Social Group Work I, a second year, clinical practice course, is designed to educate the student for responsible social work practice with particular competence in the social group work method; it builds upon the knowledge and skills acquired in first year Foundations practice course, and on liberal arts content acquired in undergraduate Psychology and Sociology courses.

The social group work concentration provides students with the knowledge base to develop individual cognitive and behavioral change through small groups. Prevention and rehabilitative practice approaches are taught for dealing with individual social and psychological problems. Emphasis is also on using the group work method for enhancing normal individual growth and development in community and school settings. A major emphasis in the sequence is development of the professional self to assure the evolution of disciplined practice based on purpose, sanction, knowledge, values and skills.

The course is integrated with field learning through case presentations, group simulations and class discussion. Field practice is in a variety of clinical and community settings, such as mental health clinics, substance abuse facilities, hospitals, child welfare agencies, homeless shelters, domestic violence programs, community centers, public schools and settlement houses.

I. Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this 1st semester of a two-semester course, students will be able to:

1. Recognize the historical roots and evolution of group work.

2. Understand the positive and negative effects of groups throughout life on the social and psychological development of the individual and society.

3. Understand the variety of clinical and developmental groups that can be led in practice settings according to group purpose.

4. Understand the individual diagnosis, or assessment process in group work.

5. Understand and apply the major elements of the group work method of helping, including development of a common group purpose, engagement in a reciprocal interactive process, development of relationships, building of a mutual aid system and conscious use of self by the group worker.

6. Understand and apply the process of group formation in a social agency and the principles that pertain to group composition, selection and preparation of members.
7. Recognize the different stages of group development in terms of group and individual characteristics, tasks to be accomplished and the role of the group worker in each stage.

8. Apply social work values and ethics to group work practice

9. Work with oppressed and vulnerable populations.

10. Develop a body of values, knowledge and skills that can be applied to the formation and practice with different types of groups.

II. Instructional Methods:

Learning will occur through a variety of experiences and methods such as lecture, class discussion, group simulations and the integration of class and field experiences.

III. Texts

A. Required Texts:


B. Recommended Text


IV. Course Expectations and Grading

Students are expected to attend all classes and to be on time. Class participation is important and there is an expectation that students will do the required reading. 45% each for both assignments and 10% for class participation, attendance and completion of assignments on time. Grades are largely based primarily on written assignments.

PLAGIARISM

Students should remember that the School will not condone plagiarism in any form and will sanction acts of plagiarism. A student who presents someone else’s work as his or her own work is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking and writing. Plagiarism occurs when a student directly copies another's work without citation; when a student paraphrases major aspects of another's work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also plagiarism to use the ideas and/or work of another student and present them as your own. It is not plagiarism to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept as a reaction to someone else's work; however, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. Any student who can be shown to have plagiarized any part of any assignment in this course will FAIL the course and will be referred to the Associate Dean automatically for disciplinary action which may include expulsion.
HIPAA ALERT

In line with the new HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your work, will need to be de-identified. What this means is that any information that would allow another to identify the person needs to be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious things like names and birthdates but may also contain other information that is so unique to the person that it will allow for identification, including diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

V. Assignments:

Assignment I: The Group Work Log.
Covers Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

In the log you are asked to include your ongoing reactions to class discussion, required course readings and field work experiences. Write your entries at least weekly throughout the semester and date each entry. Type your entries on one side of the page. Logs will be submitted three times during the semester.

Here are some guidelines for the log:

• Each log should include discussion of key concepts from a required reading.

• Make connections between theories, concepts and ideas and your practice experiences.

• When you start an entry with your own experiences, consider testing them out against required readings or references from the bibliography.

• Formulate your own questions and ideas about classroom or field work content and express them even when you can only be tentative and speculative.

• Permit yourself to make mistakes and to express them in your writing.

Logs will be read only by the instructor who will actively respond to your ideas and experiences with comments and questions. The log serves as a means for the instructor to have an individual relationship with each student.


Assignment II: Group Assessment
Covers Learning Objectives: 3, 4, 6, 9.

The assessment is to be carried out with one group you are presently leading. It should include an analysis of group: purpose, social interaction; socio/emotional ties between the members; functional and dysfunctional roles of group members; norms that help or hinder the progress of the group; decision making processes; how the group deals with conflict, level of group cohesion and stage of group development.
The assessment should include examples to describe group processes. Individual group members should be referred to (anonymously), particularly in describing member roles and social interaction.

