic behaviour change.
- ii. The objectives of both are similar.
- iii. Both techniques aim at helping the client over his/her problems.
- iv. Counseling whether provided individually or on group basis aims at positive behavioural change in client.
- v. In both situations, the counselor adopts an accepting, permissive, and non-judgmental approach for the client to participate freely such that the defenses are reduced. Both techniques aim at clarifying feelings and re-evaluation of thought content. The counselor helps the client to become aware of their feelings and attitudes and also to examine them.

## **UNIT 5 ISSUES, CHALLENGES, ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF GROUP COUNSELING**

### **Unit Structure**

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Learning Outcomes
- 5.3 Issues, Challenges, Advantages and Disadvantages of Group Counseling
  - 5.3.1 Overview of the Group Counseling
  - 5.3.2 Advantages of Group Counseling
  - 5.3.3 Disadvantages of Group Counseling
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 5.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

### **5.1 Introduction**

There are times when it is more appropriate to work with clients in groups than individually. The Counselor is often confronted with deciding what to do with a group of client. This unit deals with overview of group counseling, some of the advantages of group counseling and disadvantages of group counseling.

### **5.2 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain group counseling
- Identify advantages of group counseling
- discuss the disadvantages of group counseling.

### **5.3 Issues, Challenges and Overview**

#### **5.3.1 Overview of the Group Counseling**

Group counseling, or group therapy as it is sometimes called, is a form of therapy where a small group of clients meet regularly to talk, interact and discuss problems with each other. It provides beneficial advantages, where people can share experiences and contributions from other members in the group are considered valuable, since all the group share similar experiences. A group therapist provides an anchor point in the group to allow members to share openly and safely. It posits that people benefit from shared experiences. Usually group counseling is focused on a particular issue, for example anger 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.

1. Negative reaction from group members
2. Time to develop leadership skills to the point that they feel effective

Group counseling has preventive as well as remedial aims. Generally, the counseling has a specific focus, which may be educational, vocational, social, or personal. The group involves an interpersonal process that stresses conscious thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

One of the main principles behind individual counseling is the idea that dealing with specific issues may cause isolation and a feeling that one is alone in facing one's problems. Group Counseling attempts to counteract this isolation by assembling people with similar issues to enforce that each individual's issues are not singular to one person. Additionally, knowing other people with similar troubles can be comforting to each individual, who may not have access in their family or friends to people with the same issues.

Group counseling can be highly organised, with people doing specific activities together and then sharing the results. Or it can be more freeform, where people share current issues related to the group's purpose. For example, one person's verbal contributions to a group may be discussed, validated and provoke problem solving by other members of the group. This interaction is then primarily led by the group therapist/s.

The group Counselor uses both verbal and non-verbal means of communication i.e. reflection, clarification etc. The role of the group Counselor is to facilitate interaction among the members, help them learn from one another, assist them in establishing personal goals, and encourage them to translate their insights into concrete plans that involve taking action outside of the group. Counselors perform this role largely by teaching members to focus on the here and now to identify the concerns they wish to explore in the group.

Studies have shown that both group and individual psychotherapy benefit about 85% of the clients that participate in them. Optimally, clients gain a better understanding of themselves, and perhaps a stronger set of interpersonal and coping skills through the group counseling process. Some clients may continue therapy after group sessions end, either individually or in another group setting.

