

Segment 1

Transcriptions, Comments and Corrections

Getting Started and Round

Therapist: Well, hello everyone and welcome. I'm so glad to see so many familiar faces today. I know that taking the steps into group therapy are not always easy, but you guys are here and I'm so proud of each of you um for being so brave. Um, let's do a quick introduction and comfort level check in. I will have everyone go around the room and state their names am using a scale, 1-10, we will check everyone's comfort level. The scale starting at 1 is that your not comfortable at all and 10 being the most comfortable that you can be. Do I have any volunteers that would like to go first?

Group Member: I'll go. Um, I think I'm at about a 7 at being comfortable. Um, I'm a little nervous because I don't know everyone else in the group. But it kind of comforting because I know you and to see you.

Group Member: Responded

Group Member: Responded

Comment: Here I am attempting to set a positive tone while completing introductions and comfort level check ins. I believe that I set a positive tone, however, I can explain the directions for rounds in a more productive way by taking out the "ums" and being more clear.

Correction: Hello everyone and welcome. I am glad to see so many familiar faces today. I know that taking the steps to join group therapy are not always easy, but you all are here. I am proud of each of you for being brave and overcoming those steps. To get us started, I would like to go around the room, have everyone state their name, and use a 1-10 scale to discuss their comfort level. Using the 1-10 scale, 1 being not comfortable at all and 10 being the most comfortable you could be, where are you on the scale. Would anyone like to volunteer to go first.

Purpose and Problem Solving

Therapist: So, I know each of you guys separately, but my name is Erin Bennett, and I am the therapist that will facilitate our Sunday 3PM Therapeutic Anxiety group and this will be held for the next 12 weeks. This is a closed group so after today no one else will be joining us and it will just be us in here. Um, so my role as the facilitator is to guide our time together and ensure that we are making the most of our time and being productive. So, this will mean that I may interrupt group members just to ensure that we are staying on topic and allowing everyone to have an equal amount of time to speak. I'll encourage group members to participate in discussion and I'll also encourage everyone to respect one another and make eye contact just to show that we are all participating and listening to one another. Um, eye contact is a big thing so we will make sure that we do that. Um the purpose of this group is for us to understand and manage our anxiety by identifying our thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. So, this is what will set our group apart from a support group because we will focus on those things. The purpose of today's group, however, is for us to get acquainted, um verbalize our expectations, our rules and also begin to discuss our

anxiety and the impact that it has on our thoughts and feelings. Um, I've discussed this with most, well actually all of you previously, but while I have you all here together, I want to talk about confidentiality very briefly. We want our time together to be a safe place for everyone to share their experiences and concerns with anxiety and how it impacts their lives, and so I'm going to ask everyone to keep what we talk about in this group, in this group. Okay, so everything will be confidential. Can everyone just give me a thumbs up if you understand and agree to confidentiality? Great. Thank you, guys, so much. Before we get into our expectations, I would like to do a quick icebreaker just to let everyone get a little more acquainted. So we will go around the room again and we will talk about something that we like to do for fun but something that also helps us cope with our anxiety. Okay, so I'll go first. Um, something that I like to do for fun is going for a hike and this really allows me to be mindful and really takes me to the present moment. So, would anyone like to go next?

Group Member: Actually, mine's the same. I love to hike. Um, and it usually is really relaxing but I went on a hike last weekend, but it wasn't so relaxing. Um, It was supposed to be a two mile hike, ended up being a 7 mile hike because Jaelyn got lost. Um, I kept just I kept guess taking the wrong turn. I thought it looked like a trail then finally someone else that was hiking saw me....

Group Member: Responded

Group Member: Responded

Comment: Here I am attempting to state the purpose of the group, my role as the therapist/facilitator, and explain how the group is conducted. This portion of the session should be clear and concise to ensure group members are maintaining focus. I tend to get wordy when I go off script and use filler word. This may cause my client confusion or cause a lack of trust in the therapeutic process. I need to work on this.

