**This Activity has been developed for an E-Pedagogy course(2018) Social Work VIR-CAMP, a European Platform for on-line teaching. www.vircamp.net.**

**Author: Linda Ducca Cisneros.** **lducca@ucm.es**

**Activity (based on a screen lecture)**

***Introduction***

During this week we will discuss and learn more about the use of activities in group work. Many times, activities are used without a purpose or because we need “time to kill”. However, activities are part of the content of the group: what we do and must be coherent with the purpose of the group and the other elements of the planning. Even though activities are not the only element to consider in group work, they are perceived by adolescents as a fundamental aspect to continue attending the sessions.

**Lecture**

**Expected learning outcomes for the period**

The student will demonstrate knowledge about how to:

-Plan activities

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

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

**Tasks:**

Watch the screen lecture: Activities in group work.

Task 9: Plan and activity for your group. Specify the developmental stage of the group and the group general description. Include: objectives, contents and activity description.

Do not forget the activity has to be in accordance with the pedagogical perspective.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objectives/Content | Tasks  | Deadline | Feedback  |
| Facilitation Skills -Use of program Activities in Group Work.  | Screen Lecture: Activities in Group Work. -Task: Activity Planning |  |  |

**Readings:**

Kelly, B. L., & Doherty, L. (2017). A historical overview of art and music-based activities in social work with groups: Nondeliberative practice and engaging young people’s strengths. *Social Work with Groups*, 40(3), 187-201.

Lecture Script

-Hello! Today´s lecture is about activities in group work with adolescents. Activities are a fundamental part of group work, but sometimes we do not really find the connection with theory, and we just do things without thinking. So this lecture is about how can activities help to reach the group´s purpose.

-In this chart, that you might find really familiar, we cannot see the activities at all, but they are present. So I´ll give you two seconds to think about the position of the activities in this chart.

Well, I hope that you found some place for activities.

Activities are what we do in the group, so they are generally part of the content. At the same time, they are strongly linked with the purpose of the group. Each activity has its own purpose but it helps to reach the overall purpose of the group. We go out, not because we want to but because we think it can help with the socialization of the kids. It has also to do with the need of the participants and the other elements of the structure. At the same time, we need to be aware of the institution we work for and the social context.

-So, which aspects should we consider when planning an activity? Please, pause the video and think at least about ten aspects we should consider.

Well, how was your list? I hope you have some of these elements in it.

The time and location are very important elements to consider in an activity. For example, if we plan a very long activity and we only have half an hour, the activity won´t be concluded so it won´t have any sense. The same happens with the location. If we do a moving game in a place full of furniture, that might even hurt people and won´t help to reach the purpose of the activity.

The resources we have are fundamental. We do not need many, but we need the necessary ones. For example, if we are going to do a painting activity and we don´t have paintbrushes, the activity won´t happen at all.

The purpose of the activity in the session must be linked with the whole purpose of the group. Coherence must lead our actions. Before planning an activity, we need to know our group and we need to think about the possible effects on that group activity. For example, I was facilitating a group of social workers and I did a theater activity. They have to make a statue of a problem, and they did a family. In the scene, the mom and the dad were fighting and quarrelling and a little baby was crying in the corner. When the activity finished and we all discussed the statue, the “baby”, the person that was acting as a baby, couldn´t stop crying. So, we need to address the situation, talk with the other participants, and help that person to recover from the activity. Generally, activities can bring up feelings and we need to be able to know ahead how to deal with them.

Activities must be fun. I mean, not all of them. There are times for everything. Sometimes we need to be serious but we need to consider that adolescents need to engage with activities. They need to be involved with the activities. The degree of engagement we ask for activities must be considered beforehand.

The degree of engagement we ask for activities is very important. Do we want the kids to be really involved in our activity? Or we can consider different ways of participating? For example, if we are going to perform a play and one of the kids don’t want to get involved with it, maybe he or she can get involved with another activity. For example, directing it, preparing the props or other elements.

