5

Theories and Models in Social Group Work

*Ranjana Sehgal

Introduction

Social group work is based on the idea of man as a constantly developing human being in necessary and significant interactions with other men. He is shaped by others and also shaping others. Apart from basic needs, he needs to belong, to be an important individual, and to participate. Every human being requires help to fulfill needs, and to deal with dissatisfactions and frustrations in life. Social group work practice facilitates the development of the individual's personality through guided group interaction. Help is possible only when there is utilization of group potentialities through interaction. Thus, understanding group behaviour is indispensable and has utmost importance in the group. Theories in social group work help to understand this group behaviour. Since a particular way of group behaviour is the main modality for fulfilling needs or in other words for bringing change in the environment or in the member's intrapersonal or interpersonal relationships, social group work uses various models or approaches to accomplish group goals. The present endeavour, hence, in this chapter will be to discuss various theories and models of social group work.

_____

*Dr. Ranjana Sehgal, Indore School of Social Work, Indore

Theories in Social Group Work

'Theory' is a plausible or scientifically acceptable general principle or body of facts offered to explain phenomena. For example, Social Learning Theory describes how human behaviour is a product of environmental, social and personal factors. In the context of group work, theories are on the whole scientifically accepted facts or statements for understanding individuals and their relationships with others. Therefore, group work is based on eclectic theory of individuals and groups. There are no independent theories as such in social group work method, but in the core of social group work practice, we use theories of individual dynamics and theories of group dynamics borrowed from various disciplines for understanding group behaviour. Now we shall discuss those theories.

Theory of Individual Dynamics

An individual is understood, in social group work, on the basis of psychoanalytic theory and cultural components as well as knowledge of social psychology and sociology.

Importance of early childhood experiences: A child initially engages in one-to-one relationship i.e. interacts only with the mother. Later on, he/she begins to interact with others outside the mother. The earliest experience of interaction within the family or outside provides the child a valuable mental and emotional learning experience which he/she begins to apply as he/she grows and begins to reach out beyond the intimate family group to peers (Konopka, 1963). Thus, these experiences have a great impact on personality development.

Man's actions are influenced by unconscious motivation as well as by his capacity to act consciously and rationally: This concept is directly related to group work practice. The group worker guides

the individual members in a group to participate in the programme activities and to relate to other members in the group in order to fulfill certain personal and social needs. In other words, the capacity to control difficult inner forces can be achieved and the insight of the individual can be strengthened through constant interaction with others through group work.

The concept of ambivalence: *The* human being can experience two opposing emotions at the same time towards the same person or situation. In case of change, they wish to be involved in the change process, but at the same time they resist change and desire to keep their identity as it is.

Development theory of human being: Human beings pass through various stages in their life. In the first year, when child is under the loving adult, a sense of trust is established. In the next stage a sense of autonomy, is felt when the child can understand the boundaries of his/her self-determination. The third, fourth and fifth stages are sense of initiative, sense of industry and a sense of identity respectively. Sense of intimacy, which comes next, is the beginning of interest in the other sex and in marriage. Adulthood is the period of parental sense. The last stage is the sense of integrity when a well-integrated adult can accept himself as different from others and yet able to have and accept others (Friedlander, 1976). Having accepted this developmental theory, a group worker tries to know whether the group member with whom he deals with constantly has had adequate development through their different stages of developments. He needs to lessen some of their negative experiences. The worker also facilitates positive group experiences to compensate for the developmental lags.

Group association changes as per the need and focus in the group, depends on group goals: Every person in his/her lifespan belongs to three types of groups i.e. primary group (the family) where he is born, friendship groups, and the vital-interest groups. The primary group or family plays a fundamental role during childhood, the friendship group is most important in adolescence, and adulthood seeks vital interest groups. A person in his adulthood forms a new family, becomes a parent and feels the reversal of roles. A social group worker may apply the same logic for fulfilling group member's needs. His focus or emphasis is intricately related to group goals. In 'growth-oriented' groups (eg. therapeutic groups), the worker is aware of every individual's specific needs, whereas in 'task-oriented' groups (eg. adult community groups), although focus is on every individual's needs, more emphasis is on the accomplishment of group goals (Friedlander, 1976).

Theory of Group Dynamics

When an individual belongs to a group, his behaviour is determined not only by his inner forces but also by the people around him. Hence, apart from the individual dynamics, a social group worker must know the group dynamics or various concepts of the group process. These concepts include: acceptance or rejection, isolation (neglected and rejected) sub groups, group bond, group hostility and group contagion, group support, and group conflict.

