

Task Groups
Support Groups
Psychoed Groups
Problem Solving
Ecology
Social Justice
Interpersonal
Interdependent
Counseling Groups
Cohesion
Strengths
Rainbow
Helping
Preventing
Climate
Group Dynamics
Change
Diversity
Work
Group
Growth
T-groups

HOW TO HELP LEADERS AND MEMBERS LEARN FROM THEIR GROUP EXPERIENCE

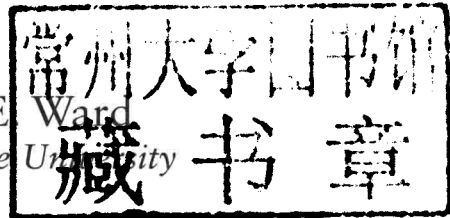
Donald E. Ward
Christopher A. Ward

Endorsed by the Association for Specialists in Group Work



How to Help Leaders and Members Learn From Their Group Experience

Donald E. Ward
Pittsburg State University



Christopher A. Ward
*Center for Creative Leadership
Greensboro, North Carolina*

 SAGE

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC



Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC

FOR INFORMATION:

SAGE Publications, Inc.
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320
E-mail: order@sagepub.com

SAGE Publications Ltd.
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London EC1Y 1SP
United Kingdom

SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd.
B 1/I 1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area
Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044
India

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte. Ltd.
3 Church Street
#10-04 Samsung Hub
Singapore 049483

Acquisitions Editor: Kassie Graves
Editorial Assistant: Elizabeth Luizzi
Production Editor: Brittany Bauhaus
Copy Editor: Megan Granger
Typesetter: C&M Digitals (P) Ltd.
Proofreader: Rae-Ann Goodwin
Indexer: Marilyn Augst
Cover Designer: Anupama Krishnan
Marketing Manager: Shari Countryman

Copyright © 2014 by SAGE Publications, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record of this book is available from the Library of Congress.

9781483332260

This book is printed on acid-free paper.



13 14 15 16 17 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

SECTION D

Processing

Both group members and leaders learn from experience, but they learn more powerfully from the meaning they derive from their group experience

Other Books in the Group Work Practice Kit

What Is Group Work? (9781483332314)

Effective Planning for Groups (9781483332307)

How to Form a Group (9781483332291)

Groups: Fostering a Culture of Change (9781483332284)

How to Select and Apply Change Strategies in Groups (9781483332277)

How Leaders Can Assess Group Counseling (9781483332253)

Groups in Community and Agency Settings (9781483332246)

Group Work in Schools (9781483332239)

How to Help
Leaders and
Members Learn
From Their Group
Experience

We dedicate this book to those who have been most important to us as people, mental health professionals, and group workers: the Wards. To Don's mother and father and Chris's grandmother and grandfather, Dorothy and the late Earl Ward, whose selfless work and love have served to establish and maintain our family as a strong, cohesive group, we express our deep appreciation. To Susan Ward, Don's wife and Chris's mother, and to Sarah Ward, Chris's wife and Don's daughter-in-law, we are thankful for your calm, loving, giving, steadfast support. To Jenny Ward Glenn, Don's daughter and Chris' sister, and her husband, Jereme, we are strengthened by your faith and courage in the face of challenge and your optimism, charity, and love. And to Don and Susan's grandchildren, Annalise and Benjamin Ward, and Johnathon, Jacob, Joshua, and Julie Glenn, we are grateful for the great joy you bring to our lives and comfort in knowing that you will carry the family group on in the future.

Preface

How do members and leaders learn from groups? What a deceptively straightforward question! Of course, one of the fascinating characteristics of humans is that we learn in many ways and in many contexts. Margo can learn from simply considering her situation and revising how she will approach things. Luke may learn by carefully observing how others around him and in his group act and change. A way that helps Tamra change is direct instruction, consistent with a psychoeducational approach to learning and group work and with the widespread use of cognitive-behavioral interventions. Of course, these and other learning mechanisms require training to apply them skillfully and maximize their impact for use by professional mental health workers.

