

Group Reflection Paper #3
Bree Adams

Southern Adventist University
Advanced Clinical Group Psychotherapy
Professor Baker
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Experiential

Going into this last group practice I was nervous because I had a feeling that I would have to facilitate one of the practice sessions. I was right! This made me nervous because I do not have any confidence in my skills as a facilitator as well as being very uncomfortable with conflict. In addition, I feel that all my classmates have superior skills and are on their way to becoming amazing social workers whereas I downgrade my skills unrealistically low-most definitely a negative habit I need to work on.

As the group session started, I got into character and things started out smoothly. I went through explaining the activity that we were going to do and gained confidence as it was going well. However, as soon as we started talking through and processing the activity, conflict arose, and I felt helpless to mediate between the group members. My anxiety increased and I struggled with knowing how much to let the group members banter it out and when to step in and draw them back into the purpose of that session. I felt as though I had completely lost the group and wanted to just give up. After the allotted time had passed, I asked my classmates and mentor how to know when to step in and when to let them banter it out. The class felt that I had not let it go too far before cutting them off and drawing it back in. It was interesting to see the difference in how I felt the session went and how my classmates and mentor felt the session went.

I also got to experience being a group member for the other practice group session. There was quite a lot of conflict in that session as well and I struggled to focus. I noticed that whenever conflict came up and things started to get “heated”, I tended to zone out and my body wanted to just completely block out what was happening within the room. This made it difficult to feel

present as a group member and able to contribute to the discussion. As a group member, I felt that I was more focused on staying zoned into the present and was unable to experience the here and now of the group development and group cohesion.

Academic

Both group practice sessions that we did were in the storming phase. The group members felt very comfortable with each other, and a lot of conflict came up as a result. I felt that the group sessions were a mix of group members trying to attain power and control and the group members no longer caring about what other people thought of them or what they said. While this is considered growth in the group, it made it difficult to get through the exercises we were practicing.

While Jacy was facilitating, I noticed that when conflict arose, she encouraged the group members to explore their feelings thoroughly and was able to state her observations in a cautious, respectful way. There was a time where a group member accused her of playing favorites and always attacking her. She was able to avoid taking the group members' comments personally and instead respond with empathy and providing clarity for the situation. Jacy used therapeutic factors of imparting information, imitative behavior, and existential factors. In addition, she was very good at circling back to make sure each group member was heard and had ample opportunity to share.

While I was facilitating the group, I feel that I did a good job at noticing body language and small behaviors that signaled that the group member did not fully agree or had something they wanted to share. I did my best to give each group member the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings. However, this was difficult at times as the group members got loud and

fixed on their conflict. In those moments, it was hard for me to be able to draw them back in as my voice was not as loud as theirs. During the session, I was able to impart information to the group members and instill hope. Overall, I feel that this was good experience for me and helped me realize just how important it is for me to get more comfortable with dealing with conflict in my personal life as well as in a group therapy session.