## Self-Assessment Exercises 1

1. Another name for group counseling is .....
2. What is group counselling?

### 5.3.2 Advantages of Group Counseling

The following are some benefits that can be derived when group procedural method is employed in counseling, the beneficiaries are not the group counseling members only but also the Counselor:

- (1) **Time Economical:** It provides an economic use of the Counselor's time when compared with individual counseling. The use of group counseling saves a lot of time. When a number of clients put their head together in an attempt to find a lasting solution to a specific problem the tendency is high that quick solution would be easily identified. This is unlike individual which only involve the Counselor and his client.
- (2) **Limited Number of Counselors:** Limited number of available counselors in the immediate environment makes delivery of counseling services very effective.
- (3) **Exploring the issue in depth:** The group experience gives individuals an opportunity to explore their issues in more depth, in a setting which closely resembles work, study, social and family grouping. Group members can learn vicariously or by mere observation or without verbalisation.
- (4) **Avoiding Isolation and Loneliness:** Group counseling attempts to counteract the problem of feeling that one is alone in facing one's problems by assembling people with similar issues. Additionally, knowing other people with similar troubles can be comforting to each individual, who may not have access in their family or friends to people with the same issues.
- (5) **Group Counseling Costs Less:** Some people find the group counseling experience a better alternative than private therapy because it tends to cost less. Frequently group counseling is covered by insurance, and many groups offer sliding scale fees for those without insurance.
- (6) **Lessening of Counselor's Workload:** A lot of time, energy, studies, researches and lots more would be needed by a Counselor in an attempt to assist a client identify and resolve life problems. The employment of group counseling technique,

however, reduces the activities of the Counselor. In group counseling, he is a facilitator as well as a moderator who is expected to make intermittent comment. The group members are expected to find solution to their problem with minimal contributions from the Counselor.

- (7) **Clients could be of help and be helped:** It provides the opportunity to help others as well as being helped. In individual counseling the client could only be helped or assisted by the Counselor to find alternative solutions to problems. There is no room for the client to help or assist other people having similar problems, group counseling however, gives room for a client to be assisted by other clients and also for such clients to help others solve their problems.
- (8) **Providing Unique Environment:** Group counseling can offer a unique environment in which to learn about and experience both self and others. We all live in groups for much of our lives and working together with others in a group can provide valuable insights into characteristics patterns of thinking and relating in a group setting.
- (9) **Development of Interpersonal Skills:** Group work provides clients with the opportunity to develop positive and natural relationship with others. The act of cordial interpersonal relationship is deficient in most individuals. Group counseling, however, serves as an avenue to develop appropriate social skills of interpersonal relationships. Process involved in making new friends, starting conversation, expressing personal views among others would be made known.
- (10) **Feedback:** Multiple feedback is obtainable in group counseling as opposed to individual counseling where it is at best single feedback.
- (11) **Feeling of Belonginess:** Each client has a feeling of belonginess. Many people find emotional support and encouragement from their group therapy experiences.
- (12) **Highly Organised:** Group counseling may be highly organised, with people doing specific activities together and then sharing the results. Alternately, it may be more freeform, where people share current issues related to the group's purpose. One person's verbal contributions to a group might be discussed, validated, and provoke problem solving by other group members in a session. It

might also be an entry into a discussion regarding a certain aspect of an illness or condition that is then primarily led by the therapist.

- (13) The Counselor has opportunity of interacting with more counselees within a session.
- (14) A purposeful group would facilitate changes in a counselee than a Counselor would.

### 5.3.3 Disadvantages of Group Counseling

- (1) **Too Large Groups Suffers:** Not all group counseling efforts are completely successful. Occasionally, group therapy suffers if a group is too large or small. Usually group counseling works best when an experienced Counselor can redirect a person who is sharing too much, and allow equal time for people to share their ideas, problems or opinions.
- (2) **Monopolising the Group:** The believe that not all of the clients would keep the discussion of the group secret. Group counseling may also become problematic when one person appears to monopolise the group. People may vary in their need for counseling, and generally those who monopolise a group should not be despised but should be redirected to private counseling, where the person is the sole focus of attention. After some time in private sessions, a person may feel less need to monopolise a group counseling session.
- (3) **Needs not met:** Clients may have needs that are not met by the group.
- (4) **Break of confidentiality:** The issue of confidentiality is very important in guidance and counseling. Confidentiality involves keeping of secret, parties involved in counseling relationships are expected to keep to themselves whatever transpire amongst them. However, it has been discovered that this is only practicable (even not in all cases) in individual counseling. On the other hand, the issue of confidentiality is very difficult to attain and maintain in group counseling. Since the number of people involved is fairly large, there is probability that not all of the clients would keep the discussion of the group secret.
- (5) Clients may be resistant to participating in the group.
- (6) The agency may not have sufficient clients to support a group.