Correction: I know each of you separately, but my name is Erin Bennett. I am the therapist that will facilitate our Therapeutic Anxiety group every Sunday at 3PM for the next 12 weeks. This is a closed group so after today no one else will be joining us. My role as the facilitator is to guide our time together, keep us on track, and ensure our productivity. For interest of time, I may interrupt group members, if we are getting off topic. I will also ensure that everyone has an equal amount of time to speak, and I will encourage members to participate in discussion. I would like to ask that everyone focus on members who are speaking by engaging with eye contact. The purpose of this group is for us to understand and manage our anxiety by identifying our thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. This is what will set our group apart from a support group. The purpose of today's group is for us to get acquainted, verbalize our expectations, our rules and begin to discuss our anxiety and the impact that it has on our lives. We have discussed it separately, but I want to talk about confidentiality very briefly. We want our time together to be a safe place for everyone to share their experiences and concerns with anxiety. To do that, everything that we say and do in this group will be kept confidential. Can everyone give me a thumbs up if you understand and agree to confidentiality? Great, thank you. Before we get into our expectations, I would like to do a quick icebreaker to learn more about everyone. Let's go around the room

again and state one activity that we like to do for fun but something that also helps us cope with our anxiety. I'll go first. Something that I enjoy is hiking. This allows me to be mindful. Would anyone like to volunteer to go next?

Therapist: Jaclyn, I'm going to interrupt you for a second. That sounds like an interesting story and I would love to hear more about it but maybe at the end of our session if we have a few extra minutes.

Group Member: Okay, that's okay.

Comment: Here I have a chronic talker and attempt to problem solve. It is apparent that interrupting someone makes me feel uncomfortable as evidenced by my body language. Moving forward, I need to be less hesitant and more assertive when completing the task.

Correction: Jaclyn, that sounds like an interesting story and I would love to hear about it if we have extra time at the end. For the interest of time, we need to move on to the next group member. Thank you for sharing.

Therapist: Now that we know a little more about each other and hopefully feel more comfortable with one another, I would like to talk about expectations that we have for this group. Um, so we will go around the room again and I would like for everyone to state something that they expect to get out of this group. And this time I'll call on... let's do Hannah first this time.

Group Member: Um, I just expect to learn more about my anxiety, learn more about how it's affecting my life maybe in the ways I'm not even aware about.

Comment: In this section, I am attempting to explain instructions for a round and hear each client's expectations. I also attempt to draw out members. To better this section, I need to make the instructions clear and refrain from using filler words. This will allow me to appear more confident and gain the trust of my clients.

Correction: Now that we know a little more about one another and hopefully feel more comfortable, I would like to discuss expectations. I would like for us to complete a round so everyone can point out one expectation they have for the group. Hannah, will you start?

Therapist: Yeah, so we will definitely cover that in one of our sessions, so thank you for bringing that up Hannah. Okay, let's go with Nawal.

Group Member: Um, something that I would like to get out of this group is uh just a safe place to talk about how my anxiety affects me um sometimes it's hard to talk to people in my life about that so it would be nice to share about that in the group.

Comment: Here I was attempting to use active listening skills through reflection. I did not do well and instead kept my response broad. I also drew out other members.

Correction: Hannah, that is a great expectation. In our group, I will use psychoeducation to inform you about anxiety and ways it can impact our lives.

Group Member: Responded.

Therapist: Yeah, so we will talk about coping skills in weeks to come and I'm hoping that that is a time for everyone to share things that help them, and hopefully other group members can take those and try them for themselves and I'm hoping that you guys will find some additional coping skills. So, thank you guys for all for sharing those expectations. You all made great points and I am confident that we will meet those expectations in this group. Um, So since we are establishing this group and we have our expectations, now I would like to cover some group rules. Um, since we've already discussed confidentiality, I think this would be a good first rule for us to have. Its important that we have group rules so we can all respect each other and make the most of our time together. So, lets go around the room um everybody does not have to share but if you have a rule that you would like to implement in the group, please let me know um and just to let you guys know, we can come back to these rules at any time. We can make changes. We can implement new rules. Um and that is open at anytime during our sessions, okay? So, would anyone like to share a rule?

Group Member: Um, I feel like a good rule is to not be on our phones and not to be distracted while we are here.

Comment: Here I am validating my client's responses and ensuring the group that we will discuss coping skills in the next 12 weeks. I thank group members for participating to encourage their continued participation. I am also attempting to explain group rules and why they are important to be successful. I tend to get wordy as I am going off script, therefore, the instructions are not clear or concise. To help the group members understand the round and to maintain their focus/confidence, I need to be mindful of this.

Correction: Thank you, everyone, for sharing. You all made valid points and I am confident that we will exceed your expectations and make the most of our time together. Since, we are establishing this group and have an idea of everyone's expectations, I would like to identify group rules. It is important that we establish group rules to make sure everyone is comfortable and respected. Group rules may change or be revisited at any time. Since this is our group, I would like for everyone to think about and share one group rule they would like to be implemented. Would anyone like to volunteer to go first?

