THEORY AND PRACTICE OF

GROUP COUNSELING

GERALD COREY

Theory and Practice of Group Counseling

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- Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy
- Manual for Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy
- Groups: Process and Practice *(with Marianne Schneider Corey)*
- I Never Knew I Had a Choice *(in collaboration with Marianne Schneider Corey)*
- Professional and Ethical Issues in Counseling and Psychotherapy *(with Marianne Schneider Corey and Patrick Callanan)*

To Marianne Schneider Corey,
my wife for 16 years
and the midwife of my books.

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Preface

Group counseling is an increasingly popular form of therapeutic intervention in a variety of settings. Although there are many textbooks on the market that deal with groups, very few of them present an overview of various theoretical models and describe how these models apply to group counseling. The purposes of this book are to outline the basic elements of group process, present an overview of the key concepts and techniques of 11 theoretical approaches to group counseling, attempt an integration of these approaches, and deal with some ethical and professional issues special to group work.

Theory and Practice of Group Counseling is written in a clear and simple style, so that students with little background in counseling theory will have no difficulty understanding the theoretical concepts and their relationship to group practice. The book focuses on the *practical applications* of the theoretical models to group work. Part I presents an overview of the various types of groups; the stages in the evolution of a group, from its formation to its termination and follow-up; and some basic issues in group membership and group leadership.

Part II examines 11 theoretical approaches to group counseling. Here the chapters follow a common organizational pattern, so that students can easily compare and contrast the various models. A typical chapter introduces the rationale for the model and its unique characteristics; discusses the model's key concepts and their implications for group process, as well as the model's basic procedures and techniques; defines the role and functions of the group leader according to the approach being discussed; and, when applicable, describes the stages of development of that particular group process. Each of these theory chapters concludes with my own evaluation of the approach under discussion. The annotated lists of reading suggestions at the end of these chapters are offered to stimulate students to expand on the material and broaden their learning through further reading.

In Part III, I have applied the 11 models to a group in action in order to illustrate how practitioners of different orientations would view a particular group and how they might deal with certain typical themes that emerge in groups. The aim of these illustrative samples of group work is to make the theoretical perspectives come alive and to provide some flavor of the differences and similarities among the approaches. Another chapter compares and contrasts the various group approaches with respect to their views on the goals of group counseling, the role and functions of the group leader, the degree of structuring and the division of responsibility in groups, as well as the use of techniques. The chapter concludes with a description of an "integrated eclectic model of group," which utilizes concepts and techniques from all the other models examined and which should help students attempt their own personal integration. The final chapter discusses a variety of professional and ethical issues that affect the practice of group counseling.

This book is for graduate and undergraduate students in any field involving human services—from counseling psychology to social work. It is especially suitable for students enrolled in any of the courses under the general designation of "Theory and Practice of Group Counseling." The book is also for practitioners who are involved in group work or who are training paraprofessionals to lead various types of groups. Others who may find this book useful are psychiatric nurses, ministers, social workers, psychologists, marriage and family counselors, and mental-health professionals and paraprofessionals who lead groups as a part of their work.

A *Manual for Theory and Practice of Group Counseling* is available to help students gain maximum benefit from this book and actually experience group process and group techniques. The manual includes questions, suggested activities for the whole class and for small groups, ideas for self-directed groups, summary charts, self-inventories, study guides, group techniques, and examples of cases with open-ended alternatives for group-counseling practice. An *Instructor's Resource Manual* is also available.

I want to express my appreciation to several people who have helped me in many ways as I was writing this book. My greatest thanks go to my wife, Marianne Schneider Corey, who has offered help, criticism, advice, and encouragement, and to my close friends and colleagues J. Michael Russell and Patrick Callanan, who have contributed greatly to my views of group process and to my group-leadership style. The four of us have been co-leading groups for the last eight years; the ideas and experiences that we have shared have profoundly influenced and greatly enhanced my skills as a group practitioner.

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Gerald Corey

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PART I

Basic Elements of Group Process: An Overview

Chapter 1
Introduction

Chapter 2
Stages in the Development of a Group

Chapter 3
Group Membership

Chapter 4
Group Leadership

CHAPTER

1

Introduction

Many of you who are in the human-services field will find that you are expected to use group approaches in your work for various types of clientele and for a variety of purposes. In a state mental hospital, for example, you may be asked to design and lead groups for different kinds of patients, or for those who are about to leave the hospital and are getting ready to be reintegrated into the community, or for the patients' families. Some of the group approaches commonly used in mental-health hospitals are insight groups, remotivation groups, assertion-training groups, recreational/vocational-therapy groups, as well as specific kinds of groups such as reality-therapy, transactional-analysis, and Gestalt groups or one of the many forms of behavior modification done in a group setting.

If you work in a community mental-health center or in a day-treatment clinic, you will be expected to provide therapeutic services in a wide range of group settings. A sample of groups commonly offered in these community facilities includes consciousness-raising groups for women (and for men), groups for alcoholics and for their families, groups for adolescents with drug habits, crisis-oriented groups for people in some immediate crisis situation, groups for senior citizens, and groups for parents who are trying to communicate more effectively with their children.

The school is the setting of special groups designed to deal with the students' educational, vocational, personal, or social problems. If you work in a school, you may be asked to form a test-anxiety-reduction group, a career-exploration group, a group aimed at teach-

ing interpersonal skills, or some type of self-awareness or personal-growth group.

In sum, for almost any need you can think of, you can find some type of group approach designed to help people meet that need. One of the main reasons for the popularity of the group as a primary therapeutic tool in many agencies and institutions is that the group approach is frequently more effective than individual approaches. This is due to the fact that group members can practice new skills both in the group and in their everyday interactions outside of it. There are practical considerations, too, such as cost and distribution of the available counselors and therapists.

The problem, however, is that even people with an advanced degree in one of the helping professions often have had very little exposure to the theory and techniques of group work. Many of these professionals find themselves in the role of group leaders as part of their job requirements without adequate preparation and training. It is not surprising that some of them—literally thrust into a group and expected to be responsible for providing the necessary leadership—panic and don't know where to begin. Although this book is not intended as an exclusive means of preparing competent group leaders, it is aimed at giving you some preparation for coping with the demands of group leadership.

About This Book

Theory and Practice of Group Counseling is designed to introduce you to some basic issues and key concepts of group leadership and membership and to show you how groups function. The text is also designed to provide you with a good overview of a variety of theoretical models underlying group counseling, so that you can see the connection between theory and practice. In writing the chapters that describe these models, I've selected what I consider to be some of the more significant aspects of each theoretical approach. I have worked toward simplicity, clarity, and conciseness, and I have chosen a common format for the chapters, which should enable you to make comparisons among the various models.

From this text you will learn only some of the essentials of the therapies explored. The text is *not* designed to make you an expert in any one group approach. Its aim is to provide you with an understanding of some of the significant commonalities and differences among these theoretical models. My hope is that you will become sufficiently motivated to select some approaches and learn more about them by doing additional reading (which is suggested after each chapter) and by actually experiencing some of these group approaches as

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