Preparing Participants for Group

HOW TO ENGAGE PROSPECTIVE CLIENTS IN MAKING AN INFORMED DECISION ABOUT GROUP PARTICIPATION

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Objectives

► Identifying some of the common reasons for group and why people dropout

► Provide information on the rationale for preparing participants for group

► Demonstrate a process for engaging individual participants in group before the start
Why Prep
Advantages of Group

1. Overcome feelings of isolation
2. Facilitates receiving and giving support
3. Promotes communication skills (finding voice)
4. Increases interpersonal skill
5. Promotes taking chances
6. Provides opportunities to learn from others
Challenges to Group Engagement

Common Reasons to Drop out:

- Less psychological mindedness
- Greater psychiatric symptomatology
- Greater intensity of target symptoms
- Hostility OR passivity
- Somatization of conflicts
Concrete Barriers

- Time, transportation, child care, work
- Can be masks for true underlying concerns
- ARE very relevant for certain groups (e.g. women in domestic violence groups, parent support groups)
Perceptual Barriers

- Emotions (anxiety)
- Expectations
- Social norms
- Attitudes (include past experiences)
- Self-efficacy
Research on Pre-group Prep

1. Retention and attendance
2. Reduced anxiety
3. Better participation processes (e.g. staying on task)
4. Increased faith in group
5. Group cohesion
6. Therapeutic processes (openness, self-disclosure)
7. Establishment of structure by leader
Purpose of Preparation

► Reduce anxiety
► Provide information: (1) details of group, (2) advantages of groups.
► Gain snapshot about interactional processes – directly or indirectly (e.g. How might the individual do in group?).
► Ensure a good match between the prospective participant and the purpose of the group.
► Begin to establish rapport
Shared Decision Making

START WITH THE CLIENT – NOT THE PRACTICE
Critical Features of Pre-group Interview

- Describe the purpose of the group
- Explore how group relates to the persons felt need/goal/interests
- Explore the participants past experiences and concerns about groups
- Review group guidelines and expectations
- Explore the alignment of the group theme with the participants felt need
- Provide/show sample of the curriculum or other materials
- Consider opportunity to “check the group out”
Describe the Purpose

► Clearly state purpose for the group
► Answer the 5 Ws –
  ▶ Who, What, When, Where and Why
► Closed or open
► Therapeutic, Support, Psychoeducational, Open-ended
Explore connection between purpose and participant

► Relate to the explicit needs of the client
► “The reason you’ve been selected or nominated for this group is that….”
► “In what ways would a group for _________ help you?”
► Summarize: Do you think that would be important to you? (e.g. connecting to others, learning how to cope with depression)
Explore Past Experience/Concerns

- Identify how those past experiences have impacted their attitudes about group
- Explore negative attitudes
- Address the negative attitudes
Preview Group Guidelines

► How will the rules be determined: Group leaders, participants, both?

► Decide before group what the basic rules are:
  ► Include rules to ensure group processes (e.g. self-disclosure, sharing information, good listening)
  ► Include safety in speaking and behaving (e.g. no belittling or abuse language)
  ► Attendance (e.g. arrivals and absences)
  ► Discuss confidentiality
Confidentiality

- All the normal limits (e.g. danger to self and others)
- Be particularly mindful:
  - People at hi-risk (e.g. victims of DV, HIV+)
  - Third-party communications (e.g. mandated clients)
  - Heightened possibility of extra-group communication (e.g. residential settings, schools, recovery programs)
Align with Felt Need

- Drill down from initial connection to specific needs
- Explore benefits and challenges of participation
- Explore both the topic/content of the group and group processes
  - Cover goals for treatment: “How do you think a group like this can help you get to your therapeutic goals?”
  - Obstacles to participation: “What are some things that might get in the way of your participating in group?”
Provide Overview of Materials

- Clearly layout specifics of the group, if applicable
- Develop brochures
- Have sample of materials available
- Review as necessary
- Decide in advance about loaning material
Provide an Opportunity to “Check Out”

- If applicable, determined in advance
- Discuss expectations for visit
- Provide realistic expectations about brief visit
- Attempt to get commitment to extended visit
Video Demonstration
Chat

WHAT ARE SOME POTENTIAL FACILITATORS TO PARTICIPATION?
Chat

WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBLE OBSTACLES?
Assessment of Intention

- **Facilitators of participation:**
  - Some alignment with goals of the group
  - No major concrete obstacles
  - Past experience with group neutral to positive

- **Obstacles to participation:**
  - Anxiety about group participation
  - Severity of depression
  - Passivity
Trouble Shooting

- Problem solve but consider counseling out
- Consider “check out”
- More than one pre-group session may be necessary
  - Further rapport building
  - Goal clarification
- Explore obstacles: perceptual or concrete
- Group (“Trial”) pre-group interviews could be helpful
How to Handle Referrals

- Explore the reasons for referral to group – complement to other therapy
- Coordinating efforts between individual therapy and group
- Consider using non-stigmatizing language – nominations vs. referrals
Thank you

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Useful Assessments

- The Group Readiness Questionnaire (GRQ)
  - measures are linked to good participation, positive client outcomes, and low attrition in groups

- Group Climate Questionnaire (GCQ)
  - designed as a self report to assess individual group members' perceptions of the group's therapeutic environment

- Group Questionnaire (OQ-GQ)
  - identifies how members perceive the relationship they have with the group-as-a-whole, other members and the leader on three salient qualities of the therapeutic relationship
Upcoming Events

Part 2: Group Processes
June 7, 2017 | 12–1pm

Part 3: Facilitation Utilizing ROPES
June 14, 2017 | 12–1pm

Part 4: Evaluation: Group Outcomes and Performance Indicators
July 13, 2017 | 12–1pm

Visit http://ctacny.org/creating-successful-group-experiences for more information
Thank you for joining us!