The focus of this book, however, is on the creation of a powerful social learning climate within treatment groups, within which multiple layers of interaction become pathways for members to learn from self-reflection, their interaction with other members, and the positions they hold in the group itself. If leaders have developed the skills to establish such a working group, they can apply processing strategies to help members identify, explore, and revise undesired thoughts, feelings, and behavior, and then apply the new learning in their everyday lives. Helping members reflect on themselves, their relationships and interactions with other members, and the way their consistent patterns of behavior affect and are affected by the group itself to examine the meaning of these influences is the primary intervention of leaders of interpersonally oriented groups. To use meaning attribution most effectively to aid in the reflection process, leaders must have a thorough understanding of the group dynamic processes underlying the behavior of members, and they need to engage in reflection on the group processes between group meetings to understand clearly and apply accurately the meaning they accrue from this reflection.

The first three chapters of this book provide a foundation of theoretical support and research and evidence-based support for leader and member learning in groups. The fourth chapter describes the major elements of the interpersonal group culture and the process of processing. Examples are provided to bring the concepts alive for the reader, and the chapter concludes

with a brief summary. A brief discussion of the use of processing in work/task groups is included near the end of Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents case examples of a leader facilitating member processing in a group and of the leader engaging in between-meeting processing to aid herself in the process of conceptualizing members, their interactions, and group functioning, and to use this understanding to plan effective facilitative processing in subsequent group sessions. The final chapter provides recommendations of activities that can facilitate leader learning and increase processing skills. Many readers may wish to read the book from the first through the last chapter. Others with an understanding of the conceptual and research support for group work may wish to move directly to the fourth and fifth chapters to focus on the foundation of group dynamics and application of processing skills. We invite you to immerse yourself in the rich content of this book in whatever manner best suits your needs.

We are passionate about the value of including processing as a major component of group work, consistent with the foundational assumptions of the Association for Specialists in Group Work and the American Group Psychotherapy Association. We hope that this book provides you with a basic introduction to or meaningful review of the processing approach. The benefits are great for members of groups whose leaders successfully apply a processing model to maximize member learning.

Brief Contents

PREFACE	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Theoretical and Conceptual Support	5
Chapter 3: Evidence Base and Supportive Research	11
Chapter 4: Elements of the Interpersonal Group Culture and the Process of Processing	19
Chapter 5: Case Examples of Processing and Groups	49
Chapter 6: Learning Exercises	57
REFERENCES	61
INDEX	67
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	71

Detailed Contents

PREFACE	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Theoretical and Conceptual Support	5
Chapter 3: Evidence Base and Supportive Research	11
Research Support for Member Learning in Groups	11
Research Support for Leader Learning in Groups	14
Summary of Evidential Support for Learning in Groups	17
Chapter 4: Elements of the Interpersonal Group Culture and the Process of Processing	19
The Interpersonal Group Culture	19
The Interactive Group Culture	20
Therapeutic Factors	20
Leadership Factors	22
Leadership Style	22
Leadership Functions	23
Membership Factors	24
Selection and Composition	25
Dual Facets of Group Work	25
Membership Roles	26
Group Development	28
Conceptual Levels of Group Activity	28
Group Developmental Stages	29
Mediating Variables Affecting the Development of the Process Group	32
Leadership Style and Effectiveness	33
Psychological Maturity and Motivation of the Members Sufficient for the Group Task	33
Characteristics of the Group Purpose or Task	34

