

Assignment #5: *Signature Assignment: Article Review*

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EDSC 531: Human Communication: Group Process

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Association for Specialists in Group Work Guiding Principles for Group Work

In a 2022 article published in the Journal for Specialists in Group Work, McCarthy et al. discussed different types of group work for counselors. The article, titled, ‘Association for Specialists in Group Work Guiding Principles for Group Work’ discusses training required for effective facilitation, and appropriate planning tools. As a school counselor it is important to have guiding principles when conducting group work. They believe that “group work is the primary method of empowering” students, (p. 2.). The *Association for Specialists in Group Work* identified specific values that include: multicultural and social justice principles, being open to innovation, commitment to holistic principles, research based practice, pursuing excellence through continued education, belief in the benefits of group work, and the belief that there are ethical considerations involved.

The researchers noted that group principles are required to be both responsible and responsive to the group members. The article suggested that continuing education is foundational to practice. Every member of the group should be treated with respect on an individual level as well as group level. Individual needs should be addressed concurrent with group needs. As social beings and group work fosters interpersonal relationships through shared experiences.

Four types of group work mentioned in the article are:

- Task accomplishment
- Personal and interpersonal growth through prevention of difficulties.
- Addressing transitional phases through counseling
- Treatment groups that address persistent patterns of difficulty that include diagnostic assessment and a specific focus.

According to McCarthy et al. counselors should have core training specific to group counseling that includes specific competencies. Their recommendation is that competencies include: theory, ethics, facilitation skills, multicultural and social justice practice. Advanced practice applies knowledge of human development and social identity. Professional development is ongoing in our changing society. In addition to education, it is important to practice within supervision as preparation for independent group work

The researchers also noted that planning stages include compliance with regulations, scope of practice, assessments, coordination of resources, cultural sensitivity as well as proper group member screening. Facilitation and evaluation planning are required.

Upon reflection of this article, I have increased my understanding of the value of group work as the primary method of empowerment. In the future, I have a better framework for developing a plan of action based on need.

I understand that there is practical application in school counseling because of the increased need for mental health services. School counselors have a limited amount of time to serve upwards of 250 students which makes group work essential. Collaboration with teachers and administrators is essential to serving the data-driven needs of students. Making meaningful connections with teachers to establish a team approach to serving students is a skill that I have been practicing. The challenges in the future will include carving out time for planning, collaboration and implementation that serves the needs of students while meeting the expectations of the counseling team and administrative goals.

In school counseling it is important to provide group counseling sessions for a variety of data driven needs. Social skills are more easily developed through task accomplishment. Careful attention should be given to being culturally and socially sensitive. Counselors should write a concise statement of the purpose and goal of the group while planning for culturally diverse participants. Counselors should provide consent forms to parents and include them collaboratively in decision making in a culturally sensitive way. Each session should have a debrief to assess what can be done better and what is working for the group. Counselors should always remember that they are facilitators.

Reference

McCarthy, C. J., Bauman, S., Choudhuri, D. D., Coker, A., Justice, C., Kraus, K. L., Luke, M.,
Rubel, D., & Shaw, L. (2022). Association for Specialists in Group Work Guiding
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