

Group Work in Agency Settings

(Ragg, 2010, Garvin, 2011-2012)

Implementing a Group Program in an Agency:

1. Monitor the agency caseload for problems and populations that would benefit from a group treatment approach.
 - a. Multiple people with similar issues.
 - b. Problems that are interactive or social in nature.
 - c. Problems that might lend themselves well to a mutual aid approach.
2. Raise the problems to supervisors and administrators highlighting that a group approach may be beneficial. When raising the issues make sure you:
 - a. Have a sense of how many clients would benefit from a group program.
 - b. The resources would be necessary from the agency to ensure a successful program.
 - c. The evidence that suggests that group intervention is an effective service for the types of problems identified.
 - d. The potential savings to the agency or other benefits by adopting a group approach.
3. Get permission to explore a group service model for intervention. If you can get permission start planning an initial group. Make sure you think through all of the programming and have a system to assess your outcomes.

Challenging and Enhancing Group Programs in an Agency

1. Observe the group programming and attempt to understand the organizational functions and reasons the group is fulfilling.
2. Identify the investments in the current program. How invested is the agency and the staff who are providing the group program.
3. If there are no investments, identify room for improvement in how the group programming is provided. Make sure you:
 - a. Use the evidence and professional knowledge base to create interest in improving the effectiveness of the program.
 - b. Identify financial implications either good or bad to construct a cost benefit analysis.
4. If there are investments try to find ways to add a supplemental program (e.g., a next phase) that builds on the original program. If this is not possible, be careful because you may be viewed as interfering.
5. Take time to carve out group programs that will allow you to practice group work in a way that is consistent with your learning.
6. Try to form alliances with other people in the agency and across agencies who approach group work the same as yourself. You will need a peer group or consultation group that can support continued learning and tweaking.