

Benchmark: Syllabus for Group Counseling

Hope V. Charles

Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies, Liberty University

Author Note

Correspondence concerning this paper should be addressed to Hope V. Charles,
Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies, Liberty University, 1971 University
Boulevard Lynchburg, VA 24515. Email: hvcharles@liberty.edu

Benchmark Syllabus for Group Counseling

I. Course Description

This is a four week-mini course and provides an in-depth crash course in Group Counseling. Students will learn the developmental stages of a group and principles surrounding group dynamics. Students will become educated on group members' and the group counselor's roles and their associated behaviors. They will also learn group theories and theoretical approaches. Finally, they will gain group counseling skills and use them during live group sessions.

II. Rationale

Regardless of the setting in which a counselor works in, there may come a time where group counseling is needed. Students will need to be equipped with the skills necessary to form a group, understand its stages, look out for the various personalities that show up, and have the skills needed to run that group. This course provides each of those skillsets.

III. Resources

a. Required

- Gladding, S. T. (2020). *Groups: A Counseling Specialty*, (8th ed.). Prentice-Hall. ISBN: 9780135169742.
- **Rationale:** The above text offers a full understanding of the Group Counseling world, to include the how's and whys for the master's level counseling student. It aligns with 2016 CACREP standards section 6.

- Tyson, L. E., Pérusse, R., & Whitley, J. (2004). Critical Incidents in Group Counseling. *American Counseling Association*.

<https://canvas.liberty.edu/courses/563911/files/103260639>

- **Rationale:** The above text is an article that gives the master's level counseling student insight into the importance of being properly trained in group counseling before pursuing the role. The article aligns with 2016 CACREP standards sections 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6.

b. Recommended

- Allender, D. B. (2005). *To Be Told: Know Your Story, Shape Your Life*, (1st ed.). Waterbrook Press. ISBN: 978157856519.

- **Rationale:** The above text offers a beautifully written book that gives the master's level counseling student insight into the journey of life. It aligns with 2016 CACREP standards sections 1, 2, and 5.

IV. Measurable Learning Outcomes

By the end of these four weeks, students will be able to:

- a. Understand the ramifications of poor group formation and planning. Partially meets 2016 CACREP standards of section 2.F.6.e.
- b. Participate in Group Counseling Demonstrations on To Be Told Book Impressions. Partially meets 2016 CACREP standards of section 2.F.6.h.
- c. Exercise their knowledge through Quizzes on Group theories and therapeutic approaches from Group Counselor. Meets 2016 CACREP standards of sections 2.F.6.a. and 2.F.6.c.
- d. Participate in Group Counseling Demonstrations and role play on Group Dynamics. Partially meets 2016 CACREP standards of sections 2.F.6.b. and 2.F.6.h.

- e. Exercise their knowledge through Quizzes on Group Members and their various roles and impacts on the group. Partially meets 2016 CACREP standards of section 2.F.6.b.
- f. Exercise their knowledge through a paper on the Developmental Stages of a Group. Partially meets 2016 CACREP standards of sections 2.F.6.e. and 2.F.2.a.

V. Course Assignments

- a. **Live Discussion Board.** Students will participate in an hour long, live discussion board, on Teams upon reading the Critical Incident Article by Doris Rhea Coy. Each student will be expected to share their thoughts and impressions from the article. Students are also expected to give feedback to their classmates. Sources should be used during this assignment.
 - Rationale: This live DB will help to understand the ramifications of poor group formation and planning.
- b. **Group Counseling Demonstrations.** Students will participate in two group counseling sessions during class, on Teams. Students will either serve as a group member, a group leader, or a co-leader. The Group Leader will read from the recommended Allendar book for the topic of the day. Participation points will be given based upon the contribution to the discussion.
 - Rationale: These group counseling sessions give students the ability to work through and within a group session, within a controlled environment, to learn the dynamics of a group, through an immersion experience.
- c. **Weekly Quizzes.** Students will have weekly quizzes to cover readings from the Gladding textbook. The quizzes will cover such topics as theories used in Group

Counseling, therapeutic approaches, and differentiating between the various members of a Group.

