

Group Dynamics in Marriage and Family Therapy and Congregations

PC 221-3
Spring 2012
Monday 2:00-4:50

Elizabeth Johnson Walker
ewalker@lpts.edu
Schlegel 204

Course Description

This course provides theological, theoretical and practical foundations for an exploration of group counseling and group therapy for the practice of marriage and family therapy and preparation for leadership in congregations. Master of Divinity students are welcomed. Utilizing theories and literature from group dynamics, group psychotherapy, marriage and family therapy and practical theology, students will learn how to organize and facilitate groups for therapy, support and education within pastoral ministry. Readings and lecture will focus on systemic methods of understanding and treating human problems in group settings, specific concepts of group psychotherapy, psycho-education and family systems theories and approaches. Emphasis will be placed on theological reflection and individual subsystems and how they operate in small group dynamics.

Course Objectives (Student Learning Outcome [SLO])

1. To demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding of group theory and group process (SLO 1 a & b)
2. To demonstrate skill in the design and leadership of at least one group theory in therapeutic groups (SLO 1 a & b)
3. To have knowledge of and understand the implications of at least one model of therapeutic group (SLO 1 a & b)
4. To have a knowledge of the implications of current group research approaches (SLO 1 a & b, 2, 3)
5. To reflect theologically on group dynamics in counseling and congregational settings (SLO 1 a & b, 4, 5)

Course Requirements and Evaluation

1. Participation: 30%
Participation will be evaluated based on
 - a. Accurate use of reading material assigned
 - b. Attention to and ability to appropriately engage the contributions of classmates
 - c. Openness to reflect critically on the implications and ideas discussed from readings and presentations
 - d. Prompt, regular attendance; absences and/or tardiness will impact your participation grade
 - e. Facilitate the group to reflect on weekly reading assignments.

2. Group leadership: 20%
Each class member will design and lead the class using group theory format. Student group leaders are expected to:
 - a. Provide the class with a paper that outlines the author's approach, to be discussed in class
 - b. Incorporate theological reflection on the reading,
 - c. Be creative in an interactive format to involve the class in the material to be presented
 - d. Creatively facilitate class involvement and discussion of the reading material

3. Weekly group journal entries: 30%
 - a. Critical reflection entries describing how the content of each area of study can be used in your work setting.

 - b. Critical reflection entries that describe the integration of group work and the pastoral care emphasis for that day group process)

 - c. Theological reflection.

Final Take Home Exam 20 % - **Due May 12 @ 11:00 a.m. in Schlegel 204**

Paper - Theory and Practice of Group Dynamics with a Specific Population or Theory and Practice of Group Dynamics with Congregations

Complete a 10-12 page paper based on your research of a specific group population you may sit with in future, describe the theory and practice of group counseling you selected. This assignment includes a sound review

of the literature and the most efficacious theoretical framework for the population you selected for this project.

Required reading on library reserve

Richardson, Ronald. (1996). *Creating a Healthier Church: Family Systems Theory, Leadership and Congregational Life*.

Yalom, I. D. (2005). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy*. (5th edition) New York: Basic Books, Inc.

----- (1980) *Existential psychotherapy*. New York: Basic Books.

----- (2002) *The gift of therapy: An open letter to a new generation of therapists and their patients*. New York: Harpers Collins.

Recommended reading on library reserve

Ashbrook, J. B. (1996) *Minding the soul: Pastoral counseling as remembering*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Jaco Hamman. (200) *Becoming a Pastor*.

McManus, G. (1996). *Structured exercises for promoting family and group strengths*. New York: Haworth Press.

Tudor, K. (1999). *Group counseling*. London: Sage Publications.

Graham, L. K. (1992). *Care of persons, care of worlds*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press

Jacobs, E. E., Riley, L. H., & Masson, R. L. (1988). *Group counseling: Strategies and Skills*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Bibliography Sources

Augsburger, David W. *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures*. Westminster Press:Philadelphia, 1986.

Corey, Gerald. *Theory and Practice of Group Counseling*. Brooks/Cole: Australia, 2000.

Corey, Gerald, M.S. Corey, Robert Haynes. *Groups in Action: Evolution and Challenges with DVD*. Brooks/Cole: Australia, 2006.

DeChant, Betsy, editor. *Women & Psychotherapy: Theory and Practice*. Guildford Press: NY, 1996.

Spitz, Henry I. *Group Psychotherapy and Managed Mental Health Care*. Brunner/Mazel: NY, 1995.

Trozier, James P. *The Counselor and the Group- Integrating Theory, Training and Practice*. Taylor & Frances, 1999.

Whitaker, Dorothy S. *Using Groups to Help People*. Brunner/Routledge: PA, 1985.

Methodology

This course will be taught using lecture, class discussion, group practicum, and reflective journal writing. Within the class discourse pastoral theological reflection will focus on the collective and personal human experience. For example, “How do we honor the sacred potential of humanity and at the same time contain the human capacity for sin and evil? How does one’s theology inform the clinical models of therapeutic group theory and practice presented in this course?”

