Group Therapy: Often the Ideal Assistance
Here’s Why...

“Just What is Group Therapy Anyway?”

In group therapy, approximately six to ten individuals meet face-to-face with two group counselors and talk about what is troubling them. Members also give feedback to each other by expressing their own feelings about what someone says or does. This interaction gives group members an opportunity to try out new ways of behaving and to learn more about the way they interact with others. What makes the situation unique is that it is a closed and safe system. The content of the group sessions are confidential; what people talk about or disclose is not discussed outside the group.

The first few sessions of a group usually focus on the establishment of trust. During this time, members usually work to establish a level of trust that allows them to talk personally and honestly. Group trust is enhanced when all members make a commitment to the group.

“Why Does Group Therapy Work?”

When people come into a group and interact freely with other group members, they usually recreate those difficulties that brought them to group therapy in the first place. Under the skilled direction of a group therapist, the group is able to give support, offer alternatives, or gently confront the person. In this way the difficulty becomes resolved, alternative behaviors are learned, and the person develops new social techniques or ways of relating to people. During group therapy, people begin to see that they are not alone. Many times people feel they are unique in their problems, and it is encouraging to hear that other people have similar difficulties. In the climate of trust provided by the group, people feel free to care about and help each other.

“What Do I talk About When I Am In Group Therapy?”

Talk about what brought you to the Counseling Center in the first place. Tell the group members what is bothering you. If you need support, let the group know. If you think you need confrontation, let them know this also. It is important to tell people what you expect of them.

Unexpressed feelings are a major reason people experience difficulties. Revealing your feelings—self-disclosure—is an important part of group and affects how much you will be helped. The appropriate disclosures will be those that relate directly to your present difficulty. How much you talk about yourself depends upon what you are comfortable with. If you have questions about what might or might not be helpful, you can always ask the group.

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