Membership Stability and Group Size	34
Time Available for the Purpose or Task of the Specific Group	35
Organizational, Institutional, Cultural, and Societal Expectations	35
Processing to Learn From	
Interpersonal Groups	35
Feedback	36
Processing Models	40
Yalom's Interpersonal Model	41
Cohen and Smith's Critical Incidents Model	41
Glass and Benschhoff's PARS Model	42
Stockton, Morran, and Nitza's Conceptual Map	42
Smead's Model for Working With Children and Adolescents	42
DeLucia-Waack's Model Using Music With Young People	43
Brown's Model	43
Jacobs, Masson, Harvill, and Schimmel's Model	44
Chen and Rybak's Interpersonal Processing Model	44
Conyne, Crowell, and Newmeyer's Model	44
Work/Task Groups	45
Additional Dynamic Variables Affecting Groups	46
Processing Techniques for Work/Task Groups	46
Team Charters	46
Process Check-Ins	47
Use of a Process Observer	47
Conclusion	47
Summary	47
Chapter 5: Case Examples of Processing and Groups	49
Member Learning Through In-Group Processing	49
Leader Learning Through Between-Group Processing	53
Chapter 6: Learning Exercises	57
Practice Processing Transcript of the	

Dialogue of a Group Session	57
Practice Processing Commercially	
Available Recordings of Groups	58
Live Observation of Processing	
in a Group	58
Processing a Recording of a Group Meeting	
in Which You Were a Leader	59
Role-Play Practice in a Group of Fellow	
Students or Colleagues	59
REFERENCES	61
INDEX	67
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	71

1

Introduction

The use of groups to provide prevention, psychoeducation, and counseling and therapy to enhance human experience has developed from a practice modality viewed as minimally potent by the majority of mainstream mental health providers a half century ago to a modality viewed as “exploding” (Conyne, Wilson, & Ward, 1997, p. vii) near the end of the century—and its use continues to increase. Some of this rapid expansion has been driven by the impact of economic forces on health care, but equally influential have been the rapid development of effective group theory and practice as well as demonstration of evidence for the efficacy of the group modality through research (e.g., Burlingame, Fuhriman, & Mosier, 2003; Burlingame, MacKenzie, & Strauss, 2004; Burlingame, McClendon, & Alonso, 2011; Kusters, Burlingame, Nachtigall, & Strauss, 2006) and consensus clinical wisdom (American Group Psychotherapy Association, 2007; Thomas & Pender, 2008). It should not be surprising that the use of groups has become ubiquitous for a variety of tasks (Ward & Litchy, 2004). Forsyth (2010) stated, “The tendency to join with others in groups is perhaps the single most important characteristic of humans, and the processes that unfold within these groups leave an indelible imprint on their members and on society” (p. 1).

The American Association for Specialists in Group Work’s *Best Practice Guidelines* (Thomas & Pender, 2008) conceptualizes the delivery of effective group work as consisting of three major steps: planning, performing, and processing. The processing step in the model is central and twofold. On the one hand, group leaders should help members examine themselves; their interpersonal interactions; and whole-group issues, norms, and themes as they relate to them inside the group and to their lives outside of the group. Leaders should also continually examine and extract meaning from their perceptions of member, member–member, and whole-group activity to understand the needs of the members and the group. This represents reflective practice, seen as the essential activity in effective and meaningful interpersonally oriented group work (Conyne, 1997; Rapin & Conyne, 2006). As a result, leaders should then be able to use this understanding to intervene

effectively in the group and to plan for effective future performance. For group members, processing involves engaging in and reflecting on their in-group experiences and how they relate to their everyday experiences (Ward, in press; Ward & Litchy, 2004). They then may use the new meanings they extract to consider and initiate change in their thoughts, feelings, and/or behavior.

A wide range of group applications are in current use, from individual work in a group setting to the establishment and implementation of a complex interactive group culture in which member–member and whole-group interactions are added to leader–member influences to facilitate exploration, learning, and change. This book emphasizes the powerful and fascinating use of processing in interpersonal groups to maximize productivity, learning, and change. Some of the myriad ways leaders process information privately or in collaboration with coleaders or supervisors, and how members engage in and reflect on personal processing—often with the help of the leader and, in some cases, in mutual collaboration with other group members—will be described. Although some of this activity originated in individual theories and approaches to counseling and therapy, an interpersonal model provides the potential for leaders to facilitate the development and application of multiple sources of change through interpersonal learning in a social context. Since extensive attention is directed at teaching processing at the individual level in most mental health practitioner training programs, more attention will be given here to leader processing of interpersonal or member–member interaction and group-as-a-whole interaction, although the focus will also be directed at member individual, intrapersonal processing resulting from member–member and group interaction. As explained in the American Group Psychotherapy Association’s (2007) *Practice Guidelines for Group Psychotherapy*,