Use of Inclusive Language

Learning is fundamentally concerned with communication, self-expression, and personal and social transformation. Learning in this setting respects individuals, their feelings, their value and worth, and their particular potential for contribution to common knowledge and community virtue. Learning is fundamentally and intentionally inclusive.

Since all learning is inherently ethical and political, and theological discourse has been traditionally patriarchal and gender exclusive, the Seminary has established a policy, in the interest of constructing an inclusive and egalitarian community, that the language (symbols, metaphors) used in all our class discussions and written work shall be gender inclusive and respectful of all persons and groups as valued human creatures of God. Racism also permeates our society and is detrimental to any learning environment. We need to use language, symbols, and metaphors that honor our commitment to racial inclusiveness.

Academic Honesty

Be careful to fully document any information included in your papers that is not original. Also, be aware when you summarize information, even when you give the complete documentation information, your summaries should be in *your own words* and not retain too much of the original author’s style. A paper that presents the ideas or writing of someone else as if they were one’s own is considered plagiarism, and school and departmental policies on academic honesty will be followed. The Academic Support Center has handouts, and/or the Library can be of assistance.

Evaluation of Written Assignments

Graduate level writing is expected in this course. This includes clear organization, correct grammar, careful proofreading and proper citation of sources. Double-spaced 12 fonts, one inch margins are considered standard in this class unless otherwise specified. Grading of all written material will be affected by careless writing. The Academic Skills Center provides instruction on all of these matters.

Attendance

In line with Seminary policy, prompt attendance at class sessions is expected out of respect for your fellow classmates as well as the instructor. Learning is a complex activity that requires conceptual and experiential participation by those who wish to learn. While circumstances may require an adult learner to miss class occasionally, absences of more than 10% of the classroom experience will affect student learning and consequently, the student's grade. Extreme circumstances, such as major health problems, family concerns, etc., must be discussed with the instructor **prior** to multiple missed classes. Students unable to attend at least 75% of classes will be advised to drop the class prior to the registrar's WP deadline, or receive a failing grade.

Class Schedule

September 10 Introduction to the course, review of syllabus and student assignments

September 17 Topic: Life, Death and Anxiety

Reading:

Yalom: Existential Psychotherapy, Chapters 1-3, pp.3-109

Richards, Chapter 1, pp

September 24 Topic: Death and Psychopathology & Psychotherapy and Freedom

Reading:

Yalom: Existential . . . Chapters 4-6, pp.110-211

Richards, Chapter 2

Topic: Isolation

Reading:

Yalom: Existential . . . Chapters 7-9, pp. 286-391

Richards, Chapter 3

Facilitator: Chandra Group Leader: _____

October 1 Topic: Therapeutic Factors; Interpersonal Learning; Group Cohesiveness

Reading:

Yalom: Existential . . . Chapters 10-11, pp. 392-484

Richards, Chapter 4

Facilitator: Tumirrow Group Leader: _____

October 8 Topic: The Role of the Therapist

Reading

Yalom: Group . . . Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-116

Richards, Chapter 5

October 15-19 Research and Study – no class

Facilitator: Alicia Group Leader: _____

October 22 Topic: Patient Selection, Group Composition, The Creation of Groups

Reading

Yalom: Group . . . Chapters 5-7, pp. 117-230

Richards, Chapter 6

Facilitator: Ann Group Leader: _____

October 29 Topic: The Beginning and Advanced Group

Reading

Yalom: Group . . . Chapters 8-11, pp. 231-344

Richards, Chapters 7-8

Facilitator: Valerie Group Leader: _____

November 5 Topic: Specialized Groups; Problems, Formats and Procedural Aids

Reading

Yalom: Group . . . Chapters 12-14. pp. 345-428

Richards, Chapter 9

Facilitator: Dr. Walker Group Leader: _____

October 15-19 Reading and Research week

November 12 Topic: Group Therapy and Encounter Groups & Training the Group Therapist

Reading

Yalom: Group . . . Chapters 15-17, pp. 429-544

Richards, Chapters 9-10

Facilitator: Joby Group Leader: _____

November 19 Topic: the Gift of Therapy

Reading

Yalom: Gift . . . pp. 1-123

Richards, Chapter 11-12

Facilitator: Dr. Walker Group Leader: _____

Journal assignment: Write a theological reflection paper on your experience practicing the theory and practice of group therapy. The paper should be 4-6 pages, double spaced and typed. Your journal notes should provide you with the resources to complete this assignment.

November 26 Topic: The Gift of Therapy

Reading

Yalom: Gift . . . pp. 124-260

Richards, Chapter 13

December 3

Final Group experience

Final journal assignment: Write a theological reflection on the resources yourbring from culture to facilitate group counseling, and to guide you in ethical decision making that contributes to your goal of helping people. Elaborate from the perspective of your anticipated population for group counseling.

Course evaluation