

SWRK 409

COMMON DYNAMICS AT THE ENDING STAGE

Ragg 2010, Garvin 2011-2012

Process Category	Group Dynamic	Typical Findings at this Stage
Structural	Decision Making	With the necessity of ending members often rely on the leader to resume control of the group's direction. Many members may regress slightly or make comments to try to avoid the impending end to the group.
	Role Structures	Roles continue to be flexible. There may be some emergence of old roles as the ending-related affect strains member coping skills.
	Control Mechanisms	The group again relies on the leader to assume a powerful position to help the group to resolve the anxiety and other feelings associated with ending. Members need to experience their affect which requires more activity in the formal leader roles.
	Boundaries	The boundaries begin to dissolve. Some members may leave the group early and reconnect to out-of-group relationships and priorities. Members want to retain the experience but can't visualize due to the boundary disintegration.
	Leadership	The leadership reverts back to the worker who must resolve the work and identify goal completion. Members often regress slightly and become more dependent during the ending process.
Interpersonal	Norms	Norms begin to break down because the ending is different from the earlier stages. The work now is to end rather than work together.
	Patterns of Affiliation	Relationships are ending. Some may mourn the loss of specific group member relationships. Unfinished business may emerge as the members attempt to resolve old tensions prior to losing their opportunity.
	Atmosphere	There is increased hesitation. Often memories of past endings taint the current ending creating emotional responses. Members must separate out past from the present responses to ending.
	Tension Management	Tension management again relies of the worker. Members often have their own internal resistance to ending so the leader must help members handle the stress of ending. This requires identifying positive memories, accomplishments, and growth in the group.
	Cohesion	Cohesion breaks down. Many feelings are selfish in nature so the sense of we-ness will dissolve. As issues of accomplishment are explored some relatedness can restore but the ending will erode cohesion regardless.