Reference should be made to the group work literature.

After you have concluded the assessment indicate what changes in group process are needed to better accomplish group purpose and goals.

An outline to guide the assessment is attached.

The assignment is due:

VI. Unit I. Introduction to Course (Session 1)

Major Learning Themes
1. Course objectives, content, assignments and grading.
2. Expectations for student learning.
3. Student interests and expectations.
4. Identification of the positive and negative effects of groups throughout life on the psychological and social development of the individual and upon society.

Required Readings:


Unit II. The Evolution of Group Work (Sessions 2,3,4)
Covers Learning Objectives: 1,3,4.

Major Learning Themes
1. Historical development of group work within the social work profession.
2. Humanistic values and democratic norms.
3. Working with diverse populations.
4. Major elements that characterize the group work method.
5. Role of the social group worker.

Required Readings:


Shulman, L. (1999). The group as a mutual aid system. (Chapter 8).


Unit III. Forming a Group in an Agency - (Sessions 4,5) Covers Learning Objectives 3,5.

Major Learning Themes
1. Concepts of social system and agency function in thinking about group services.
2. Purposes and diversity of groups in social work practice.
3. Criteria for deciding when groups are the modality of choice in social work practice.
4. Issues in working with the staff and agency administrative systems to implement group plans.
5. Selecting the type of group based upon client needs.
6. Serving diverse populations through group work.

Required Readings:


Unit IV. Group Composition: Selection and Preparation of Members (Session 7) Covers learning objective: 5.

Major Learning Themes
1. Principles that apply to group composition.
2. Differential process of assessment of individual members in socialization, treatment and task groups.
3. How information on individuals is used and gathered.
4. Content of group meetings
5. Preparation of group members

Required Readings:


Unit V. Group Development - (Session 8)
Covers Learning Objective: 6.

**Major Learning Themes**
1. Studies of group development.
2. A model of group development.
3. Variations in stage of development with different populations.

**Required Readings:**


Unit VI. Stage I. The Beginning Stage of Group Development (Sessions 9,10)
Covers Learning Objectives: 6,7.

**Major Learning Themes**
1. Group characteristics in the beginning stage.
2. Tasks to be accomplished.
3. Role of the worker in the beginning stage.
4. Elements of a working agreement.

**Required Readings:**


Klein, A. F.  Effective group work.  A group begins (pp. 67-80).

Northern, H.  Stage I: Inclusion - Orientation; Stage II: Uncertainty - Exploration.  (Chapter 12 & 13).


Shulman, L. (1999).  The beginning phase with groups (Chapter 10); First group sessions some variations (Chapter 11).


### Unit VII.  Stage II: Power and Control - (Session 11,12)
Covers Learning Objectives: 6, 7.

### Major Learning Themes

1. Group characteristics
2. Attitudes toward group conflict
3. Role of the worker in the conflict phase
4. Principles for working with group conflict
5. Relevance of ethnic, gender and age factors in this stage.

### Required Readings:

Bernstein, S. Conflict in group work (Chapter 3). In Exploration in group work.


Unit VIII.  Stage III: Mutuality and Work (Session 13,14)


1. Group characteristics
2. Problem solving process
3. Work with individuals
4. Use of program activities
5. Group assessment

Required Readings:


Hartford, M. E. (1971). Deliberation and decision-making in the group; Cohesion. In Groups in social work (Chapter 8 & 9).


Shulman, L. (1999). The work phase; Working with the individual in the group; Working with the group as client (Chapter 12, 13 & 14).

Wurzweiler School of Social Work

Outline for Group Assessment

The following concepts are useful in understanding how the group as a whole is functioning. The questions help to focus the assessment.

Group Purpose

Purpose expresses the common need problem or interest that brings the members together and how the group will be of help. It is a process of clarification that continues throughout group development.

A. Is the group purpose clear to the worker, agency and members?

2. Is there congruence between the worker and members perception of group purpose?

3. Have the members shared their goals and expectations as part of the shaping of group purpose

4. Does the group continue to refer to its purpose or has the purpose stated at the beginning, been forgotten?

Social Interaction

Through interaction the members influence each others attitudes and behavior and accomplish group goals.