Acceptance or rejection: A group worker must know every individual group member's relationship with other group members or how much power each one has over the other i.e. whether he is accepted by others or isolated. If a member is isolated, the group worker must know the meaning and causes of isolation. It may be because the individual's behaviour has offended the other members

due to variations in Socio-cultural background or personality differences. Sometimes the situation is worse than the isolation i.e. the individual is rejected by the group and exposed to open hostility. Thus the questions of isolation or rejection need to be addressed by the group worker by handling interpersonal and intrapersonal issues in the group.

Sub groups: There is no group where all members come together to perform every task Formation of sub groups are very natural and they emerge spontaneously. The group worker has to observe whether these sub groups threaten the unity of the group or are friendly formations. He has to act accordingly. It should be known that emotional acceptance of the inevitability and legitimacy of sub groups is a pre requisite for good and skillful group work. A worker who works against the sub groups, loses the whole group (Konopka, 1963).

Group bond*:* It refers to 'group cohesiveness' or 'sense of belonging'. It is the force bringing group members closer. Group bond may be emotional or task-related. 'Emotional bond' derives from the connection that members feel to other group members and 'task-related bond' refers to the degree to which group members share group goals and work together to meet these goals. The effectiveness of a group can be understood through group bond. The main factors that influence group bond are: members' similarity, group size, entry difficulty, group success, and external competition and threats. Thus, group bond is a powerful aspect of group dynamics.

Group hostility and group contagion: Group hostility, in most of the cases, is found among the exploited or depressed or minority groups. Hostility means aggression or resentment or unfriendliness. A very fine man or gentle person can express hostile attitude because of the fact

that he is part of a hostile group atmosphere. Group contagion is the tendency to catch and feel emotions that are similar to and influenced by others in the group. In this regard, Barsade (2002) comments: 'It is a process in which a person or group influences the emotions or behaviour of another person or group through the conscious or unconscious induction of emotion states and behavioural attitudes'. Group contagion may occur during examination or when two children are upset in a camp or when some external threats come.

Group support: Any work becomes easy in a group when support and courage come from other members. A child having good behaviour does not have any motive towards stealing but he/she may do it while interacting in a group. We find in group therapy that each individual shares experiences with others 'who are in the same boat' and accumulate moral support, information as well as advice on the problems and experience growth opportunities. The group support thus is an instrument for solving individual problem in the group.

Group conflict: There exists no group without any conflict. Maturity of a group can be understood by observing how a group resolves conflict. Normally conflict can be solved or mitigated through withdrawal of one part of the group (giving up or running away or starting another group), subjugation (powerful part forces others to follow their wish), majority rule (major people decide action), minority consent (minority agrees with any option), compromise (each party agrees to the limit set by them), and integration (conflicting opinions are discussed and reworked for solution) [Konopka, 1963]. Integration is the most mature way of conflict resolution (Friedlander, 1976). The worker, while performing the helping role in a group, should have knowledge on 'group conflict' for better handling of the clash or arguments and decision-making.

Models of Social Group Work

In the initial days, the conventional view for the purpose of group work was prevention, but afterwards group workers were gradually involved in treatment as a primary goal. As group workers embarked on practice in a range of settings, they attempted to describe repeated patterns of phenomena and to define practice in the language of science. This led to the development of a wide variety of theoretical models for practicing group work. A model enables the group worker to focus on problems in a holistic manner. What kind of model to be employed in a group today depends on the group goals or objectives or purposes. There are several classical as well as a few contemporary models and we shall discuss here the major models seemingly found in practice.

Papell and Rothman (1966) have pioneered three models i.e. the social goals model, the remedial model, and the reciprocal model. These are at the core of social group work tradition.

Social Goals Model: The settlement house movement, the social movement, the labour union movement, and the women's movements of the 1930s in USA are the roots of the social goals model (Sullivan et al., 2003). The central focus of this model is on 'social consciousness' and 'social responsibility'. It helps members of the community to work on solving social issues and bringing about social change for oppressed populations. The model has a strong avowed social values stance. Cohen and Mullender (1999) assert that the social goals model is referred to in recent literature as social action group work. The principles of democratic group process are fundamental to this model. Principles guiding practice involving the social goals model include: clarification of agency policy, positive use of limitations, identification with agency goals, determination of

appropriate issues for collective action, and the weighing of alternatives for action and their consequences (Papell and Rothman, 1966).

