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Group Reflection Module 5

**Clinical Group Component**

 This week’s group was meant to be a group that had been meeting for about six sessions. She briefly reviewed what we had already covered in prior groups, such as confidentiality and informed consent. She opened by asking about how we felt after our last session. Next, she opened a jam board and had us write an anonymous secret on a sticky note. We each read someone else’s secret. We then discussed our reactions to hear our secret heard aloud. This was a great way to develop group cohesiveness and draw out the feelings of various group members. Hearing their internal thoughts read aloud to the group, our characters were taken aback. This created a moment of catharsis between the different characters. She did well in making the environment feel supportive and safe for sharing. The participants struggled to share personal stories or internal feelings. The facilitator had difficulty overcoming this initial quietness from the participants. She did not challenge the participants to push beyond their emotional barriers enough to dive deeper into the session.

 There was a lot of vertical disclosure during the group session and less horizontal disclosure. There were some surface-level disclosures, but the group did not interact much with one another. This session would have been a great forming session, but it did not feel like we moved fully into storming or norming, in my opinion. There was some norm development but not as much cohesion as there may be in a later stage. By the end, we were getting closer to developing cohesion but needed a push to make it fully into a cohesive group dynamic.

**Experiential Component**

 During this group session, it seemed we were starting over somehow. I think we struggled to dive back into our characters and come up with new things to say during this session. Because the group is made up of characters rather than our own experiences, we seemed to have difficulty with being creative and developing our characters within the group setting. During the previous meeting, my character had a lot to say. This meeting, I tried not to dominate the conversation which resulted in more moments of quiet. Toward the end, we started to have more to say and to develop our stories a bit deeper.

The ongoing theme of this session was that we all had a fear of vulnerability and unwillingness to open up to others. Our facilitator touched on this with a few of us but did not push it as far as may have been helpful. Watching her lead the group made me think about my own time as a session leader. I realized that I need to push people to explain why they feel the way they do. I think there is an element of the Socratic method that we have to employ with group counseling. Rather than repeat statements back to them or grant advice, it may be the most helpful to follow up with a question. When someone says they feel uncomfortable with sharing, I could ask them “why do you think that is?” instead of accepting that answer and moving on.

 I realized in this group that it can be very uncomfortable when no one shares. It made me appreciate the role of the facilitator or counselor. A group such as this one needs someone to stir up the conversation and encourage conversation when silence lingers for too long. I left thinking that I need to be very intentional with stirring up conversation in my video recording. It is important to hit all of the benchmarks and talking points, but it is more important to encourage the group to speak up and share with one another. She ended the group with saying “I am” statements. I thought this was a really great activity that could have spurred on even greater conversations. I really liked that activity and thought it was helpful.