SOCIAL WORK WITH GROUPS
(Ragg, 2010, Garvin, 2011-2012)

CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING GROUPS

TREATMENT PLANNING ISSUES

1.   What need is this group responding to?
- ❑ social system,
- ❑ agency,
- ❑ worker,
- ❑ client,
- ❑ community,
- ❑ societal.

Given this need, how will I recruit members?

2.   What is the main purpose of the group (and how should I structure it for intimacy/authority)?

- ❑ treatment   (high intimacy/low authority),
- ❑ support (high intimacy/low authority),
- ❑ socialization (high intimacy/low authority),
- ❑ self help/self advocacy (mid intimacy/low authority,
- ❑ skills building (mid intimacy/mid authority),
- ❑ community action (mid intimacy/high authority),
- ❑ education (low intimacy/high authority),
- ❑ leisure (low intimacy/low authority).

Given this purpose, how should I structure the group to achieve the intimacy/authority level?

3.   What is the developmental level of the group members (what about ability levels)?
- ❑ pre-school,
- ❑ school aged,
- ❑ latency aged,
- ❑ pre-pubescent,
- ❑ young teen,
- ❑ older teen,
- ❑ young adult,
- ❑ middle aged,
- ❑ older adults in general,
- ❑ elderly

4.   Given all of the above, what method will be employed and why this method?
- ❑ play group
- ❑ art/crafts
- ❑ activity/interview
- ❑ educational
- ❑ outward bound
- ❑ drama/role play
- ❑ talk/discussion
- ❑ movement
- ❑ work
- ❑ community action
- ❑ mixed

PRAGMATIC ISSUES

1.   Where will the group be conducted?
Is the location suitable for:
- ❑ the method,
- ❑ the purpose,
- ❑ the developmental issues of the membership,
- ❑ the abilities of the membership,
- ❑ the transportation available and access needs of the membership,
- ❑ the family situations of the membership,
- ❑ support staff availability,
- ❑ the types of activities,
- ❑ the authority & intimacy needs of the group,
- ❑ the number of people anticipated,
- ❑ the type of problems the members might have.

2.   What resources will I need for the group to be successful?

3.   How long will each session last?
Will this length:
- ❑ overtax the members,
- ❑ be too short to achieve goals,

4.   How frequently will the group meet?
Will this:
- ❑ allow for continuity between sessions,
- ❑ overtax the members,
- ❑ interfere with other member plans (vacations, etc.),

5.   For how long will the group meet (how many sessions in all)?
- ❑ open vs. closed group,
- ❑ are number of sessions sufficient for meet the goals,
- ❑ should phasing be considered,

6.   How many people can I accommodate in the group?
- ❑ what is the maximum (before the program gets too watered down or unwieldy),
- ❑ what is the minimum (before absenteeism greatly impact the program),
- ❑ would a co-leader be feasible (will it allow more to be seen or better programming),
- ❑ what is the cost-benefit of co-leadership,

7.   At what time will the group meet?
- ❑ what issues might be associated with timing (e.g., after school, no busses running etc.)
- ❑ should you plan something in to make this easier (e.g., transportation, snacks etc.)

8.   Is transportation available / necessary?

9.   Is the room adequate?
- ❑ size of room (too big vs. too small for the group),
- ❑ equality of furniture,
- ❑ distractions (craft supplies, toys),
- ❑ chairs vs. couches,
- ❑ privacy protected,
- ❑ room for movement,
- ❑ appropriate size to the task,
- ❑ resources available in room, organized, user friendly,
- ❑ safety issues,
- ❑ location to wash room facilities (e.g., concern re. ex offenders),
- ❑ lighting and windows,
- ❑ limit or encourage interruptions,
- ❑ circle size,
- ❑ no table vs. table.

10.   How will progress be measured and documented?

FORMATION ISSUES

1. The group will be:
    - ❑ homogeneous,
    - ❑ heterogeneous.

2. How will the homogeneity/heterogeneity be selected and balanced?
    Things one may consider:

    Ascribed Characteristics
    - ❑ age range,
    - ❑ sex distribution,
    - ❑ race/ethnicity,
    - ❑ physical attributes,

    Other Member Characteristics
    - ❑ geographic location,
    - ❑ socio-economic status,
    - ❑ family constellation or types,
    - ❑ language,

    Behavioural Attitude Characteristics
    - ❑ problem type,
    - ❑ ability,
    - ❑ voluntariness,
    - ❑ sexual orientation,
    - ❑ maturity,
    - ❑ areas of interest,
    - ❑ activity levels,
    - ❑ self/other orientations,

3. Are any members not supposed to be together (or shouldn't be)?
    - ❑ survivor/perpetrator issues,
    - ❑ non association orders,
    - ❑ peer/gang affiliations,
    - ❑ past conflicts,
    - ❑ out of group prior relationships,
    - ❑ siblings.

LEADERSHIP AND COLEADERSHIP ISSUES

1. What is the justification for co-leadership?
    - ❑ own discomfort and fears about group,
    - ❑ just like working with the other worker,
    - ❑ significant improvements in programming,
    - ❑ allows more to be seen in group - should a second group be offered,
    - ❑ gender balance in leadership - what is the rationale for service outcomes,
    - ❑ can the use of two be realistically justified at the service level.

2. What style of group leadership will best meet the intimacy/authority needs?
    - ❑ permissive/laissez faire,
    - ❑ directive/autocratic,
    - ❑ democratic/empowering,

3. What is the style of available co-leaders
    - ❑ fit with your style,
    - ❑ fit too well and create gaps in leadership,
    - ❑ clash with your style,
    - ❑ other poor fit.

4. Will there be a primary leader and secondary leader hierarchy?
    - ❑ who will take the lead,
    - ❑ what are roles based on,
    - ❑ what functions will each fulfil,
    - ❑ what about recording, admin, liaison etc.,
    - ❑ is a hierarchy of skill inherent,
    - ❑ how does each want the other to interact,
    - ❑ how will differences be processed in the group,
    - ❑ respect agreements and identification of strengths.

5. What is the plan for meeting together and debriefing/tweaking and planning the group?
    - ❑ time availability after each session,
    - ❑ place for meeting about group,
    - ❑ time to help with set up,
    - ❑ other time commitments for planning.

6. Are there resources for expert consultation, supervision, feedback.
    - ❑ internal to the agency,
    - ❑ external resources,
    - ❑ are external resources legitimised by the agency structure,
    - ❑ is access to expertise available.