- Rationale: This will ensure that the students are able to comprehend, and retain the vast material provided within the text, to achieve their measurable learning outcomes.

d. **Developmental Stages of a Group Paper.** Students will take all they have learned within the four weeks and complete a synopsis of the developmental stages of a group. This paper should also shed light on attributes surrounding group dynamics; group members; their roles, and behaviors; theoretical approaches; and group counseling skills.

- Rationale: This assignment will test the student's ability to synthesize all they have learned throughout the four weeks.

VI. Course Grading

All assignments must be completed to pass the course:

Evaluation	Points
Live Discussion Board	100
Group Counseling Demonstrations (2)	200
Quizzes (4)	400
Developmental Stages of a Group Paper to test the students understanding.	300
Total	1000

Grading Criteria

A = 940–1000 A- = 920–939 B+ = 900–919 B = 860–899 B- = 840–859

C+ = 820–839 C = 780–819 C- = 760–779 D+ = 740–759 D = 700–739

D- = 680–699 F = Below 67

VII. Course Calendar**Course Calendar: Group Counseling**

Week	Topics	Assignments
1 1/5/25	- Group Formation and the Developmental Stages	- Gladding Reading Chapters 4-7 - Critical Incident Article - Live Discussion Board - Quiz on Chapters 4-7
2 1/12/25	- Group Counseling Skills	- Gladding Reading Chapter 1 - Allendar Reading - Group Counseling - Quiz on Chapter 1
3 1/19/25	- Group Dynamics	- Gladding Reading Chapter 2 - Group Counseling - Quiz on Chapter 2
4 1/26/25	- Group theories and therapeutic approaches from Group Counselor	- Gladding Reading Chapters 15-18 - Paper - Quiz Chapters 15-18

VIII. Attendance Policies

Since this course is only four weeks long, the expectation is for there to be no missed classes.

Students are required to participate in each class, weekly, and on time. Since classes are only an hour, a five-minute grace period can be offered with a valid explanation. All assignments are expected to be submitted on time. Late work will not be counted.

Appendix A

Live Discussion Board Assignment

Instructions: Read the Critical Incident Article by Doris Rhea Coy. Be prepared to participate in a live discussion about the article.

Requirements: You will participate in an hour long, live discussion board, on Teams upon reading the Critical Incident Article by Doris Rhea Coy. Each student will be expected to share your thoughts and impressions from the article. You are also expected to give feedback to your classmates. Sources should be used during this assignment.

Reading Material: Tyson, L. E., Pérusse, R., & Whitley, J. (2004). Critical Incidents in Group Counseling. *American Counseling Association*.

<https://canvas.liberty.edu/courses/563911/files/103260639>

Appendix B

Live Discussion Board Grading Rubric

Partially meets 2016 CACREP standards of Section 2.F.6.e (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs. 2015).

	Advanced	Proficient	Developing	Not Present
Content	65 - 70 pts Student contributed to the questions and lead in the live discussion. There are substantial references used and there is evidence the student prepared the live discussion.	59 - 64 pts Student does addresses questions and does participate in the live discussion. There are references used or there is evidence the student prepared the live discussion.	1 - 58 pts Student does not address questions and does not participate in the live discussion. There are no references used or evidence the student prepared the live discussion.	0
Professionalism	25 - 30 pts There is substantial professional courtesy. The attire is appropriate for class. The student's video and/ or audio have no distractions.	20 - 24 pts There is minimal professional courtesy. The attire is appropriate for class. The student's video and/ or audio have minimal distractions.	1 - 19 pts There is a lack of professional courtesy. The attire is not appropriate for class. The student's video and/ or audio was not functional.	0

Appendix C

A Group Counseling Demonstrations on To Be Told Book Impressions

Instructions: Read the Allendar book Chapter 1. Be prepared to participate in a Group Counseling Session to discuss the chapter. Your role will either serve as a group member, a group leader, or a co-leader.

Requirements: You will participate in a group counseling session during class, on Teams. You will either serve as a group member, a group leader, or a co-leader. The Group Leader will read from the recommended Allendar book for the topic of the day (Chapter 1). Participation points will be given based upon the contribution to the discussion.

