

PSY 130 DYNAMICS OF GROUP BEHAVIOR

3 credits

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION: Theoretical basis of group behavior, including focus on the distinction between content and process variables. Task and maintenance functions of group members are explored. Other topics include concepts of group membership, conformity and deviancy pressures, styles of leadership, and group problem solving and decision making. Professional and ethical issues related to group work are explored. The effective use of group models for specific ages on the spectrum of human development is presented. (Formerly listed as SOC 221.) Not open for credit for students who have successfully completed SOC 221.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: After successfully completing PSY 130, the student will

- understand and appreciate the distinction between content and process variables;
- be able to recognize and distinguish between task and maintenance functions of group members;
- know one's own skill level in participating in and leading various types of groups;
- be able to identify and implement various styles of group leadership, depending on the needs at hand;
- be able to integrate concepts and skills, as theory is applied to experiential group practice in the classroom;
- be able to delineate the various stages of groups;
- have practiced using skills and techniques applicable to various group variables, such as utilizing procedures for forming and leading groups;
- be familiar with and be able to identify professional codes of ethics applicable to group work;
- understand and appreciate multicultural perspective relevant to group processes and group work.

COURSE CONTENT:

1. Introduction to Group Work

Overview of the various types of groups
Multicultural perspectives on group work

2. Ethical and Legal Issues in Group Work

Ethical issues in group membership: voluntary vs. required membership
Confidentiality
Uses and abuses of group techniques
The role of the group leader

3. The Group Leader

The group leader and appropriate training
The co-leadership model
Developing a research orientation to group practice

4. Group Process: Stages of Development

Forming a group

Attracting and screening members
Practical considerations
Uses of a pregroup meeting

Initial stage of a group

Group characteristics at the initial stage
Creating trust: leader and member roles
Identifying and clarifying goals
Helping members get the most from a group experiences

Transition stage of a group

Problem behaviors and difficult group members
Dealing with resistance
 Effective leadership: research findings
Co-leaders at the transition stage

Working stage of a group

Progressing from the transition stage to the working stage

Ending a group

Task of the final stage: consolidation of learning experiences
Termination of the group experience
Evaluation of the group experience
Co-leader issues as the group ends

5. Specific age-related groups

Groups for children

Special needs and problems of children
Guidelines for group work with adolescents
Children's groups in community agencies
A group for children of divorce

Groups for adolescents

Description of an adolescent group

A high school group for adolescents in troubled families

Involving parents

Groups for adults

Theme-oriented groups

Group work with men

Support groups for victims of similar circumstances

Groups for the elderly

Unique characteristics of the elderly

Practical and professional considerations for group work with the elderly

Working with healthy aging people

An elderly bereavement group

APPROPRIATE ASSIGNMENTS THAT DEMONSTRATE CRITICAL THINKING:

Group exercises and test questions require the students to apply concepts that have been studying in novel situations, thus going beyond rote learning. A Journal is required of each student. This Journal will critically relate and interpret the student's experience in group situations within the context of the class.

EVALUATION: Evaluation is based on the cumulative point total of quizzes, final exam, and the Journal. There are four quizzes. The lowest score is dropped. If a student misses a test, that counts as the "Drop", as no make-up tests are provided. Beginning with the third test, short answer questions are added to the multiple-choice format. These questions are better evaluative instruments for how well a student understands the material, as the mechanism tapped is recall, the student having to apply concepts to novel contexts contained in the question.

The Journal provides opportunity for the students to apply the theories being studied to their specific experiences within the class-structured group experiences.

Attendance is assumed to be acceptable - no more than four classes during the semester. The instructor reserves the prerogative of administratively withdrawing students from class for excessive absenteeism.

TEXTS:

Corey, M. & Corey, G. (1997). Groups: process and practice (5th ed.). San Francisco: Brooks-Cole.

Egan, G. (1973). Face to face. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks-Cole.