Course Description

Group work practice, an integral part of social work intervention, will be examined in depth with application to social work within an agency context. The course creates a link with the foundation practice courses taught in the first year, as well as content taught in the human behavior in the social environment, social policy, and research courses. Emphasis will be on addressing conceptual understanding, application, analytical and interactional skills necessary for group work practice. This course is taken in conjunction with field education, as a co-requisite, in order to facilitate the integration of classroom and field learning.

The course focuses on theories and methods of work with groups, and the use of groups with a wide range of populations, including groups related to staff and team relationships, prevention, social action, mutual aid, and treatment. An eclectic approach which builds competencies and integrates theory and practice is used. This course provides students with a perspective which considers the special qualities of group practice as an integrative part of intervention in various settings. The choice of group as intervention method is made by utilizing a broad-based or systems assessment and communication and ego psychological formations. Within the field of group practice the various group approaches of social group work, including task groups, psychodynamic and cognitive behavioral groups are addressed. The course includes the history of social work groups, different models of group practice, the stages of group development, the planning and formation of groups, leadership issues, the beginning through ending phases of group, and groups for vulnerable and specific populations. Throughout the course, the impact of racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, and poverty in the provision of group services and in group dynamics, is explored. Identification and utilization of client strengths within the group are stressed.

Course Objectives

Content of this course contributes to students’ mastery of the following practice behaviors, listed under the 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE):

Educational Policy 2.1.1: Identify oneself as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly. Social workers:

- Demonstrate professional and differential use of self with clients O1, O4
- Develop and sustain working alliances and therapeutic relationships with clients O9
- Demonstrate self-reflection and self-assessment in the active use of supervision and consultation. O1, O2
- Readily identify as a social work professional and engage in preparation for career-long learning O2, O9
Educational Policy 2.1.2: Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice. Social workers:
- Demonstrate initiative in applying ethical reasoning for problem resolution O8
- Identify and use knowledge of relationship dynamics, including power differentials and personal biases, and how they affect practice O6, O9
- Apply ethical standards and decision-making frameworks to respond to dilemmas in models and levels of intervention, agency practices and environmental contexts. O8
- Identify and address the impact of changing organizations on client outcomes and service delivery. O2

Educational Policy 2.1.3: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments. Social workers:
- Collaborate with clients regarding assessment and intervention strategies, benefits, and consequences O1, O6
- Evaluate the strength and weaknesses of multiple theoretical perspectives and differentially apply them to client systems O4
- Differentially select and implement strategies for assessment & interventions using evidence based practice and best practice methods O7
- Communicate professional assessment to other social workers and to professionals from other disciplines in both verbal and written formats O2

Educational Policy 2.1.4: Engage diversity and difference in practice. Social workers:
- Research and apply knowledge of diverse populations to enhance client well-being O3, O4, O7
- Work effectively with diverse populations, using an understanding of how culture, power, privilege, policies and services impact them O3, O9

Educational Policy 2.1.5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice. Social workers:
- Use knowledge of the effects of oppression, discrimination, and historical trauma on client and client systems to guide interventions O8, O9
- Advocate at multiple levels for the advancement of human rights and social justice O2, O9

Educational Policy 2.1.6: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research. Social workers:
- Use the EBP process to inform direct practice O7
- Use research methodology to evaluate practice processes and outcomes O1, O5

Educational Policy 2.1.7: Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment. Social workers:
- Draw from multiple sources, theories and models of human behavior and differentially apply these models to guide direct practice O3, O6

Educational Policy 2.1.8: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services. Social workers:
- Address policies that challenge and/or support achievement of client goals O2, O9
- Communicate to stakeholders the implications of policies and policy change to the lives of clients O2, O9

Educational Policy 2.1.9: Respond to contexts that shape practice. Social workers:
- Assess obstacles in organization and community contexts that may thwart client and community well-being O2, O3, O9
- Identify policies that support or compromise service delivery to particular populations or settings, or across levels of direct intervention O2, O3
• Demonstrate organizational evaluation skills that enable assessment, correction and strengthening of organizational performance. O1, O2

Educational Policy 2.1.10(a)–(d)  Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers:

