ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SOCIAL WORK WITH GROUPS
COMMISSION ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

GUIDELINES FOR CONTENT: Social Work Practice with Groups

These guidelines were prepared as recommendations to CSWE for the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Though they have not been adopted for inclusion in EPAS, they represent what AASWG believes should be required in social work curricula.

OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the generalist/foundation curriculum, students should be able to:

- Identify the legal, ethical, and value issues which are unique to working with groups
- Trace the development of group work as helping method within the social work profession
- Articulate the role of the group as a system of mutual aid for assisting individuals
- Distinguish between and specify the appropriate use of different group types
- Identify tasks associated with group formation
- Explain how sociocultural forces such as race, class, gender, and ethnicity, influence the group, its members, and group work practice
- Define the role of activity in group
- Identify interaction and communication patterns between members and between members and the group worker
- Identify different theories of stages of group development and characteristic group behavior
- Articulate the need for a simultaneous focus on individual members and the group as a whole
- Specify practice skills in the beginning, middle, and ending phases of group
• Evaluate the effectiveness of their group work intervention

CORE CONCEPTS & PRINCIPLES

Mutual aid orientation
• Group is made up of multiple helping relationships

Social worker’s role
• Foster members’ sense of commonality
• Help members achieve their individual goals through participation in group

Advantages of group membership
• Empowerment of members
• Social justice and social change
• Universality
• Mutual acceptance and demand

Sociocultural safety
• Member to member, worker to member, and worker to group interactions characterized by egalitarianism, respect for diversity and the uniqueness of individual members

Group Types
• Groups organized for different purposes

Group structure
• Reflects member needs, group purpose and type, and agency mandates

Role of Activity
• May be necessary to facilitate the group’s development and members’ growth

Group as a Social System
• Norms and roles

Stages of development
• Characteristics of collective and individual behavior in beginning, middle, and ending phase

Group Formation
• Contract with agency
• Selection/screening of members
Worker skills in the beginning, middle, and ending phases

- Clarifying role, purpose, and expectations
- Empathy, elaborating, clarification skills
- Sessional contracting and ending
- Connecting individual to group
- Monitoring member to member and member to worker interactions
- Dealing with taboo subjects
- Use of self
- Assisting members to end their relationships with one another and with worker