

Jeremy Gillentine—October 10, 2024

COUC710-- Discussion Four: Yalom, chapters 8-9 Discussion Thread: Member Selection & Group Structure

Initial Question—October 8, 2024, 5:25 PM

Pages 333-334 in Yalom discusses the homogeneous and heterogeneous characteristics of group participants. To have a homogeneous group, how many characteristics do the group members need to have in common? If they happen to be at the same residential rehab facility, is having an addiction enough or should it be the same addiction? Is having varying addictions but sharing the same religious ideals adequate?

Question Response #1

Karina Blest—October 6, 2024, 12:46 PM

In chapter 8, Yalom discusses how clinicians screen clients to determine who will be included in the group. With this in mind, there are some people who are not appropriate for the group setting. What are some ethical considerations to keep in mind when informing prospective clients that they will not be included in a group they have requested to be a part of?

Reference:

Yalom, I. D., & Leszcz, M. (2020). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy*, (6th ed.). Basic Books.

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Typically, a group has an area of focus, and the counselor has the responsibility to keep the wellbeing of the group in mind. The 2014 ACA Code of Ethics says, “A.9.a. Screening— Counselors screen prospective group counseling/therapy participants. To the extent possible, counselors select members whose needs and goals are compatible with the goals of the group, who will not impede the group process, and whose well-being will not be jeopardized by the group experience. A.9.b. Protecting Clients—In a group setting, counselors take reasonable precautions to protect clients from physical, emotional, or psychological trauma.” Ritchis & Huss (2000) share that the counselor doing the screening should have specific requirements for the group in place before the screening begins. This will help to avoid the appearance of discrimination towards and individual. Ritchis & Huss also mentioned that some problem focused groups may be better served if it is gender specific. In 2000 this would have been a very clear criterion that would exclude a person who was not a member of the inclusionary gender group.

It is not always possible to do so, (due to being in a rural environment etc.) but, if possible, a referral to another group or individual services would be an appropriate addition to the denial to attend the current group. Yalom and Leszcz (2020) point out that when a busy clinic chooses to shortcut the process of screening by simply doing a phone interview, this is a potential disservice to the cohesion of the group by having to deal with a member who should not have been allowed to attend in the first place. This has a higher potential to be distressing to a short-term group (pg. 353). As counselors who are striving to be ethical and serve our clients well, we should put the needed work into the screening process.

American Counseling Association. (2014). ACA Code of ethics.

<https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/ethics/2014-aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>

Ritchie, M. H., & Huss, S. N. (2000). Recruitment and screening of minors for group counseling. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 25(2), 146-156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01933920008411458>

Yalom, I. D., & Leszcz, M. (2020). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy*, (6th ed.). Basic Books.

Question Response #2

Kelley Ryals—October 7, 2024, 6:54 PM

In Chapter 8, on page 297, Yalom and Leszcz (2008) said that individuals in crisis are not good candidates for a group. This is slightly out of context because the text is talking about groups in general. However, over the last few days, I have been researching how to get a group of counselors to North Carolina for the flood victims. They have lost so much: loved ones, children, homes, and livelihoods. They could benefit from some groups, specifically grief and crisis counseling. My question would be, how do you screen for a group based on a natural disaster, and would it even be necessary?

Reference

Yalom, I. D., & Leszcz, M. (2008). *The Theory and practice of group psychotherapy*. Hachette UK.

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This is a great and kind idea! It may be difficult to pull off unless you are familiar with a church or organization you can work through. The areas most affected by disasters like hurricanes usually get sectioned off and you cannot get in without credentials. Our family helped with some Katrina cleanup years ago. Because of the opportunistic scum of the earth, they had National Guard controlling entry because of looting. We were working through an organization called Church of Christ Disaster Relief which allowed us entry. All that being said, an article on the National Board of Certified Counselors, “Counseling in the Wake of a Disaster” offers some links to several potential nationally known organizations you may be able to work through (link below). Bemark and Chung (2014) share the Disaster Cross-Cultural Counseling (DCCC) Model. They further share, “The model was developed since guidelines and core group work principles (e.g., group selection, client selection, ethics, leadership, confidentiality, prescreening, single group sessions) have not been defined for post-disaster situations” (pg. 6). This book chapter speaks to many real dilemmas present in disaster response group such as not having adequate areas to meet, having to adapt on the go, and being in situations where outsiders may join as walk-ups. Further, they speak about the added need for counselor self-care due to exposure to death, destruction, and horrific accounts of what has occurred. An article on the

ACA's website (link below) speaks to Disaster Mental Health Counseling. The article was adapting information traditionally used for natural disasters to the COVID-19 fiasco. It offered several bits of advice for working in a strained environment (e.g., beginning with check ins using Maslow's Hierarchy of need, etc.).

<https://www.counseling.org/resources/practice-briefs/article/covid-19>

<https://www.nbcc.org/resources/nccs/newsletter/counseling-in-the-wake-of-a-disaster>

Bemak, F., & Chung, R. C. (2014). post-disaster group counseling: A multicultural perspective. In J. L. DeLucia-Waack, M. T. Riva & C. R. Kalodner (Eds.), *Handbook of group counseling & psychotherapy* (pp. 571-584). SAGE Publications, Incorporated.

<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781544308555.n45>