2.1.10(a)—Engagement
• Develop culturally responsive therapeutic relationships O3, O6
• Attend to the interpersonal dynamics and contextual factors that both strengthen and potentially threaten the working alliance O5, O6
• Establish a process that encourages clients to be equal participants in the establishment of treatment goals and expected outcomes O1, O6

2.1.10(b)—Assessment
• Select and modify appropriate intervention strategies based on continuous assessment O1, O5

2.1.10(c)—Intervention
• Identify multilevel strategies for clients, based on empirical evidence, clinical judgment, and client preference. O4, O7
• Collaborate with other professionals to coordinate service delivery O2, O9

2.1.10(d)—Evaluation Advanced Practice Behaviors
• Collaborating with clients, develop and implement plans for monitoring and evaluating interventions and client progress. O1, O2
• Competently document the process and progress of work done with or on behalf of clients and incorporate in future practice O2, O5, O8

Upon completion of course, students will demonstrate the following knowledge and application of skills in working with groups:

1. Planning, assessment, practice and evaluation of social work practice with groups.
2. Agency and organizational impact in developing groups, and the ability to apply negotiation skills including advocacy, mediation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and systems change efforts which will lead to provision of enhanced group services as an essential approach in various settings.
3. The impact of diversity i.e. ethnicity, race, religion/spirituality, gender, age, sexual orientation and other issues on group planning, assessment and intervention.
4. A range of theories and group practice models.
5. Dynamics and interventions appropriate to the beginning, middle and endings of groups.
6. Group dynamics and processes (including leadership and member roles) in planning and implementing interventions with groups.
7. Evidence-based and promising group interventions to identify and build client strengths.
8. Values and ethics specific to social work with groups, including those that impact and emerge through the group experience.
9. Social work role as agent of change, working on connections between group and community practice to promote social justice, equity, and enhance functioning and improve social conditions.

Required Texts:


(2017). *Adelphi University School of Social Work Field Education Manual.* Available at: www.adelphi.edu (social work field education)

**Recommended Texts:**


**Availability of Readings:**

Required and some recommended readings are available through the library either in hard copy or e-reserve. Some instructors may elect to order a Course Pak of readings for this course and/or may provide some readings through a Blackboard or Moodle site for the class.

**Journals:**

*Groupwork*
*International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*
*Social Work with Groups*

**Websites:**

www.iaswg.org International Association for Social Work with Groups (formerly ASWG.org)
www.eaps.org Eastern Group Psychotherapy Society

**Student Assignments**

Students will be required to complete assignments that will take the form of written papers, logs, or group presentations. This will give students the opportunity to demonstrate their level of mastery of the course content. Class participation in-class demonstrations and class discussions is expected.

**Student Evaluation Criteria**

Criteria used for evaluating students may include performance in such areas as: written assignments (including depth of content, clarity of content, accuracy, and research adequacy), exams, class participation, and attendance. Individual instructors will provide students with written notification regarding the specifics of how grades will be determined in each section of the course.
Exam Assignment Policy

Adelphi University welcomes diversity in its community, and respects various religious observances. The University requires that students who anticipate being absent due to their religious observance, will notify their professors at the start of the semester. This will allow the faculty to take these observances into consideration in light of their course exam and assignment schedules.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when one does not give credit to another person’s ideas. It includes lifting paragraphs from a book, article, or the Internet, representing someone else’s work as your own, and failing to acknowledge the ideas of another person. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses. Penalties for academic dishonesty may include failure for the assignment, failure for the course, and/or dismissal from the program.

Grading Criteria

Students are expected to attend all class sessions, complete reading assignments and written assignments as assigned. Active participation in class discussions and class activities is required. Students will be evaluated on the basis of the quality of their written and oral work as this demonstrates appropriate acquisition and application of social work practice skills in supervision and staff development. The criteria for evaluation of student’s work are: mastery of course content; critical thinking; organization of material; writing ability; integration and application of course content to social work; and ability to conceptualize.

