

Courtney Krajesky

Group Participation/Group Process Reflection

Clinical Group Component

In the group mock therapy session for the week, Amber, April, and Kaitlyn were the facilitators. We are in the sixth session but it didn't quite feel that way due to the ongoing conflict. Several group members entered the session with anger that seemed to channel from their facial expressions and body language. Amber led the meeting with an activity about the "bully within." In this activity we all paired off into dyads of two members, however my group had three. We were to write down negative thoughts and then have another group member read it aloud. The activity was going well until several members became agitated and asked what the purpose of the activity was as they felt as though rather than diminishing conflict, it was pulling it out of them. Tension was rising in each dyad as well as my own little group as I noticed all the voices in the room seeming to escalate. My character read the other Rachel's negative commentary aloud about her "being dumb and crazy." My response to her was "you are not dumb and crazy, but you do appear to be hostile and angry." The third member in our group claimed she felt uncomfortable and did not know how this activity was a step in the right direction. Amber then gathered the attention of the group as a whole in order to openly share commentary. Amber explained to the group the purpose of the activity and the negative ways we perceive ourselves that aren't actually true. Noreen's character was merely looking at Sam/(Rachel) and Rachel began to ask her why she was awkwardly staring at her. Noreen stated that she was merely looking at her while listening and that she was definitely not staring at her or intending to do so. Noreen crumpled her paper up and anxiously warped it into a ball. She

continued to ask what the purpose of this activity was because there was so much agitation filling the room. Kaylee (Ray) then stated that she felt threatened by the group's dynamic that day and felt uncomfortable to share anything or look at anyone. I proceeded to share about Rachel and how hostile and angry I felt that she was, rather than her statements describing herself as "dumb and crazy." The group continued to add commentary and then April took over as group lead. April went deeper with questions as Amber had previously done in order to assist members with universality and help them better understand one another and where each member was coming from. Each member proceeded to share how they felt at the current. Kaitlyn had a difficult task of taking over and completing the session. She did a beautiful job as she asked Rachel questions about her conflict and then shifted the tone of the room as everyone appeared to suddenly understand Rachel, and why she acted the way that she did. Kaitlyn also closed the group with a positive activity that seemed to evoke optimism in the group as a whole. It was an intense session however everyone was amazed at how well the tone and conflict shifted towards the end.

Experiential:

I was initially a bit anxious about the session as the topic was centered around conflict and this is not something that I am comfortable with. I try to always avoid conflict at all costs and although I was not a group leader in this session, I still couldn't help but worry about how I would be handling such high emotional responses. In my role as Rachel, as anxious and confrontational as the room was, I felt calm as each leader was in control and structured so that conflict would be diffused and brought back to the focus of the here and now and the purpose of our group. In my opinion this group session was one of the best we have had so far as it was a huge learning experience. I imagine there are numerous times that conflict such as these will arise. It is our role as facilitators to lead and form healthy emotional responses for the group as

an entity and avoid communication roadblocks, criticizing, generalizing etc. As facilitators it is our duty to establish clear goals and generate action plans for conflict resolution. It is important to monitor the intensity of the conflict and guide a peaceful resolution. At the end of our session I felt as though Kaitlyn did a beautiful job of guiding the group from conflict into a positive experience and take away for each group member.