

Group Therapy Transcription

Getting Started

Therapist: (00:02)

Hey guys, welcome to our group meeting today. I'm Brianna, as you guys may know, and I'm your facilitator for this therapy session. Basically, my role in this is just to help you guys feel comfortable and open up and make sure that we're all connecting and getting the most out of this session that we can get. We're doing everything online as you can see because of all the things going on right now, so things may be a little bit different, but we're just going to kind of try to adapt to that and do the best we can. So basically, first of all, I want to get to know you guys and go over some of the ... We're going to make some rules and expectations that we want out of this group and then we're going to do a couple of activities today, and then just really talk about some of the deeper things that are going on with our issues today. So first of all, I want to get to know you guys.

Comment: When getting started in a group meeting, it is important to set a positive tone and to be open about the upcoming meeting. I introduced myself and my role with the group members and made sure to let them know that I was there to make them comfortable and understand what to get out of the meeting. I explained about things being online due to current issues. I went over the agenda for the day to allow them to know what to expect. I also allowed time for group members to get to know each other and to lighten the mood. The one thing that I could have done differently when introducing myself is that I could have told them I am here if they have any questions. I should have also emphasized that the group is their group and I am just here to help them process the information and feelings as they come up. I should have introduced the purpose of the group sooner (when introducing myself) and discussed how many times we were going to meet as well.

Correction: "Hey everyone, welcome to our first group meeting! I'm Brianna and I will be your facilitator for each of our therapy sessions over the next six weeks. As you may know, this group is to help individuals who have suffered a traumatic event to cope with their feelings and develop a support system. My role in these sessions is to help you all feel comfortable in opening up about your situations and feelings, and to make sure that you are getting the most out of these sessions. This group is your group to control and fashion in the way you need, but I am here if you have any questions. As you can see, we are doing everything online because of all the things going on in the world right now, so things may be a little different. We are going to just try to adapt and do the best we can, and I am sure we will still get just as much out of our sessions together! So the agenda for today is to introduce ourselves, go over some rules and expectations we have for this group, do a couple activities, and then just talk about some of the deeper issues we are facing. Is that alright with you? Alright, so first of all I want to get to know you all! (goes into round).

Purpose

Therapist: (01:17)

As you guys may know, this is a group therapy session for issues with trauma. All of us that are here today have been through some sort of traumatic event that has affected us in different ways. And we're here to support each other and to kind of work through that trauma to be able to function at our optimum.

Comment: I think I described the purpose of the group well in this session. I should have explained it sooner but discussed that in the previous section. I should have also added that there are different types of trauma and how we need to remember that everyone handles trauma in different ways. This would encourage the clients to be respectful of each other and not downplay certain events that happened to others.

Correction: "As you guys may know, this is a group therapy session for issues with trauma. All of us that are here today have been through some sort of traumatic event that has affected us in different ways. I just want to let you all know that there are different types of trauma that we may have faced. Everyone processes and handles traumatic events in different ways, and we should remember to continue to respect each other and not downplay our other group members trauma if we feel it is different from ours. We are here to support each other and to work through each of our trauma so that we can function at our optimum".

Therapist: (07:04)

Next, we're going to talk about some of the rules for this group. I know Alan shared a really good one about giving everybody the ability to talk and being respectful of that. I will say one thing, I know that it's online, so it's hard to make eye contact and everything, but just try to be as focused as possible on the person that's talking so that we can show respect to each other along those lines. Are there any other rules that you guys want to have for this group?

Comment: I was able to address maintaining eye contact. I allowed group members to come up with some of their own rules rather than just telling them a bunch of rules to follow. I also emphasized being online, which is a situational thing that needed to be addressed.

Correction: No change

Allison: (07:46)

And we don't judge each other.

Alan: (07:49)

I think being on time is important as well.

Nora: (08:04)

And just being supportive and not judging others.

Therapist: (08:11)

Those are very good rules. It is also good to remember that this is a judgment-free zone. As you've heard now, we've all been through these very traumatic things and so everybody deals with these things differently and we want to be able to be supportive of each other without judgment for the way that we deal with these things. Along those lines, I would also like to mention confidentiality. What we say in this group should be kept confidential, that means not to share it with your friends or anybody outside of this group. It is very personal information so we don't want to spread that around. Just like you wouldn't want the group members talking about these situations to other people, we don't want to do that for your other group members either. Okay. Everybody in agreement with that?