Graduate Grading Policy – Adelphi University School of Social Work

The numerical equivalents for letter grades are:

- A = 93 and above
- A- = 90-92
- B+= 87-89
- B = 83-86
- B- = 80-82
- C+= 77-79
- C = 73-76
- C- = 70-72
- F = below 70

The nominal definitions of letter grades are:

- A is awarded for excellent work
- B is awarded for good work
- C is awarded for marginal work
- F is awarded for failing work

An Engaged Learning Environment

Students can expect an engaged learning environment that is accessible to all individuals no matter their learning needs and talents. If you have a disability that may impact your ability to carry out assigned coursework, you are encouraged to contact the staff at the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS), located in Room 310 of the University Center, 516-877-3145, DSS@adelphi.edu. The staff will review your concerns and determine, with you, appropriate and necessary accommodations. All information and documentation of disability are confidential. If English is not your first language, please notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester.
Code of Academic Honesty

"The University is an academic community devoted to the pursuit of knowledge. Fundamental to this pursuit is academic integrity. In joining the Adelphi community I accept the University’s Statement of Academic Integrity and pledge to uphold the principles of honesty and civility embodied in it. I will conduct myself in accordance with ideals of truth and honesty and I will forthrightly oppose actions which would violate these ideals."

The code of academic honesty prohibits behavior, which can broadly be described as lying, cheating, or stealing. Violations of the code of academic honesty will include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Fabricating data or citations
2. Collaborating in areas prohibited by the professor
3. Unauthorized multiple submission of work
4. Sabotage of others’ work, including library vandalism or manipulation
5. Plagiarism: presenting any work as one’s own that is not one’s own
6. The creation of unfair advantage
7. The facilitation of dishonesty
8. Tampering with or falsifying records
9. Cheating on examinations through the use of written materials or giving or receiving help in any form during the exam, including talking, signals, electronic devices, etc.

Refer to: http://academics.adelphi.edu/policies/honesty.php or Adelphi University’s Undergraduate & Graduate Bulletins
Course Outline and Readings

I. Historical and Theoretical Background of Group Work Practice (Session 1)

A. Overview
   1. Why group?
   2. Definitions of Social work with groups, Group work, Group treatment, etc.

B. History: When, Where, and How Groups Began to be Used in Social Work.

C. The Settlement House Movement
   1. Social reform – Community organization
   2. Mutual aid
   3. Task groups

D. The Child Guidance Movement
   1. Activity groups
   2. Parent groups

E. Life Space and Therapeutic Community
   1. Day treatment
   2. Institutional settings
   3. Psycho-education groups

F. Group Therapy
   1. Theoretical models
   2. Practical technologies

Resource Readings


II. Models and Approaches (Session 2)

A. Common Elements of Social Work Practice with Groups
B. Development of Models and Approaches, Examples Including:
   1. Remedial And Rehabilitative Model (Vinter, Glasser)
   2. Social Goals Model (Phillips, Konopka, Coyle, Weiner)
   3. Reciprocal Interactionist Or Mutual Aid (Schwartz, Lee, Shulman, Gitterman)
   4. Psychodynamic Model (Yalom, Levine)
   5. Activity, Task Oriented, Structured, Action And Mixed Transactional Groups
      (Slavon, Garvin)
   6. Time-Limited Groups (Garvin, Reid & Epstein)
   7. The Mainstream Model (Papell & Rothman)
   8. Cognitive - Behavioral Groups
   9. Empowerment (Lee, Guitierrez)

Required Readings

Resource Readings


### III. Stages of Development (Session 3)

A. Overview of Stages in Social Work Practice – Application in Group Work

B. Comparison of Models of Stages of Development in Groups
   1. Simple Model: Preparation, Beginning, Middle, End
   2. Boston Model: Forming pre-affiliation approach avoidance, Power and control, Intimacy, Differentiation, Ending-separation-termination
   3. Relational Model: Pre-affiliation, Establishing a relational base, Mutuality and interpersonal empathy, Challenge and change, Termination.