A. Is there active participation by the members or is the discussion dominated by certain members?

B. Is the members communicating with one another or does the interaction tend to be between the members and the worker?

C. Do the members share their conscious thoughts and feelings about the group or do they avoid open and honest communication with the worker and one another?

D. Do the members listen to one another or are interruptions prevalent? If interruptions are occurring who interrupts whom?

Relationship

The positive and negative feelings the members hat-a for one another affect the group process and the achievement of individual group goals.

1. Are members regarded favorably by the group or are there individuals who are rejected?
2. What factors influence the attraction and repulsion among members?

3. Do members recognize their interdependence and reach out to help one another?

4. Do members regard one another objectively or do stereotypes exist based on such characteristics as: race, religion, gender, social class and appearance.

Members perform various informal and formal roles in their interaction with each other. Informal roles express individual dual needs as well as the expectations of others while formal roles are designated positions related to the purpose and structure of the group.

1. What are the variety of informal roles performed by individual members?

2. Are the roles constructive for the individual in the role and for the group or are there roles that are destructive for the individual and the group?

3. Are any individuals stereotyped in their roles by the group so that it is hard to alter their role behavior?

4. Are there formal or informal roles needed by the group to achieve its goals that are not being performed?

Norms express standards of behavior to which the members of a group expect one another to meet. Norms differ from rules which are externally imposed on the group by the worker or agency. They develop from social interaction and provide stability and control. Norms may help or hinder the group. The following questions express humanistic values and democratic norms providing the foundation for the practice of social group work.

1. Does the group value the contributions of all of its members regardless of such factors as race, class, status age, gender?

2. Is there a norm for inclusion of different kinds of people and opinions rather than for exclusion?

3. Does the group allow expression and experimentation with new ideas and behaviors?

4. Are member interactions based on caring and helping, or do members avoid taking responsibility for one another?

5. Do members take responsibility for the group through collective decision making or is responsibility avoided and decisions made by the worker or a few members?

Conflict

Differences amongst the members are a normal and natural part of the group process and essential for group development and change. The ways in which members recognize and manage conflict is crucial to group functioning and survival.

1. Does the group avoid dealing with conflict or are differences recognized and accepted as beneficial to the group?

2. Does the group allow for a full and open discussion of differences or is there a tendency toward premature resolution of the conflict?

3. Are the ideas and opinions of all group members solicited in the resolution of conflict?
4. Is there sufficient closure to insure that the conflict is satisfactorily resolved by the members?

**Group Cohesion**

Cohesion refers to the attraction the members have for one another, the worker and the group as an entity. The more cohesive the group the greater is its influence on the members. The following attributes are signs of group cohesion.

1. Regularity-of attendance and punctuality predominate, especially in groups in which membership is voluntary.
2. Members feel that they belong, as evidenced by knowing who are members and differentiating themselves from nonmembers.
3. Members increase their expressions of "we" feelings, symbolizing identification of members with each other and with the group entity.
4. Relationships among members become accepting, interdependent, and intimate.
5. Members become highly invested in their participation in the content of the group experience.
6. Members express verbally their satisfaction with being a member of the group and with the way it operates.
7. The social climate is characterized by spontaneity, informality, and appropriate self-disclosure.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

SWK 6023  
Social Group Work I  

HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF SOCIAL GROUP WORK


**KNOWLEDGE BASE FOR SOCIAL GROUP WORK PRACTICE**


PRE-GROUP PLANNING AND GROUP FORMATION


**BEGINNING STAGE**


MIDDLE STAGE


TERMINATION STAGE


PRACTICE WITH DIFFERENT POPULATIONS

Adolescents


**Children**


**Elderly**


Einstein, G. (1980). What does life mean to us now that we are no longer young?: A series of group discussions at the Southwest Seniors' Hospitality Center. *Social Work With Groups*, 3(2), 65-74.


*Ethnic Diversity*


Mentally Ill


CO-LEADERSHIP


**TYPE OF GROUP**

**Psychotherapy Groups**


**Mutual Aid, support, self Help Groups**


USE OF PROGRAM AND ACTIVITY


**Task Oriented Groups: Administrative And Social Action Groups**


**Time Limited Groups**


**Developmental, Socialization, Psycho-educational Groups**


Open Ended Groups