Comment: I brought up again that everyone handles trauma differently and we would want to be supportive of that. I should have talked about that with the purpose of the group instead though. When talking about confidentiality, I forgot to mention that I would need to report if anyone said they were going to hurt themselves or anyone else, or if there was child or elder abuse involved. I did ask if they were in agreement and received verbal confirmation.

*Correction: *Same as above but add during confidentiality discussion* "Although we want to keep everything in this group confidential, as a mandated reporter, I will need to take action if someone states they intend to harm themselves or someone else, or if there is mention of child or elder abuse. Is that alright with you all?"*

Focus

Therapist: (05:14)

Those anxious moments and everything do. And I'm sure we can all agree. Do you guys agree that you have some sort of trigger as well? Yeah, so with traumatic events, it's a very common thing to have a certain thing that triggers those memories and everything. Thank you for sharing, Becky.

Comment: I should not have said that I'm sure we could all agree. I should have discussed what triggers were and talked about her feelings more. She did discuss her feelings later on, but maybe should have asked here first. This would have helped Yalom's factors of imparting information as well as universality. I did use Yalom's technique of universality though by normalizing her issue.

Correction: "Thank you for sharing Becky. It is very common for individuals to have some sort of trigger when they experience a traumatic event. This trigger somehow reminds us of that traumatic event and causes us to have some sort of emotional or even physical reaction. Sometimes we know what our triggers are, but other times we may experience the symptoms of the trauma but not be able to pinpoint the trigger. Does everyone else know what their specific trigger may be?"

Therapist: (06:36)

I know it's difficult to open up about these experiences. And after hearing everybody's situation, I think you can kind of see some similarities, possibly having nightmares and certain triggers that cause you to have emotions again about the event. And so, hopefully, we can work through some of those together as a group.....

Therapist: (16:44)

Okay. Are there any particular triggers that cause that loneliness to be there?

Nora: (16:51)

Right now, just trying to go to sleep, he's not there next to me, so every time before I go to sleep, it's a reminder that he's gone.

Comment: I think I summarized the discussion to this point well, but I should have again discussed their emotions more. I have a hard time deepening the focus but should have tried to get them to express their emotions with those triggers.

*Correction: *Same as above but add* "So what are some of the emotions you all experience with these triggers? I know a couple of you have mentioned loneliness and anxiety, but do you have any physical symptoms that happen? What exactly happens when you face one of your triggers?"*

Allison: (26:50)

Just punch them in the face.

Therapist: (26:55)

Probably not the best idea. You've brought some good coping skills and some not so great coping skills. We'll talk about that a little later. But, yes, I could see that, just somebody to check on you, basically. So, like Alan said, maybe we can share some phone numbers and we can check on each other and see. And also, we'll have these group sessions once a week for the next six weeks, so that might be able to help to check-in with each other too, some, and we'll see how we're doing.

Comment: I was a bit blunt with my response to her punching comment. I should have been a bit more empathetic. Also, I mentioned coping skills in passing, but really should have delved into those more instead of brushing it to the side for later. I need to stop trying to give advice and turning the questions back on the group more.

Correction: "So what you mentioned there, Allison, is a coping skill. We can have healthy and unhealthy coping skills when dealing with situations. Punching people is one that we would categorize in the unhealthy coping skills. What are some coping skills that might be healthier in this situation?"

Nora: (15:13)

So, I went ahead and included some words like anxious, fear, memories, overwhelmed, scared,

lonely. And those are just some of the words I struggled with every night before going to sleep. So, the first thing that came to my head was a big dark cloud that just follows me everywhere.

Therapist: (15:39)

Okay. Yeah. You mentioned a lot of those feelings words like, anxiousness, and fear, and overwhelming. That's very insightful and I'm sure you guys can relate some to those feelings as well. And I can see how that would make it very difficult to sleep at night, thinking about all those things. Is there a particular one of those feelings that's worse than the others or more ...

