

Abstract

The purpose of this presentation is to illustrate how to put in practice the specifics of social work with groups for men with anger issues. It describes the various stages by which a cognitive-behavioral group for men dealing with anger, could be transformed into a group of mutual aid. It highlights the importance of considering the structural and social conditions that help keep these men in difficulty.

CONTEXT

In a men's community organization, an anger management group with a first wave CBT approach had several challenges and limitations.

During my internship in social work, my main objective was to incorporate all stages of group planning, implementation and evaluation (Lindsay and Turcotte, 2014), while putting forward the specifics of social work with groups.

FINDINGS

The evaluation of the last three editions of the group illustrated the need to review its structure. Here are the comments of the participants and the findings:

- Absence of pre-group meetings;
 - High dropout rate;
 - Predetermined structure, too theoretical, unsuited to their realities and needs;
- Individualized intervention in group;
- Insufficient opportunities for participation;
- Theory is too individualized and difficult to understand;
- The improvement in the management of participants' emotions was not explained by the integration of the theory.

THE SPECIFICITIES OF GROUP SOCIAL WORK

How social work with groups was utilized:

1. The importance of planning: matching individual, group, organization and community needs and taking social and structural dimensions into account when defining the problem – a group adapted to the participants and not participants adapted to the group (Turcotte and Lindsay, 2014).

2. Power sharing: the group was structured in conjunction with the pre-group meetings. The objectives, themes and structural aspects were determined by the participants according to their needs and realities. The content of the meetings was flexible and open to modifications (Steinberg, 2008).

3. Socially just inclusive group: Opportunities for inclusion of quieter participants with created; an inclusive group culture was promoted; offensive behavior was highlighted and participants were invited to share their opinions (Ortega and Garvin, 2019).

4. Group phenomena and dynamics: Activities were planned to promote cohesion at appropriate stages and allow a strong understanding and adherence to the group goals and norms. Strategies favoring communication and interactions between participants were used (i.e., spatio-temporal changes, use of subgroups, reinforcements, etc.) (Toseland, Jones and Gellis, 2004).

5. Mutual aid: From the pre-group meetings, the development of mutual aid was promoted by putting forward the following standards:

- Authenticity: daring to say the real things, experimenting with new ways of being and doing through activities, working together to make sense of various points of view.
- Participants were encouraged to practice self-awareness by using their experiences and speaking on their behalf. Participants' strengths were put forward and used within the group.
- Participants saw themselves as sources of information, help and support (Steinberg, 2008).

IMPACTS



Participant Retention Rate

	CBT group W. 2019	CBT Gr S. 2019	Mutual aid gr. W. 2020
Total registrations	14	17	12
Participants present at the first meeting	10	10	9
Drop-out rate (at most 2 meetings)	43%	82%*	25%
Average number of participants per meeting (8 meetings)	7	4	9

Figure 1. Comparison of participation in the two previous editions of the group. * In this edition of the group, only 2 participants in the last 4 group meetings (out of 8 meetings).

The post-course transformations noted by the participants:

Previous groups: Change of way of thinking (work on cognitive distortions) allowing them to reduce their anger; let go.

This edition: Talk about their frustrations and their emotions; accept being vulnerable; have healthy lifestyles (doing hobbies that make them feel good); use their other emotions as an engine for change; be more focused on the positive and their progress; involve their loved ones in their transformation (as catalysts) and speak openly of their anger to their children and/or their spouse; use the energy, confidence and "strength in numbers" as fuel to try new ways of doing things and being assertive in a healthy and efficient way; improving their listening skills, empathy and their ability to accept divergent opinions.

In the mutual aid group:

Participants adopted **life changes beyond healthy management of their emotions**. They were able to **act on their environment** by involving their loved ones in their changes and demonstrated a willingness **to use their learnings to help other people struggling with similar difficulties**.

REFERENCES

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