Reading Material: Allender, D. B. (2005). *To Be Told: Know Your Story, Shape Your Life*, (1st ed.). Waterbrook Press.

Appendix D

Group Counseling Demonstrations Grading Rubric

Partially meets 2016 CACREP standards of section 2.F.6.h. direct experiences in which students participate as group members in a small group activity, approved by the program, for a minimum of 10 clock hours over the course of one academic term (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs. 2015).

	Advanced	Proficient	Developing	Not Present
Content	65 - 70 pts Student contributed to the questions and lead in the group session. There are substantial references used and there is evidence the student prepared the group session.	59 - 64 pts Student does addresses questions and does participate in the group session. There are references used or there is evidence the student prepared the group session.	1 - 58 pts Student does not address questions and does not participate in the group session. There are no references used or evidence the student prepared the group session.	0
Professionalism	25 - 30 pts There is substantial professional courtesy. The attire is appropriate for class. The student's video and/ or audio have no distractions.	20 - 24 pts There is minimal professional courtesy. The attire is appropriate for class. The student's video and/ or audio have minimal distractions.	1 - 19 pts There is a lack of professional courtesy. The attire is not appropriate for class. The student's video and/ or audio was not functional.	0

Appendix E**Weekly Quizzes Example**

Which is not a part of Gladding's stages of a Group?

- a) Formation
- b) Transition
- c) Performing
- d) Termination

Which is not an activity Gladding mentions as a method for helping participants gain greater insight into their groups functioning?

- a) Journaling
- b) Outdoor experiences
- c) Video recording
- d) Dinner dates

Appendix F

Developmental Stages of a Group Paper

Instructions: You will write an 8-page paper on the Developmental Stages of a Group. The purpose of this assignment is to shed light on attributes surrounding group dynamics; group members; their roles, and behaviors; theoretical approaches; and group counseling skills.

Requirements: Your paper must be 8 pages. There should be a separate heading for each of the following topics:

- Group dynamics
- Group members
 - Their roles
 - Behaviors
- Theoretical approaches
- Group counseling skills

The paper should include at least 5 scholarly references within the past 10 years, with a title page, abstract, and conclusion. APA-7 formatting style should be used. Paper should be free from grammatical errors. Please do not plagiarize.

Appendix G

Developmental Stages of a Group Paper Grading Rubric

Partially meets 2016 CACREP standards of sections 2.F.6.e. approaches to group formation, including recruiting, screening, and selecting members, 2.F.2.a. multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally, and 2.F.6.b. dynamics associated with group process and development (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs. 2015).

	Advanced	Proficient	Developing	Not Present
Content	125 - 150 pts Student included all 4 topics (Group dynamics, Group members Theoretical approaches, Group counseling skills.).	75 - 124 pts Student included 3 of the 4 topics (Group dynamics, Group members Theoretical approaches, Group counseling skills.).	1 - 74 pts Student included one of the 4 topics (Group dynamics, Group members Theoretical approaches, Group counseling skills.).	0
Paper Elements	40 – 50 pts There are at least 5 scholarly sources. Paper is the correct length, 8 pages.	35 – 39 pts 3-4 scholarly sources. Paper is not at least 8 pages.	1 – 34 pts 1 scholarly source. Paper is not at least 8 pages.	0
Paper Mechanics	40 – 50 pts There are no grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	35 – 39 pts There are minimal grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors reflected.	1 – 34 pts There are several grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors reflected.	0
APA Elements	40 – 50 pts Includes the citations and APA formatting. Title page, citations, and heading, are correctly formatted. Double-spaced with correct margins. An abstract is included.	35 – 39 pts The citations and APA formatting had a few errors. Title page, citations, abstract, and heading, are present with few errors. Abstract included with errors.	1 – 34 pts The citations and APA formatting has several errors. Title page, citations, abstract, and heading, are included with several errors. There is no abstract included.	0

Total Points: 300

Reference:

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs. (2015). *2016*

CACREP standards. <https://www.cacrep.org/for-programs/2016-cacrep-standards/>