Nora: (16:17)

I think just ... I feel lonely, just, I lost my partner. I no longer have a husband and it's hard to function on a regular basis. I feel lonely at work. I feel lonely when I come home. I feel lonely before I go to sleep. So, lonely is the main word that I could use to describe myself.

Comment: This was in relation to processing the exercise we did of drawing your trauma. I was able to acknowledge Nora's skill for expressing her feelings and bring that back to the group. I also think it was good to try to narrow down the strongest feeling she was experiencing, so that we could deal with one topic at a time.

Correction: No change

Alan: (20:44)

Powerless. I worked the in the field with addiction and I'm powerless. I cannot help my daughter.

Therapist: (20:55)

Yeah. I liked that you used that term too, the feeling of powerlessness. Can you guys kind of agree that that's something you guys feel too, kind of the out of control and not able to control your life or situation, and that makes you feel kind of empty?

Comment: I acknowledged his term with the powerlessness, but I should have gone into it more. Discussed how that feeling of powerlessness affects his life. I also said it may make them feel empty, but he never said that so I should have asked more.

Correction: "I liked that you used that term, the feeling of powerlessness. Can everybody else here agree that's something you all feel as well at times? The feeling that you are out of control of your life and/or situations? How do those feelings affect you? Are there other feelings that may come with that feeling of powerlessness?"

Allison: (12:13)

It just makes you feel you're not worth living and that's just really where I'm at with life.

Therapist: (12:20)

Okay. So it makes you feel very lonely and kind of like not having a purpose in life. Is that kind of what you're saying?

Allison: (12:32)

Yeah. I have no hope for the future at all. I just feel alone and lame, kind of just a nobody.

Therapist: (12:45)

Thank you for sharing that. Loneliness is a very intense emotion to go through. And, are there certain things that cause you to feel more lonely, like certain events or anything?

Comment: This discussion is the part that I am the most upset with myself and ashamed about. I was so focused on meeting the criteria for the video I did not notice the urgent need to ask her if she had any intentions of hurting herself. The lack of hope for the future sounds like she may be suicidal, and I definitely should have addressed that! If she was, I would have needed to take appropriate steps to either have her go to the ER or admitted to a psychiatric facility for acute suicidal ideations and intentions. I'm honestly not sure if I would ask her those questions right at this time of the conversation or just tell her that I needed to meet her after the group to talk about it, but either way the conversation would go something like this...

Correction: "So you said you feel like life is not worth living and you have no hope for the future. We care about those feelings of hopelessness that you mentioned, and I need to ask, are you intending to harm yourself? Do you have a plan to harm yourself? Have you been seeing another therapist or someone individually about your feelings? I would like to talk with you individually after group about those feelings more in depth if you are alright with that".

Becky: (17:48)

This is the way I feel every time I think about me going over a bridge and the trauma that. I cry. I want to scream. My head feels like it's on fire, those kinds of emotions.

Therapist: (18:06)

Okay. So, you're just very, would you say it's more a sense of fear or some anger?

Becky: (18:23)

Frustration. Yeah, a little bit of all. I'm very angry at my friend for what he did. But also the fact that it has created this fear in me, the phobia of wanting to cross the bridge. And so, every time I even get close, I just have this overwhelming feeling of needing to scream, and to cry and to pull my hair out, and all the angry, hurtful things.

Therapist: (18:52)

Yeah. So, the bridge kind of causes all these different emotions to come up when you get near a bridge and it kind of reminds you of that event.

Comment: I should have discussed her anger at her friend more. That seems to be the underlying issue, but she mentioned "fear" and "frustration" so much that it got blended in with the other emotions. I should have dug deeper to find out which emotion really was the main factor causing her issues.

Correction: “So something you mentioned that stood out to me is that you said you are angry at your friend for what he did. What are you angry about? How do you think that anger might tie into some of your other emotions and fear of bridges?”

Alan: (19:36)

I get to the point where I'm trying to control things. My daughter didn't die from this, but she's still out there and still using, and anytime the phone rings I'm thinking that's the call. I'm afraid to answer my phone. But I remember to give it to God, and then I'll be okay for a little while. But then I somehow I want to take it back, and worry, and I don't know, it's a constant struggle I have. But it will consume me like a black hole. It consumes our matter. That's how I feel.

