

Jeremy Gillentine—November 14, 2024

COUC710-- Discussion Six: Yalom, chapters 13-14 Group Procedures & Online Formats

### **Initial Question**

On page 552 the Yalom talks about writing a summary and sending it to the group participants.

He says he speaks to each participants contributions and what he said and in some instances what he wishes he had or had not said. Is this a good practice? Are there any ethical concerns about mailing or emailing this information? Are there any potential violations of confidentiality? What if this is sent to a shared email of the participant and their spouse? What if the participant leaves the email or letter open on their desk at work?

### **Response #1 Question**

Posted by Kelley Ryals—November 1, 2024, 6:26 PM

In chapter 13, structured exercises are discussed. It states explicitly that an exercise that is successfully structured will produce data and is discussed by Yalom and Leszcz (2020a). We have done this in our anger management group for men. We used the Cave In exercise and the result was interesting. Several of our group members are on probation for charges received due to violence and anger. Several of them thought that the more conservative or philanthropic individuals should be saved from the cave in, and several thought that they should be saved based on age, not on individual accomplishments both past and future. Two said the drug dealer should be saved, and others disagreed. How could the group leader help them move to acceptance of the opposite view and what do you think would be parts of the discussion?

Yalom, I. D., & Leszcz, M. (2020a). *The Theory and practice of group psychotherapy*. Hachette UK.

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I would be wondering internally if the one's seeking to save the drug dealers were legitimate in their comments or trying to make fun of the exercise (maybe they are dealers and are hoping to keep their business going). I would want the group to understand the values that were driving the varying ideals being represented by the options being put forward. Through the discussion I would hope we could find some points where there might be some alignment that could possibly be built upon to help draw them closer to an agreement of sorts. Many times, people in the type of group you describe (really people in general) have not been taught critical thinking skill but have been taught implicitly to be reactionary. I would hope to take the group on a small venture into the idea of critical thinking and ask something like, when thinking about the big picture, what is the goal or the desired future results you are hoping to be achieved when picking the options you have chosen? What or who will be benefitted by this desire being achieved? What difference do you hope to occur by your choice? Weinberg (2014) speaks to disagreements that occur in groups. Weinberg says, "The concrete task of the leader is to help both parties see the other's subjective experience, acknowledge the legitimacy of the different points of view..."

When the group can take on the stance of wanting to understand one another's viewpoint, they

should be on track to be able to move towards an agreement or at least have a better understanding of what separates them.

Weinberg, H. (2014). When a conflict erupts: The tasks of the group leader. *Group (New York, 1977)*, 38(1), 81-90. <https://doi.org/10.13186/group.38.1.0081>

Yalom, Irvin D.; Leszcz, Mlyn. *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy*. Basic Books. Kindle Edition.

## **Response #2 Question**

Kelley Woodburn—Posted November 3, 2024, 1:14 PM

Yalom references in chapter 13 how a group member will often place a higher value on either group therapy or individual therapy. A group member won't typically hold both experiences on the same value system. So, how would the group leader know this about the group member placing a higher value on their individual therapeutic work over group work? Does the group member devalue group therapy overtly/covertly?

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An interesting article by Marmarosh (2016) speaks to the need to adequately prepare a client for the group environment when they have been in individual counseling. Marmarosh after looking

back on an encounter, arrived at the necessity for a thorough intake session to determine the fitness to enter the group. Marmarosh said that the client being discussed came in and just as the individual counselor had stated was extremely likable and kind. The client had been having trouble with keeping relationships long-term. Once the client felt jaded, she determined the person had been lying about who they were and would terminate the relationship. The failure of the individual counselor or Marmarosh to pick up on how this would likely play out in group led to a boisterous encounter and the client leaving group and returning to only participating in the individual sessions. When Marmarosh attempted to collaborate with the individual counselor, he shut it down and said if his client does not bring it up, he would not make her talk about it. This is the long way of saying you may not know until it becomes blatantly obvious. In the scenario shared by Marmarosh, there was no observed evidence of an issue until a random discussion in the group of failures in various participants' relationships and talking about forgiving, understanding, working through it, etc. was more than the referred client could take and abruptly told them all off. Needless to say, the covert became very overt. It turned out the client was able to interact within her safe individual sessions without the fear of being challenged in this area. Her individual therapist said he had not seen this as if he had to witness it to have been so. As long as we work with people, we can only do the best we can and hope to continually grow and improve intentionally.

## Reference

Marmarosh, C. L. (2016). Can we collaborate? mistakes made when group and individual therapists ignore multiple realities. *Psychotherapy (Chicago, Ill.)*, 53(3), 320-324. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pst0000067>

Yalom, Irvin D.; Leszcz, Milyn. *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy*. Basic Books. Kindle Edition.