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Curriculum Plan “Social Work with Groups with Youth”

# Introduction

Social Work with Groups (SWG) with adolescents has been a very important part of the Social Work discipline since the beginning of the profession. However, the education, practice and research on Social Work with Groups have varied from time to time and from place to place.

The media and the social imaginary generally have portrayed adolescence as problematic and scary, as an “in between” stage full of disturbance. Adolescents face problems as people in any other stage but they are whole persons already.

At the same time, the number of adolescents and youth at risk of social exclusion is increasing together with the inequality. Group work is becoming a popular answer for addressing those problems but many professionals lack the skills or the knowledge to work with groups.

Group Work is a methodology that allows participatory process addressing individual needs from a group perspective. Nowadays, SWG is undergoing difficult times due to a general shift towards a more individualized and managerial trend for social intervention.

This course will address the theoretical aspects about group work with adolescents with the focus in the improvement of the group work skills and methodology with a critical perspective.

## Target Group

This is a course for professionals who have experience in working with youth/adolescents.

## Credits and certificate

6 ECTS credits. (European Credit Transer System)

## Period

2 months

# Objectives

The main objective of the course is to improve and promote group intervention with adolescents and youth by learning about its elements and characteristics. The course is intended to generate a reflective and interactive atmosphere, where the theoretical and practical aspects of practice are integrated.

The final product of the learning experience will be a plan for a group of adolescents, so the different aspects of knowledge acquired will be exposed.

## Content

The content of the course will be related to the following topics:

-Group work main characteristics.

-Planning process in Group Work.

-Adolescence as a stage in the Lifespan. Social perceptions, prejudices and developmental milestones of the age group.

-Youth and social aid.

-Socio economical characteristics of participant´s environment and its relationship with group practice.

-Institutional conditions for group work.

-Socio educational groups. Pedagogical perspectives.

-Facilitation skills

- Use of program Activities in Group Work.

-Conflict resolution

-Participation in groups.

-Diversity in Group Work

-Evaluation

# Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, participants will be able to have competencies at a cognitive, practical and ethical level. Though the three aspects appear to be divided, they will be integrated in the course.

### Knowledge

Students will demonstrate knowledge about how to:

-Define adolescence and youth from a critical perspective

-Describe and analyze the social and organizational impact on group work

-Choose a group work pedagogical perspective to implement in practice

-Explore the dynamics and interventions appropriate to the group stages of development.

-Define and explore possibilities for participation in group work.

### Skills

Students will know how to:

-Plan a socio educational group with youth

-Develop an assessment plan

-Use of self-reflection as a mean for professional improvement.

-Interact and learn from other professionals and exchange good practices in group work.

-Address group problems and dilemmas in a collaborative manner.

### General Competencies

-Identify values in group work.

- Reflect upon the connections between group and community practice to promote social justice and equity.

-Use of self-reflection as a mean for professional improvement.

# Learning and teaching approach

The learning and teaching methodology is related to the constructivist theories, so active learning will be promoted. A problem solving/ task centered approach will guide the structure of the tasks. There will be a strong emphasis on the interaction with other participants and the practical implications of the theoretical elements exposed.

The course has also a pragmatic objective: to be useful for the daily practice of the professionals.

It will consist of weekly tasks that will be filed in a final portfolio. Participants will have 2 weeks at the end of the course to improve the tasks if considered necessary.

Some of the tasks and feedback will be collaborative, so interaction with other students will have a very important role in the course. There will also be a group meeting every other week.

# Course Requirements

-Participants must have experience working with adolescents. It is preferable that the participants facilitate a group while being at the course.

-Internet Access.

-Educational level: High school Diploma or equivalent. Professional Training qualification.

-English language skills. The required level is a B2 (Comprehension and expression- written and oral)

# Assessment

The final assessment will consist on a Portfolio presentation of all the tasks performed during the course and a plan for a short term group with adolescents. Besides, tasks developed by students during the course will receive a feedback from teachers and/or other participants, to have the chance to reflect upon and improve the tasks before the final portfolio.

Self-assessment will be used as well as a tool for improving the daily practice. Every two weeks, participants will present a blog in their portfolio about an issue that came up in their daily practice and would like to reflect upon.

# Readings

International Association of Social Work with Groups.(2015) Standards For Social Work Practice With Groups. Second Edition. [www.iaswg.org](http://www.iaswg.org).

Doel, M. (2006). Difficult behaviour in groups. *Social work with groups*, *28*(1), 3-22.

Hämäläinen, J. (2003). The concept of social pedagogy in the field of social work. *Journal of social work*, *3*(1), 69-80.

Hughes, N. (2011). Young people ‘as risk’ or young people ‘at risk’: Comparing discourses of anti-social behaviour in England and Victoria. *Critical social policy*, *31*(3), 388-409.

Lavie-Ajayi, M., & Krumer-Nevo, M. (2013). In a different mindset: Critical youth work with marginalized youth. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *35*(10), 1698-1704.

Malekoff, A. (2015). *Group work with adolescents: Principles and practice*. Guilford Publications.

Chapter 1. Adolescent development, Risk and Opportunity. (pp.3-20)

Chapter 3. Strengths-Based Group Work with Adolescents (pp.41-68)

Chapter 4. Planning in Group Work: Where We Begin (pp.69-97)

Chapter 17. On Becoming a Reflective Group Worker. (pp. 373-382)

Wayne, J. & Cohen, C. (2001). Group Work Education in the Field.

Chapter 2. The Special Value of Social Group Work: Implications for Intervention. (pp. 5-16)