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Group Reflection Module 7

**Clinical Group Component**

 During this session, we focused on conflict within the group. I was one of the characters and had to instigate conflict and keep it going long enough to allow the group leader to practice their skills. The leader opened the group by reflecting on the previous group and activities. She encouraged the group to reflect on the previous week and bring their experience into the here and now. We discussed the previous week’s activity in which we told secrets via a jam board session. During the previous session, this was an emotional moment of catharsis. When the activity was discussed during this session, my character was upset because her secret was overlooked and not shared in the session. This caused a breakdown of cohesiveness during the session and caused the other group members to become increasingly agitated with my character. The group leader allowed my character to discuss her frustration. She also provided space for the other group members to express their annoyance with my character. My character and another character argued some and became increasingly tense. She encouraged us to express why we were feeling frustrated. Addressing the issue head-on allowed us to move forward and go deeper in our emotional responses to the conflict. This lead to horizontal and vertical disclosures that were cathartic for the characters. This also allowed for the group to develop a different level of cohesiveness and a culture of honesty and directness. This became a storming opportunity that allowed the group culture to advance and group members to develop healthy conflict-resolution skills.

**Experiential Component**

 This was a difficult group session. I do not often lean into conflict and rarely stir up issues with others. It was fun to branch out from my normal personality and try to be more confrontational. This was also a unique experience in which I intentionally tried to dominate the conversation and disrupt the group. I would never do this in real life so it stretched me. Unlike last week, I was trying to create disunity and group discomfort for the sake of learning about conflict. I thought our group leaders did a great job of being patient and calm throughout the tense moments in the conversation. I could tell that they were being stretched and adjusting to the discomfort. They handled the situation very professionally. This was a great representation of how conflict can unfold in a group and ways to embrace the conflict for the benefit of the entire group.

 This session helped me develop in my understanding of the importance of conflict. Too often in my Southern culture, we shy away from any conflict or direct communication. In my personal life, I am learning to be more direct and straightforward. This session helped me to see how this could translate into the clinical setting. Conflict allowed for each group member to be in an uncomfortable setting and push through it. The different group members each jumped into the conversation at times to settle the conflict or provide their insight. This was a neat demonstration of using critical thinking with psychosocial development. We were all learning how to overcome discomfort for the sake of learning and growing as a group. If this was a real group session, I think my character would have left feeling like she was more capable of voicing her feelings and sticking up for herself in the real world. It also taught the characters to address conflict directly and seek to understand the reason for their feelings. This was a powerful tool to help them create resiliency in their relationships.