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Advanced Clinical Practice

April 18, 2019

Skills Performance Comparison: Group Therapy Personal Reflection

Beginning Graduate school Fall 2018 brought on waves of dread, fear, and anxiety.

Before the start of classes the benchmark to be done was to practice using interviewing skills in a group setting. Benchmark videos are to determine base level knowledge and skills of clinical practice without any preparation or group information beforehand. The way the group dynamic was set up was for each group member to play a different personality type, in resemblance of potential clients we could encounter. The group I facilitated was the first session with those who have or are dealing with any type of cancer. Fast forward to Spring 2019 I have learned how to structure, plan, create activities, and facilitate individual and group clinical groups. Evaluating my performance overall comparing where I started to the present, I can honestly say that I have gained new skills and grown more confident in my ability to conduct a session. As a soon to be Social Work Practitioner this knowledge base is very important to develop and hone in on for engagement with all clients in all settings.

My benchmark video demonstration of professionalism I would say that I did well with by acknowledging each group member, seeking clarification or prompting elaboration, making eye contact, appropriate dress, tone of voice, and questioning. The use of my hands was very excessive all throughout the session, which is something I have to be consciously aware of so that the gestures do not become distracting. In the midst of conducting session there were moments of confidence in which I did well interacting with group members, affirming responses, and explaining content. I did not do well addressing the personality types of the negative member

and non-talkative member because I was unsure of how to appropriately respond or elicit more information for further engagement. I also noticed that a few times I did not complete a thought and could have taken time to go deeper. The way in which questions are formed will determine how much a client discloses. For processing purposes and to expound on what the client stated I am very proud of myself for not speaking fast, which, I have a tendency to do when I am feeling anxious and a lack of confidence. I recall having those emotions, but instead of talking too fast I looked down, became quiet or chuckled to myself nervously. Overall my base level knowledge was adequate, but certain areas require strengthening my technique and skillset.

Final group therapy video there was definitely improvement in deliverance of session, performance, facilitation technique, and practitioner skills. This time around I had opportunities to develop my session, hone in on challenging areas, deal with various personality types, and use my creativity to engage members more. I did feel more confident in my ability to facilitate group therapy and I worked with a great group of classmates that played their roles perfectly so I could practice. Even though I knew the structure of the group I still found myself stumbling throughout the first half, which came across as if I was unsure of myself. I also did not pause enough between different parts to check for comprehension or questions, as doing this would have cut back on me dominating the conversation.

Both of my videos were very similar in overall presentation of myself as a professional and personality wise, which I believe is a good thing. Bringing my own style to a session not also sets a positive tone, invites interaction, eases any tension, but also assists with building rapport with group members. When unsure of myself in how to respond or became nervous I did not allow myself to stay in that mode too long before moving forward. A delay in session is appropriate for processing, but too long of a delay can cause shift in away from focus of group.

There are definitely areas of improvement in my skillset as a facilitator, but with practice and confidence I will become better. I will admit that initially I was not thrilled about leading group as I prefer one-on-one but I am more open to the idea now.