Therapist: (20:09)

So, basically, that fear of what could happen and of repeating the accident and with a worse outcome, what kind of drives your life and quality of life, basically, is what you're saying?

Comment: I think I did well on reflecting and clarifying the issue here. But I should have again dug a bit deeper and discussed some of those emotions. I could have used hypothetical situations here such as what if he did get the call? This hypothetical situation could allow him to get to the root of what he may be avoiding and how that fear is affecting his life.

Correction: “So it sounds like you are saying that the fear of what could happen with your daughter with a worse outcome seems to drive your life decisions and decreases your quality of life. Is that correct? So let's have a hypothetical situation right now...what if you did get the call that your daughter had overdosed again and did not make it? How would you handle that situation?”

Therapist: (21:20)

So, I know it's hard to open up about these kind of situations and everything. And I just want to be able to check-in with you guys as well right now and just after we've discussed some of these things and see how you're doing, how you're feeling right now. So, how are you guys feeling with this exercise?

Comment: I was able to check in with their feelings during the exercise but should have checked in at the beginning of the exercise and after the exercise. That way, we could have a baseline to compare.

*Correction: *after asking how they are feeling before the exercise, then do the exercise* “So I asked how you were feeling before we started this exercise. Now that we have finished the exercise, how are you feeling about everything? How has this exercise been helpful or not helpful?”*

Therapist: (22:17)

Okay. These traumatic experiences are very ... They cause some really deep-seated emotions in us that really affect our lives. So, it's not going to change overnight. That's not how people work basically. Unfortunately. It would be very nice, but it will take some time to process through some of this stuff. But hopefully, we can slowly be able to mend that.

Comment: I know I need to mention this in the conversation so they are aware things aren't just going to change overnight, but I could have said it differently. I also should not have given them possible false hope at the end saying we will be able to mend that. It is important that they know they may never be fully "recovered" from the trauma, but can still get back to a functional life and be happy.

Correction: "I know these traumatic experiences are very difficult to open up about and I appreciate you all being so open about your feelings. These experiences can cause some really deep-seated emotions that we may not even be aware about and can really affect our lives. Because the emotions are so deep and affect our lives in such large ways, it will not be able to be changed overnight. It takes time, patience, support, and awareness to be able to process our emotions and recover from the situation. Sometimes, we may always have some of those emotions, but we are trying to be able to improve our quality of life and become functional again.

Rounds

Therapist: (01:44)

So we're going to go around and just say our name and the reason we're here in the group, and then one group rule that you want for the next six sessions that we have together. Does that sound good to everybody? Just say your name and then one expectation you have from the group and what brings you to this group therapy.

Comment: I should not have said "rule" and then change it to "expectation". These are two different things and I should have clarified since it was confusing. I should have just had them say their name, the reason they are in group therapy, and what they expect to gain from group therapy.

Correction: "So now we're going to go around and say three things about ourselves. First, I want you to say your name. Then, I would like to you mention the reason you are in group therapy, or the traumatic event that brought you here. And last, I would like to you discuss one expectation that you have from this group therapy.

Exercises

Therapist: (09:50)

All right. I want you to take your piece of paper and a pen and I want you to draw what trauma

looks like to you. And I'll give you just a few minutes. When you're done, just kind of like raise your hand or something so I can know that you're finished. And we'll regroup in just a few minutes, okay?

Comment: I think I described this activity well. I should mentioned more what the drawing could be, or if they were more comfortable, they could write something. That way they would have options since not everyone does well with drawing.

Correction: "All right. I want you to take your piece of paper and a pen and draw what trauma looks like to you. It can be anything that you feel, or the event itself, or triggers, or just anything that you think of when you think of trauma. For those of you who do not want to draw, you can write a word/words that you think of with trauma. Once you are done, I want you to raise your hand, so I know you are done. Then we will regroup in a few minutes. Is that alright with you?"

Therapist: (11:26)

All right. So we're going to go through it one by one and show our pictures. I'd like you to talk about what you drew and why you drew what you drew.