Therapist: Yeah, that is a great rule to have. Um I do know that you guys have families and you guys may have employment or in school so if you could just put your phones on silent and only step out for emergency calls then um I think that will really show respect to one another. So thank you hannah. Would anyone else like to share a rule?

Group Member: Responded.

Comment: Here I am attempting to validate my client's response and discuss the importance of silencing phones during the session. I can explain this is a more confident and understanding way.

Correction: Hannah, thank you for sharing. Minimizing distractions by keeping phones on silent is important during this process. I will ask for everyone to keep their phones on silent and only step out for emergency calls.

Focus, Exercises, and Yolam's Curative Factors

Therapist: Um, so now that we are acquainted, discussed our expectations, and our group rules we will move into an exercise and this exercise will help us dig deeper into your anxiety and how it impacts your life. So, I would like everyone to take out your sheet of paper and your pencil and we are going to draw a picture of our anxiety. And I would like to specifically focus on what thoughts and feelings you have um when your anxious and so for example you could draw being fearful or being worried, or not in control. Um and it may not be one of those three but I wanted to let you guys have an example of what that could look like. Um, so I'll give you guys some time to do that and then we can all come back to share..... okay, Ill give you guys a few more seconds and then we will start..... Okay so Hannah it looked like you got finished first, would you mind sharing?

Group Member: um, yeah, so, um I tried to draw um my worry and the way that my worry makes me feel. Um like I just feel like um consumed by it and like I feel like its making me cry a lot and be really emotional um and it also feels like I'm worrying for like 10 people and so I feel really like overwhelmed.

Comment: Here I am attempting to appropriately introduce the first exercise. It is not as clear and concise as it should be and could have likely caused confusion. If clients were confused, the ability to accurately process the exercise would be unlikely.

Correction: Now that we are acquainted, discussed our expectations, and group rules, now we will dig deeper into anxiety and its impact on our thoughts and feelings. I would like for everyone to take out a piece of paper and pencil. Let's draw a picture of what anxiety looks like to you, specifically focusing on what thoughts and feelings your anxiety gives you (examples). Hannah, would you mind sharing your picture first?

Therapist: Yeah, well thank you for sharing that Hannah. And I'm sorry that you are experiencing that but I would like to just reiterate that that is a symptom of anxiety and according to the DSM-5 excessive worry that hard to control is one of the diagnostic criterion for Generalized Anxiety Disorder um and so this can also be followed up with symptoms such as restlessness, fatigue, sleep disturbances, and many other things that we can talk about in the future but thank you so much for sharing that hannah. Um I would be interested to know if anyone else experienced that. Yeah, okay. Well thank you hannah. Jaclyn, would you like to go next.

Group Member: Sure. Umm, I don't know if you can see it. It's not much. I'm not an artist but um it just kind of represents sometimes when I'm feeling like my anxiety there's lots of worry like hannah said but sometimes its like all the emotions you know like sometimes I can be angry or like sad or something you know where I'm just like you know all of a sudden why am I crying or yelling. Um so its just kind of like all the emotions at one time.

Comment: In this section, I am attempting to express empathy, psychoeducation, and deepen the focus. I miss the opportunity to effectively express empathy because I am focused on educating

the clients on anxiety. I also should ask the client the duration of worry to see if it meets the criteria. I need to slow down and make my time with the client's effective.

Correction: Hannah, thank for being vulnerable and sharing your experience with anxiety. It must be difficult to feel consumed by your anxiety and worry. How often do you feel anxious or worried? I want you to know that you are not alone in feeling that way. According to the DSM-5, excessive worry that is hard to control is a diagnostic criterion for Generalized Anxiety Disorder. This is also followed by symptoms such as restlessness, fatigue, sleep disturbances, and many other symptoms.

Therapist: well, thank you for sharing that, um, does that have any sort of impact on your relationships, your employment, or school?

Group Member: Yeah and sometimes I can notice how it affects those things. I'm hoping to kind of get it out of this group also like kind of being able to notice just how much it affects me in various parts of my life. If that makes sense.

Comment: Here, I deepen the focus by asking about daily functioning. This question can be clearer to help the client understand how anxiety impacts her relationships and life.