D. Critiques and Comparison of Models

C. IASWG Standards for Social Work Practice with Groups

**Required Readings**


**Resource Readings**


### IV. Group Formation (Sessions 4, 5, 6)

A. Organizational Factors
   1. Agency purpose and function
   2. Organizational culture and environment
   3. Negotiating the System
   4. Handling agency resistance

B. Needs of Potential Members
   1. Psycho-social reasons for joining a group
2. Interpersonal reasons
C. Potential Group Purpose
D. Group Structure
   1. Site of group
   2. Space and time
E. Group Composition
   1. Heterogeneity vs. homogeneity
   2. Open or closed membership
   3. Commonalities of issues or diagnosis
F. Pre-Group Contact
   1. Screening of clients
   2. Pre affiliation
   3. Factors of attraction
G. Potential Group Content
H. Evaluation Plan
   1. Process evaluation
   2. Outcome/goal achievement assessment
I. Beginnings
   1. Purpose and goal setting
   2. Tuning – in affectively/intellectually
   3. Engagement
J. Contracting
   1. Agency goal
   2. Reaching for client goals
   3. Worker goals
   4. Reaching for consensus and commonality
K. Early Assessment
L Values and ethics in starting a group.

Required Readings
Resource Readings
Muskat, B., Mishna, F., Farina, F. & Wiener, J. (2010). “We may not like it but we guess we have to do it”: Bringing agency-based staff on board with evidence-based group work. Social Work with Groups, 33(2/3). 229-247.

V. Leadership (Session 7)

A. Worker-Authority Relations
   1. Structured
   2. Unstructured
   3. Transference/Countertransference
   4. Self-Disclosure

B. Group Leadership
   1. Co-Leadership
   2. Shared Responsibility
   3. Members as Helpers
**Required Readings**


**Resource Readings**


**VI. Middle Phase (Sessions 8, 9, 10)**

A. Identifying and Developing Themes within the Work Phase.
   1. Latent and manifest content
   2. Authority and intimacy
   3. Scapegoating

B. Identification of Themes

C. Detecting and Identifying Obstacles in Work

D. Values, Norms, Group Culture

E. Cohesiveness

F. Interventions
   1. Increasing interaction and communication
   2. Mediating the interactional process
   3. Making a demand for work
   4. Reaching for and relating to feelings
   5. Encouraging mutual aid
   6. Consensus taking-detecting false consensus
7. Interpretation and assessment
8. Dealing with major difference in group member characteristics

G. The Individual and the Group
1. Roles, sub-groups
2. Accepting difference
3. Identifying commonalities that help members deal with difference

H. Ongoing Assessment
1. Group as a whole
2. Individual in the group

I. Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Culture
1. Working with diversity among worker(s) and members
2. Working with diversity among members

J. Conflict and Decision-Making
1. Exploration of conflict and intimacy issues as growth-producing commonalty
2. Reaching for commonalty and acceptance of differences in consensus making.

K. Developing a Mutual Aid System
L. Psychodynamic Interaction

**Required Readings**


**Resource Readings**


**VII. Use of Program and Activity (Session 11)**

A. Program as a Tool

B. Gearing Tasks to Needs of Client Population
   1. Children and adolescents
   2. Adults
   3. Older Adults

C. Role of Worker

**Required Readings**


**Resource Readings**


Middleman, R. (1968). Chapter 2, Non-verbal and verbal Content: The components of program content, (pp 25-63) and Chapter 4, Non-verbal content and professional purpose, (pp. 89-106). In: The non-verbal method in work with groups. NY: Association Press.


VIII Specialized Groups and Small Group Presentations (Session 12, 13, 14)

A. Single Session Groups
B. Large Groups
C. Therapeutic Community Groups
D. Clubhouse Model
E. Participatory Research
F. Self-Help Groups
G. Psychodynamic
H. Psycho-Educational Groups
I. Virtual/On-Line Groups

Required Readings


Gutierrez & M.J. Galinsky. *Handbook of social work with groups*. (pp.139-159). NY: The Guilford Press.


**Resource Readings**


**IX Endings and Evaluation (Session 15)**

A. Termination as a Transitional Stage
   1. Transition/member
   2. Departure/worker departure
   3. Group termination

B. Factors in Termination Phase for Workers and Members
   1. Anxiety
   2. Denial
   3. Regression
   4. Fight or flight
   5. Recapitulation
   6. Graduation effect
   7. Saying goodbye

C. Evaluation
1. Purpose
2. Method and instrumentation
3. Understanding processes and outcomes

**Required Readings**


**Resource Readings**