Allison: (11:47)

I drew, I don't know if you can see it, it's a box and a tiny person and it's all dark because trauma to me feels like you're, especially what I've been through, I don't know if everybody can relate, but I feel like you're trapped in a tiny box and no one is with you, and you're all alone, and it's dark, and you just feel like the walls are closing in. And, sorry, Becky, for what I'm about to say. But it just makes you feel you're not worth living and that's just really where I'm at with life.

Therapist: (13:36)

Okay. So you said the holidays are a big trigger, but everyday kind of has that loneliness. Do you have any other support or anything?

Comment: This is an example of one of the members' drawings I was able to process with them. I talked about support, but I should have focused more on her emotions. And again, I should have discussed suicidal intentions for safety.

Correction: "So first of all, you said life doesn't feel worth living, and I need to ask, do you have a plan to hurt yourself?" (if no...) "So you said you feel like you're alone in a tiny box and the walls are closing in. What are some of the feelings you get with that image?"

Therapist: (23:19)

I'm glad that you guys can feel like you can share with each other and help each other like that. That's great to be able to do that. Well, I'm glad that you guys got a little bit out of that exercise and were able to see maybe that everybody has very different experiences, but some of the emotions can still be the same. Some of the things you're going through might be similar even though the traumatic event is very different for each of you.

Comment: I think I did well discussing this with them, but I should have gone deeper into the discussion. Maybe talked more about the emotions as well rather than things just being different for different people.

Correction: "I'm glad you can share with each other and help each other out. That can be very beneficial when working through your challenges. So I'm glad you were able to get some insight from that activity. As we discussed, everyone can have vastly different experiences, but the emotions experienced may be the same. Each of us handles trauma differently, but at the core, we have the same fears, anxiety, anger, and loneliness. Hopefully this exercise has allowed you to see what the deeper emotion is with your traumatic event as well as be supportive and understanding of each other."

Therapist: (24:00)

So next, I'd like to do another exercise. But this time, it's going to be more of a discussion together. Because of these traumatic things, and I know I touched on it a little bit with Allison, but there are sometimes that these support systems, support systems can really help or hinder your progress in any kind of situation. And so, what are some of the things, first of all, do you guys have anybody else in your support system that has been beneficial to you? And if so, what are some of the things that they do? And if you don't have anybody in your life that's really a support, how would you want them to support you? How do you want somebody to really support that need for you?

Comment: I didn't really like this exercise after I tried it. I had an exercise for them to do before we had to do zoom stuff, but it was more of a dyad thing so I could not do it on zoom. I wanted to focus on coping skills but thought I could do so through discussing support groups. It ended up being way off and the responses were not quite what I was expecting. So first, I should have had them write the stuff on a piece of paper to make it more solidified in their minds. Then I should have asked only one question instead of several, because I know it was confusing to follow. And last, I would have focused more on coping skills rather than support systems (which is kind of what I was trying to get at, but in a round about way).

Correction: "So next, I'd like to do another exercise. For this exercise, I want you to use the same piece of paper and pen you did for the last exercise and flip it over. Now I want you to write two healthy coping skills you have and one unhealthy coping skill you have. Now remember, this is coping skills you actually use right now, not what you wish you would use. When you are done writing those down, raise your hand so I know you are done. In a few minutes, we will regroup and discuss what we wrote. Does that make sense to everyone?"

Therapist: (25:30)

So, Allison, you're saying that you'd like somebody to be able to just be there with you, is that what you're saying, and to just do things together?

Allison: (25:41)

Yeah. But most people don't really want to be friends with someone who has a pimp for a boss.

Therapist: (25:46)

Yeah. I can see how that would be difficult. But, everybody has needs deep down. And right now, we're just trying to see what kind of ways we would want to be supported and how your peers here can act as a support system for you.

Comment: I should have expounded on what I meant by "needs". She kinda threw me for a loop when she said she had a pimp, so I was caught off guard. I also don't know if I should have discussed safety in this situation? But I know was trying to be culturally sensitive to her job and lifestyle. I should have asked her more about if she has any other supports or how she deals with her trauma right now. Again, I should have focused more on coping skills instead of going a round-about way by discussing support groups.

Correction: "I understand that sometimes, when we have certain people in our lives, it is hard to make other friends. Everyone has social needs and it is very hard to move past traumatic events without a support system. That is part of what this group therapy is all about....to support each other. Do you have any other support system besides your boss? What about coworkers or family? How do you deal with your trauma right now? Also, are you safe in your situation right now?"