Remedial Model: The function of the remedial model is the treatment of individuals. It tends to be clinically oriented. The model focuses on those who have problems of adjustment in personal and social relations (Fatout, 1992). A worker undergoes this model while dealing with a group of persons with emotional problem or teaching skills of daily living to a group of mentally handicapped children. The group worker, in this model, is viewed as a change agent who facilitates interaction among members of the group to achieve change. He is in a some-what superior position than the group members whose social skills are impaired or not fully developed. The worker using this model exercises considerable authority, instructs model behaviour for group members, and creates an atmosphere which motivates individual growth. The group participants here are regarded as clients rather than members (Brandler and Roman, 1999). The remedial model is widely used in mental health centers, correctional institutions, family service organizations, counseling services, schools, health care facilities, and in many other agencies.

Reciprocal Model: The reciprocal model has been derived from the systems theory, field theory, social psychological theories of behaviour, and the practice principles that are a part of generic methodology for social work (Skidmore et al., 1988). There is a duality of attention in this model i.e. it serves both the individual and society. In other words, reciprocal model focuses on the major concerns of both social goals model and remedial model at the same time (Fatout, 1992). According to Papell and Rothman (1966), the thrust of this model is to establish a mutual aid system and worker or members do not keep here any preconceived

goals. The image of the worker is a mediator or an enabler who is viewed as a part of the worker-client system.

Researchers have studied to understand how small groups develop. Thus, we find several models of Small Group Development such as Kurt Lewin's Model, Tubb's Model, Fisher's Model, Tuckman's Model, Poole's Model, Gersick's Punctuated Equlibrium Model, Wheelan's Model, and Team Model. These have been discussed here briefly:

Kurt Lewin's Model: Kurt Lewin is remembered for coining the term 'group dynamics'. His model of individual change is a stepping stone for many pioneers who have contributed theoretically. Kurt Lewin's model has three stages such as unfreezing, change, and freezing in a change process or small group. The first stage makes effort to remove lethargy or sluggishness and dismantles the existing 'mind set'. The second stage is the transition phase that brings change. In the last phase, the new mindset is crystallized and individual becomes stable.

Tubb's Model: Stewart Tubb studied small group interaction and developed systems model with four phases such as orientation, conflict, consensus and closure. In the first phase, group members introduce each other, start talking on the problems and examine the strengths as well as weaknesses. Ideas are evaluated through conflict in the second phase. Conflict ends in the third phase and the last stage announces result.

Fisher's Model: Fisher's model of decision emergence outlines four phases i.e. orientation, conflict, emergence, and reinforcement. In the first phase, members get to know each other and experience primary tension. Second phase is meant for conflict and marked by secondary tension. Members there disagree with each other and debate ideas. Group's tasks as well as members' viewpoints become

apparent in the emergence phase and group members bolster their final decision in the last phase (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/group_development).

Tuckman's Model: Bruce Tuckman having reviewed almost fifty studies in the mid nineteen sixties proposed a new model of group development. The model initially (in 1965) had four stages, but later on (in 1977) added one more stage and thus today it includes forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning stages. Forming is the first stage when individuals are collected and each member is preoccupied with issues of joining or inclusion. Confusion, low morale, hidden feelings, poor listening, and un-involvement are visible more in this phase. Storming stage is the point at which members are beginning to seek individual roles or space and conflict arises as they search for compatible tasks or struggle for status in the group. In the third phase, there are establishment of norms or accepted ways of doing things. Group culture emerges. Members start using the term 'our group'. Group develops trust, cohesion and a degree of intimacy (Brown, 1986). Performing is the fourth stage where group becomes self-sufficient and use all the skills as well as potential of the members to achieve its aims and solve problems. In the last phase group disbands

Poole's Model: Marshall Scott Poole's multiple-sequences model addresses decision making. The model has several tracks such as task track, topic track, relation track, and breakpoints. The tasks track refer to the process by which the group accomplishes its goals. The topic track concerns the specific item the group is discussing at the time. The relation track deals with the interpersonal relationships between the group members and breakpoints occur when a group switches from one track to another (Poole, 1981).

Gersick's Model Gersick's punctuated equilibrium model

suggests, that groups develop through the sudden formation, maintenance, and sudden revision of a 'framework for performance'. The model works in the following way: Phase I – The first half of the groups calendar time is an inertial movement whose direction is set by the end of the group's first meeting. In this meeting, members behaviours may be influenced by prior expectations, contexts relating to the sponsoring organization, and preferred behaviours. Midpoint Transition – at the midpoint of the allotted calendar time, groups undergo a transition during which the direction of the group is revised for phase 2. Gersick calls this a 'problematic search and pacing' which stems from the group's awareness of problems. Phase 2 - the second period of inertia focuses on carrying out the plan formulated during the transition. Progress may spurt ahead in order to reach a markedly accelerated conclusion (Cole, 2005).