We also need to consider that the degree of difficulty is strongly related with the purpose of the activity. Is the activity going to be too easy that the participants do not have any engagement to it? Or is it going to be so hard that they are going to be frustrated. But if for example, if we have the purpose of experiencing frustration, that could be a possibility. We need to know that participants will have another opportunity of accomplishment in the groups.

With adolescents we need a lot of flexibility. People might not feel like working one day. So we need to find a balance in seeking the purpose of the group and listening to the voices of the participants. We also need to provide flexibility in participation. Sometimes people can participate in a different way.

The role of the facilitator is also another aspect we must consider. Are we going to be really active? Or we are going to have a passive role in the activity? It is not something we leave aside. For example, in one group, we were asking personal questions, and of course the adolescents encouraged me to talk about my personal questions as well.

Another element we consider is the roles of the participants. Are they all going to have the same role in the group activity? Or they can take different ones? Activities can be a possibility to change the “normal” roles we acquire in life.

We also need to see the stage of group development the group is in. For example, at the beginning of the group’s activities are generally directed to get to know the other participants and to create the sense of belongingness of the group. During the middle stages, we need to have activities that help to solve the problems we face during that phase. For example, conflicts or role distribution.

-Mar Doel, called activities action techniques, because he thinks that groups should not be only about discussion. However, we can do many many things doing discussions. For example, we can do a very structured discussion, we can take cards and talk about topics. Talking is a very important element that can be combined with other activities.

-Hardware activities are those that require a hardware to take place. For example, in the experience above, a group of adolescents with professionals made a movie about a love story. Those kids are considered “at risk”, so they did a “risky” movie. They usd technology, the learned new skills to produce a movie. That really helped to the group coherence, to the empowerment of the participants, and the results were excellent. In the second example we can see a radio mixer. Radio can be another opportunity to give voice to people and to create things together.

-Another possibility is written activities. The example above there is a community project that is all over Argentina where people get together and design poetry and then they go outside and paint it in the wall. It´s been replicated in many parts of the world and it really helps to give people a voice and to give a message to the community. And this can have a impact in the community and in the group, because people feel really well when they can give their message to the neighborhood. In the second experience, they are members of latin bands who work together to recreate and re think about the concept of

being an inmigrant and being part of a group. So in this activity they have to write a few words about what they think about Latin America, the police, immigration, the city they live in… So after reading this they can discuss and think about different solutions for their lives, or at least state what they think.

-We can use different elements to express. For example, in the paint up there, I´ve seen an introduction activity in a group of girls in which they have to present themselves showing what they had in their bags. SO in this way they used objects that identify them 2in order to introduce themselves. Another example can be a yarn. With a yarn you can do many activities: a net to the introductions, some games. So here we need to use our imagination and we can use almost every object to create an activity.

-So here we can see some experiences. For example, graffiti can really help children to express themselves. In the second one, drawing can be an important tool to help people express things that cannot be expressed with words.

-Here we can see some outing from a group of people formed by university students and adolescents at risk of social exclusion. We can see outings and getting together activities and can really help integration.

-So, why include activities in group work and not just talking? It is not a new topic. Since the beginning of group work with adolescents, activities have helped to reach the group purpose. They are founded on evidence based practice.

And because people need different channels of communication. We can use art, another kind of activities that can help to reach all different kinds of learning styles. We generally work with population who experience trauma have important problems in life and they are difficult to engage. Doing something that is not related by the specific problems, can help to open up.

-This is Sumiko Iwamuro and she is a DJ who is 82 years old. I brought this picture she is a very old lady who is not “supposed” to be a DJ. Sometimes we need to do different things to explore our possibilities. The same happens with activities. One group worker from the Bronx told me once that facilitating groups is like being a DJ. The activities we use are different songs from different genres that we need to mix and get together and make

them ours. At the same time we need to feel the vibe of the crowd and try to arrange these songs and mix them in order to get to them. So, I really hope you liked this lecture and got to know more about activities.

-Thank you very much. Here you have some references and you can see the whole videos that are referenced as well.