Nora: (26:23)

Maybe just having my family check on me or go out and have coffee with them here and there just so I won't feel lonely all the time.

Therapist: (26:33)

Okay. Do you have family members that do check on you?

Nora: (26:40)

I do, but I feel like they're treating the situation ... They don't want to talk about it, so they don't check on me as often as they used to.

Comment: She was saying she wants family to check on her, so I was asking if she does actually have family that check on her. I should have again discussed how coping skills play in.

Correction: "So you said you would like for family to check on you, but does that happen? What kind of other ways do you help your trauma? Do you do anything on your own to help yourself when you feel scared or anxious?"

Alan: (27:31)

It helps me by helping others and getting outside of myself, like sharing the numbers, if the other people are calling and in kind of a dark place, it helps me get out of my own place by helping others.

Therapist: (27:46)

Okay. So basically, being a support for other people helps support you as well.

Comment: Alan's answer was very insightful and he mentioned not only a support group, but a good coping skill. I should have expanded on that for the other group members as well.

Correction: "So you're saying that by being a support for other people, it helps you as well, correct? There is a lot of research out there that shows that helping others actually does help regulate our emotions. It can help us feel joy, a sense of accomplishment, increased self-esteem, acceptance, and many other things. It can also temporarily help take our mind off the issue at hand by being busy with helping others. This is a good coping skill to have on your road to recovering from trauma.

Becky: (28:03)

Well, I have to take meds to help me be able to cross bridges. And I do you have a sister that I can call at any time. She kind of lets me talk through it. So I think the thing that helps me the most is having people to be able to talk through the ... So, I usually have my sister, I can pick up the phone and call her when that happens.

Therapist: (29:13)

Okay. Well, that's good that you have somebody you can talk to. And I think from what I hear you saying, the best support for you is to be able to just talk it out, just to have somebody to be able to talk about those feelings and emotions with.

Comment: I think what I said was good, but I should have expanded more on coping skills again. I should have also discussed how medications can be helpful in some situations, but also discuss how substance use and illicit use of prescriptions can be harmful.

*Correction: *Same as above but add* "Talking things out with someone you trust is another good coping skill that can be used to help process your trauma. Sometimes, just hearing ourselves say things out loud helps us come to terms with it, when we may have been trying to keep it bottled inside. I also know you mentioned you use medications. Medications may also be very helpful in dealing with trauma when prescribed and monitored by a physician. But, using substances such as illicit prescriptions, alcohol, and illicit drugs can be more harmful than helpful to the situation. The point of using medications from a physician is that he/she can monitor your progress and adjust as needed. When we try to self-medicate, many times we end up just trying to cover up the problem and it slowly gets worse over time.*

Therapist: (29:27)

So, that's great. Now that you guys have seen some of the different ways that we want to be

supported in our efforts, maybe we can incorporate some of those. And we also know what to look for from others as well if needed. All right, well, thank you guys for sharing that.

Comment: I feel like a broken record, but again, I would have discussed coping skills more. I would have talked about incorporating coping skills on our own as well as getting support from others.

Correction: "I'm glad you were able to share your strategies for coping in this exercise. Hopefully we can use all the coping skills shared today in our own lives to help get through our trauma. We can also look to others for support, whether it is our families, friends, physicians, or here in group therapy. It is important to be able to be open about our emotions in order to process through them.

Yalom

Allison: (03:25)

I just want to be able to feel safe again, I guess I just grew up in foster care and I've been in and out of houses for a long time. And I'm grown now, but I just hate that on holidays and stuff I don't have a family to go to.

Therapist: (04:02)

Yeah. That sounds like a really tough thing to go through. And I appreciate you sharing that though. And, we'll try to work through this together

Comment: I think I did well in instilling hope in her. I acknowledged that what she is going through is tough, but that we will work together to get through it. This also creates group cohesiveness by saying that we as a group will work through this together.

Correction: No change

Therapist: (14:14)

There are a lot of different ways that people cope with these traumatic events and I'm glad that you were able to seek out our group and hopefully, we can help be that support for you and be there for emotional support as well as we can help each other outside of the group as well, if necessary.