Correction: Jaclyn, you mentioned that you have a lot of worry and other intense emotions like anger and sadness. Has this had any impact on your relationships or ability to function?... Tell me more about that.

Therapist: Yes, that makes perfect sense. Thank you for sharing that, Jaclyn. And then Nawal?

Group Member: Um so what I drew if you can see um so I drew like sunshine and a nice day outside but myself um stuck in the house and with a frown because a lot of times my anxiety makes me feel too scared to go out and enjoy life so I just feel stuck and mostly just afraid. So that what that symbolizes.

Comment: Here I am trying to draw out members by asking Nawal to share. I can do this with more instruction and less rushed. This may help decrease risk of confusion.

Correction: Nawal, do you mind sharing your drawing next?

Therapist: Okay. Well Nawal, do you mind telling me about a time when that's happened, a recent time?

Group Member: yeah, so um I think about a week ago some of my friends were going to hang out and they invited me but I just started having these anxious thoughts and negative thoughts like well what if they judged me or what if they didn't want me there and I ended up not going and so I ended up missing out because I was too anxious to go.

Comment: I need to be clearer when asking questions. I also miss the opportunity to get important information such as the thoughts Nawal was having during this time.

Correction: Nawal, do you mind telling me about a time you were too anxious to hang out with your friends? What thoughts were you having during that time?

Therapist: Yeah, so you mentioned some thoughts that you had and I just want to point out that um we all have thoughts that are automatic and these can be positive thoughts or negative thoughts and sometimes its important for us to analyze those thoughts and ask ourselves the evidence that supports that thought. So um, you could ask yourself you know “what makes this true” or “how do I know if this is true” and that how you can analyze. So thank you for sharing that Nawal. Um, so I definitely hear some common themes um about symptom that you guys are experiencing um and I just want to know that as other members shared their responses what did that, what thoughts and feelings did that bring up for you?

Group Member: Well, I actually like Nawal sharing, I have so many of those same stories, you know where like and again some I realized some I may not even realize like how much anxiety does truly hold me back from a lot of things. But its also king of comforting to hear Nawal say it you know. Um.

Group Member: Responded

Group Member: Responded

Comment: To begin, I attempt to educate the group on automatic thoughts and how to use evidence questions to analyze if the thought is true or not. Because of this, I lose the opportunity to show empathy to Nawal, who is being transparent and vulnerable. I also attempt to discuss universality in the group. Because I went of script to complete these skills, I appear to lose confidence and use filler words. Taking my time, trusting myself, and eliminating filler words will make this section easier to understand. Lastly, I further process the exercise with the group. I believe I did demonstrate the process question well.

Correction: Nawal, thank you for being so transparent in discussing your experience with anxiety. It must be difficult having those thoughts. I want you to know that you are not alone in that. We all have these types of thoughts. They are called automatic thoughts and we have them without even realizing it. It is important to recognize those automatic thoughts, how they impact our feelings, and how our feelings impact our behavior. When you can realize them, you have the ability to challenge the thought by asking evidence questions such as “What is the evidence that the automatic thought is true”, “What’s the best/worst that could happen?” or “What’s the most realistic outcome? I hear several commonalities in thoughts and feelings that you all shared. As other members shared their experiences with anxiety, what feelings and thoughts did that bring up for you?

Closing

Therapist: Um, so to conclude our session, we got acquainted. We talked about rules and expectations, and then we started to dig deeper into our anxiety. Um we were able to use exercises in order to do that and we were able to identify automatic thoughts, and how anxiety impacts our thoughts and feelings. But importantly, we were able to identify an affirmation to use when we are having those anxious thoughts and feelings and I think that’s very important. Um, I know its not always easy to be vulnerable, but you guys did it and you’ve completed your first session so I’m so proud of you and you guys should be proud of yourselves. Um and so that

will wrap up our first session so I will see you guys next Sunday at 3PM and we will continue our discussion on anxiety.

Group Member: Responded non-verbally.

Group Member: Responded non-verbally.

Group Member: Responded non-verbally.

Comment: This should be a short and concise conclusion of the session. I tend to get wordy in this section and use many filler words. I also missed the opportunity to ask for feedback.

Correction: To conclude, during our session we got acquainted as well as verbalized our expectations and group rules. We were able to use exercises to discuss our anxiety and its impact on our thoughts and feelings. During this, we were able to discuss automatic thoughts and how to analyze the thought. We were also able to identify an affirmation when we are feeling anxious, having negative thoughts, or feelings. I appreciate everyone's willingness to be vulnerable and transparent. I know it is not easy, but you guys should be proud of yourselves for completing your first group session. Would anyone like to provide any feedback about the session? Next Sunday we will continue our discussion. Same place and same time. Thank you, all.