Elucidation of group process serves a critical function in group psychotherapy. It contributes centrally to both the successful development of the group itself as a viable and therapeutic social system in which interpersonal interaction occurs and to the individual learning about self in relation to others. These are the mechanisms through which therapeutic change occurs. (p. 36)

Working to develop meaningful relationships and a group climate conducive to member engagement, examination, processing, and change is increasingly recognized and applied to some extent in most types of group work today. The practice guidelines continue:

There is a growing appreciation of the importance of understanding these overt or covert group processes so that the therapist may modulate anti-therapeutic forces and enhance positive ones (Lieberman, Yalom, & Miles, 1973; Ward & Litchy, 2004). This is relevant even in

those settings where the explicit examination of group process is not considered part of the usual therapeutic work (such as CBT (Bieling, McCabe, & Antony, 2006) and psychoeducational (Ettin, 1992) groups). (American Group Psychotherapy Association, 2007, p. 36)

What are some of the major influences that have led to the current understanding of the value of process-oriented groups, with multilevel processing as the focal point of group work?

Some of the theories developed to conduct therapy with individual clients, such as psychoanalytic, rational emotive behavior therapy, reality therapy, Gestalt therapy, and especially cognitive behavioral therapy (see Corey, 2012, for summaries of major theories that have also been applied to group work) were often adapted to perform essentially individual counseling and therapy in a group setting and did not make extensive use of the powerful interpersonal and group-level mechanisms available to foster individual learning in groups (Ward, 1982). This was typical of applications of counseling theories that had been originally developed for individual counseling and were implemented in group work (see Ward, 1982). A number of these theories have been expanded in recent years to include attention to the interpersonal and group levels of group activity to increase group productivity and member learning. Contemporary group practice may maintain this focus on individual thoughts, feelings, and behavior through the use of these individual theories and techniques. However, many have included work at the interpersonal and group levels to tap those powerful sources of group learning to maximize member outcome.

As a founder of the interpersonal school, Sullivan's (1940, 1953) work has had a strong influence on increasingly interpersonal and group-level processing models of group work, as reflected in the interpersonal group therapy model of Yalom (1970, 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005). Sullivan theorized that individuals seek to form secure attachments in childhood, especially with parents, and then act in ways that help them feel accepted by and connected to others. When secure attachment is not achieved, the individual often compensates by misinterpreting the meaning of others' behavior. As Brabender (2011) stated,

The interpersonal view of personality is highly compatible with group psychotherapy, because this modality provides a venue wherein parataxic distortions can be corrected by the individual's access to the observations of group members. Members in the group have the opportunity to obtain feedback on others' perceptions of their behaviors, and the reactions members have to those behaviors. . . . This idea that the learning a member achieves with the group is transferable outside involves another concept critical to interpersonal theory, the *group as a microcosm* (or little world). From an interpersonal perspective, individuals manifest their interpersonal style wherever they

go. . . . Inevitably within the group, those behaviors that create difficulties for members in their everyday lives will appear and evoke responses characteristic of those reactions of others outside of the group. (p. 465)

Although the value and application of processing to enhance learning in counseling and therapy groups is the focus of this book, it is important to note that the advantages of building work/task groups into teams have also received increasing attention in recent years. By definition, deeply personal psychological learning and change is not the goal of these groups. However, skilled leaders and managers often build interactive work teams and use processing to enhance the application of existing group skills and knowledge to the external tasks toward which work groups are directed. A brief introductory summary of the use of processing in interactive work teams is presented at the end of Chapter 4.