- (7) **Difficulty associated with the selection of group members:** There are certain criteria that are to be considered if group counseling is going to be effective. These include similarity of problem, sex, age, intelligence etc. An attempt to assemble clients that would fit into a specific counseling group may be difficult at times. For instance some clients may relatively be of the same age but having different problems and vice versa.
- (8) **Danger of wrong placement:** At times, a client may be wrongly placed into a counseling group that cannot resolve his problem. The danger inherent in such is that there is likelihood that such a client may serve as a threat to other members or may be in the group without making any meaningful contribution to the resolution of the problem at hand.
- (9) **Unfit for certain categories of individuals with certain personality characteristics:** In group counseling, more than one individual is involved which implies that difference in personality make-up is anticipated. However, certain personality characteristics of members could hinder the attainment of group counseling objectives. Such individuals with personality traits that are aggressive, extremely introverted, domineering etc.
- (10) **Unsuitable for certain groups of people:** Group counseling requires group members to contribute meaningfully in an attempt to come across solutions to problems. This requires a reasonable level of intelligence of the members. Certain categories of people are, however, not intelligent enough to make any meaningful impact in group counseling. A clear-cut example of this group is severely mentally retarded individuals. This, therefore, means that application of group counseling for this group of people may be an exercise in futility.

### Self-Assessment Exercises 2

1. List the advantages of group counseling.
2. List the disadvantages of group counselling.

### 5.4 Summary

This unit acquainted the reader with the concepts of group counseling, as a vehicle for helping people make changes in their attitudes, beliefs

about themselves and others, feelings and behaviours. Also advantages and disadvantages of group counseling were discussed. This will, no doubt, help lay the necessary foundation as you work through the course for better understanding of the subject matter.

### 5.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

Akinade, E. A., Sokan, B. O., & Oseremen N. (2005). *An Introduction to Guidance and Counseling: A Basic Text for Colleges and Universities*. Ibadan: Caltep Publications (Nigeria) Limited.

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### 5.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

#### Self-Assessment Exercises 1

1. Group Therapy.
2. It is a form of therapy where a small group of clients meet regularly to talk, interact and discuss problems with each other.

#### Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1.
  - i. It provides an economic use of Counselor's time
  - ii. Limited number of available counselors makes delivery of counseling services very effective.
  - iii. The group experience gives individuals an opportunity to explore their issues in more depth.
  - iv. It helps to avoid the feeling of isolation and loneliness by assembling people with similar issues.
  - v. Group counseling costs less
  - vi. Lessening of Counselors' workload.
  - vii. Counselors could be of help and be helped.
  - viii. It can offer a unique environment in which to learn about and experience bot self and others.
  - ix. Group work provides clients with the opportunity to develop positive and natural relationship with others.
  - x. Multiple feedback is obtainable in group counseling

- xi. Each client has a feeling of belongingness.
  - xii. Group counseling may be highly organised.
  - xiii. The counselor has opportunity of interacting with more counselees within a session.
  - xiv. A purposeful group will facilitate changes in a counselee than a counselor would.
- 2.
- i. Too large groups suffer
  - ii. Monopolising the group
  - iii. Needs of some clients may not be met
  - iv. Break of confidentiality
  - v. Clients being resistant to participating
  - vi. Agency may have insufficient clients to support a group
  - vii. Difficulty associated with the selection of group members
  - viii. Danger of wrong placement
  - ix. Unfit for certain categories of individuals within certain personality characteristics
  - x. Unsuitable for certain group of people.