Segment Two

Reflection and Issues

Cultural Issue

According to the American Psychiatric Association, the most common disorders which affect approximately 30% of adults are anxiety disorders (Parekh, 2017). Women are more likely than their male counterpart to encounter anxiety disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). There are several factors that contribute to women's increased rates of anxiety such as biological factors, family background, life experiences, and societal norms. Because of this, cultural issues that may have been presented are societal norms such as traditional gender roles. The traditional gender roles in society can contribute to women's increased risk of anxiety and phobias (Stoyanova & Hope, 2012). To address traditional gender roles effectively, I must be competent and understand how traditional gender roles influence thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of group members.

To address cultural issues, such as traditional gender roles, I will empathetically acknowledge the client's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs associated with the topic. Then, I will use reliable research to gain a better understanding of traditional gender roles and its impact on clients. This will allow me to think critically and seek possible solutions. I will also use evidence-based practices to effectively intervene with group members. This will promote successful interventions and client outcomes. Another way I will address cultural issues is by providing trauma-informed care to promote a safe, empowering, and successful environment. Using the trauma informed approach in group settings, I will be prepared to demonstrate safety,

trustworthiness, transparency, support, collaboration, empowerment, and autonomy. Additionally, I will identify and address any misconceptions or concerns, by using research and statistics, presented by the clients in the therapeutic group.

It takes continuous attention and efforts to be culturally competent. I am dedicated to the constant learning of cultural practices and different worldviews. To increase my cultural competence, I will challenge myself to continue to become aware of my own culture and worldview, become aware of any cultural biases that I have, learn about different cultures, and respectfully interact with diverse groups.

Reflection of Growth

Reflecting on my role as an advanced autonomous practitioner, I have gained a knowledgeable skill set and passion while facilitating group therapy. While I am still growing as a group facilitator, I have noticed significant change in my abilities as a therapist. Through practice, I have become confident demonstrating group therapy skills which include setting a positive tone, clarifying the purpose, checking the comfort level, explaining my role, explaining how the group will be conducted, helping members verbalize their expectations, discussing group rules, and demonstrating the use of rounds and dyads. Other skills that I am confident in demonstrating include establishing and deepening the focus, introducing and processing exercises, as well as the use of Yalom's curative factors. I have practiced and demonstrated each of these skills effectively allowing me to facilitate a successful therapeutic group.

To strengthen my role as an advanced autonomous practitioner, I will continue practicing skills utilized in group therapy. I will utilize self-reflection to become aware of strengths and areas of growth. Demonstrating my commitment to growth, I will enhance my skills that are lacking. I will additionally engage in practice informed research and research informed practice to stay current on evidence-based interventions that can be effectively implemented into group therapy. Because I am passionate about becoming an effective practitioner, I have set goals for the future. The first goal is to remain confident throughout my sessions, even if I do not precisely follow structure/script. The second goal is to step out of my comfort zone more often. With practice, this will allow me to have new opportunities to learn and eventually become more confident in my abilities as an advanced practitioner. I look forward to challenging myself and continuing my growth.

Reflection of Technology

In the future, it is possible that I will have to facilitate therapy via Telehealth, due to the current pandemic. Having the opportunity to facilitate group therapy via technology platforms has been beneficial as it allowed me to navigate possible barriers and prepare for the future. While I had a positive experience overall and learned many skills, I did run into barriers such as internet connection, communication issues, and lack of eye contact. In the event of connection issues, I learned the important of staying calm and attempting to alleviate the problem. If the problem continues, I know that I can contact the client via email, text message, telephone call, and etcetera to communicate a plan moving forward. Technology platforms can also present communication issues such as speaking over the client or having multiple clients speak at once.

Using this experience, I learned to wait a few seconds after the client is done speaking to respond to ensure the client is finished with discussion. Moving forward, I will inform clients of this method as it is difficult to sense when a client's discussion is complete via technology platform. I also found it difficult to maintain eye contact with each client through the camera. I will continue to be aware of this and only look at the camera to decrease constant eye and head movement. Using these experiences, I will continue progressing as an advanced practitioner that is confident in the ability to facilitate group therapy in person and through various technology platforms.

References

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