Comment: Kind of a lot of information packed in this little sentence. I should have talked about being an emotional support, but also learning about coping skills. This helps instill hope in the client, but also creates group cohesiveness by saying that we will be there to support each other.

Correction: "There are a lot of different ways that people cope with these traumatic events. I'm glad you were able to join our group, and hopefully we will learn ways to be able to cope with these emotions and work through them together. We are here to emotionally support each other and learn from each other's experiences.

Problem Situations

Allison: (30:04)

So, Alan, do you have a wife? Because I'm kind of tired of being around my pimp, and I was just wondering if maybe we could go on a date.

Therapist: (30:13)

Okay. So maybe that might not be the topic to talk about in this session. So, maybe we can kind of talk about that when you are not in group therapy sessions. Okay?

Allison: (30:28)

So I can date one of my group members? It's not frowned upon?

Therapist: (30:32)

I won't say that it is a rule, but I will say that it's probably not the best situation when you're trying to go through some therapy. But I can't force you to not do that. It's probably better not to fraternize with each other while we're in this group.

Comment: Here, I was not sure if people are actually prohibited from dating in groups or not. I do know in substance abuse recovery groups, it is prohibited for a year, but was unsure about trauma groups. I did try to divert the subject back to the topic at hand though, so I would have kept the first part. I should have definitely talked more about how dating each other could hinder progress though. And I should have set ground rules for appropriate contact in actual therapy sessions. I was kind of taken by surprise by that one so not really prepared to address it. I might have even just said that we could discuss it after the session, but whether we discussed it in the session or after it would go something like this....

*Correction: *keep first response....but for second response* "So dating people within your therapy group is not a good idea. Dating brings up many different emotions, and sometimes dating can be used as a coping mechanism to distract us from the problem we are facing. It can cause other emotions that may confuse the emotions you are trying to process through in therapy as well. So it could very much hinder your progress. I cannot force you not to date, but I would definitely highly recommend you do not date. Also, when we are in group therapy, there should not be any physical or romantic contact, so as not to hinder the progress of other group members as well. Does that make sense? We can discuss this more in depth after our session.*

Closing

Therapist: (31:00)

All right. So, we introduced ourselves. We talked about some of the situations we've been going through, some of the trauma. The first exercise we did, the first one, we talked about the ... We

showed what our trauma looks like to us and talked about that. And that was very helpful to see how everybody kind of has different emotions, but also some similar emotions with varied events that have happened. And then we did this last exercise about talking about our support systems and what we want in a support system versus what we have in support systems right now. So, we can try to incorporate some of that.

Comment: I think I did a good job summarizing, but again I would have talked about coping skills instead. With discussing the support system, I would have mentioned the coping skills and said we could try those in our times at home. I also would have had more of a positive tone with it.

Correction: “So we got a lot accomplished today! We got to know each other, talked about what traumatic situations we have been facing, and did a couple exercises. Just to recap, in the first exercise where we drew our trauma, we were able to see that everyone has different types of trauma, but some of the emotions could be similar. In the last exercise we discussed some different healthy and unhealthy coping skills, and were able to learn some things that we can try to incorporate into our lives in order to work through our trauma.

Therapist: (31:45)

So basically, next week we'll go into this a little bit more. We'll talk a little bit more about our experiences. And this session was just to kind of open up and get to know each other, kind of introduce what has been going on with each other. We'll try to really focus in on the deeper emotions that are underlying these issues as we go on. And we'll just remember to always be engaged and always be both listening to the other person, be respectful, and to be timely. I really enjoyed meeting you all and I hope to hear from you and see you next week!

Comment: I like how I summarized here, but I should have tried to emphasize what we learned today versus what we are going to do next week as well. And I should have mentioned the exact time we were meeting.

Correction: “So next week we will talk about these coping skills a bit more. We will also discuss more about the deeper emotions we have from these experiences and how they affect how we see and function in the world. We will learn about cognitive distortions and core beliefs about ourselves. Next time we should also continue to remember to always be engaged and listening to the other people talking, to be respectful, and to be on time! I really enjoyed meeting you all, and I will see you again next week on Wednesday at 7 pm!