Wheelan's Model Susan Wheelan's 'integrated model' of group development has five phases i.e. dependency and inclusion, counter dependency and fight, trust/structure, work/productivity, and final. The first stage is characterized by significant member dependency on the designated leader, concerns about safety, and inclusion issues. In the second phase, members disagree among themselves about group goals and procedures. The next phase shows, member trust, commitment to the group, and willingness to cooperate increase. The fourth stage of group development is a time of intense team productivity and effectiveness. Separation and members appreciation of each other are addressed in the final phase (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/group_development).

Team Model : Team Evaluation and Maturation (TEAM) model identified by Morgan, Salas and Glickman has seven main stages such as first meeting (forming), unstable situation (storming), accommodation (norming), inefficient

patterns of performance (performing-I), re-evaluation and transition (reforming), effective performance (performing-II), and completion of assignments (conforming). The TEAM model postulates the existence of two distinguishable activity tracks present throughout all the stages i.e activities that are tied to the specific tasks being performed and activities devoted to enhance the quality of the interactions, interdependence, co-operation, etc. (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/group_development).

We have discussed so far a number of models for group work practice, nevertheless there exist many more models. Allan Brown (1986) has classified those, even though arbitrary, based on the major differences in aims. These clusters of models are as follows:

Intake Models: Brown, Seymour Hankinson, Stephens, Todd and Barcome, are popular for these models where focus is given on contact initiation or individual assessment or orientation about agency function. These models are primarily concerned with the intake process when an individual first engages with an agency, and not with specific interventions such as the provision of support, achievement of change or the amelioration of a specific situation.

Guided Group Interaction Models: The guided group interaction approach was originally developed by Lloyd McCorkle in the late 1940s in the treatment of military offenders (Harstad, 1976). The basis or central focus of this model is positive peer culture. Individuals normally learn deviant behaviour, attitudes and values from the peer groups. Therefore, the present model is used in reverse sense i.e. it carefully constitutes peer group as a vehicle for changing behaviour from the anti-social to the law-abiding. The key principle is to mix offenders with ex-offenders and others in the residential or day care setting with programmes that have positive peer culture.

Problem-Solving, Task-Centred and Social Skills Model: This group of models is concerned with solving specific behavioural problems, achieving specific tasks or developing specific behavioural skills. Every model belongs to this category does not have exclusively a group approach as it uses a blend of individual, pairs and group methods. The major emphasis is on co-operation rather than competition, safe and structured environment, building self-esteem and using positive reinforcement practice.

Psychotherapeutic, Person-Focused Models: These models are concerned with the person, his feelings, emotions and relationships. The aim is to strengthen an individual's mental health and self-concept. Psychoanalytic group therapy, gestalt therapy, psychodrama, transactional analysis and so on come under this category of models. In psychoanalytic group therapy, the therapist interprets the behaviour of the clients, the content of discussion, looking for patterns that will reveal intrapsychic conflicts or maladaptive defenses. Gestalt therapy is an existential and experiential psychotherapy that focuses on here-and-now approach. It enables an individual to get in touch with immediate problematic experience and emotion, and work through the conflict. Psychodrama is used to express problems, issues, concerns, dreams and highest aspirations of person through spontaneous and dramatice role-play. Experience in action, rather than words, is the touchstone of this model. Transactional analysis is an integrative approach because it has elements of psychoanalytic, humanist and cognitive approaches. It emphasizes a pragmatic path in treating patients or develops models to assist understanding of why certain treatments work.

Mutual Aid or Self-Help Models: The concept of mutual aid was first elaborated by Kropotkin (1903), one of the most important evolutionary theorists and socio-biologists

of his time. The Mutual Aid Model of group work practice proposed by Schwartz (1961) was introduced in the article "The Social Worker in the Group". Schwartyz envisioned the group as an "enterprise in mutual aid, an alliance of individuals who need each other in varying degrees, to work on certain common problems". This type of group is largely self-governing and provides its members with a source of mutual help and support. In India, at present, self-help model is used very widely in micro credit programmes in order to alleviate poverty. Alcoholic anonymous group is also example of this type.

There are also a few models based on psychotherapist care such as NEEDS-ABC Model, Neurolinguistic Model etc. A brief description about these is as follows:

NEEDS-ABC Model: Tom Caplan has developed this model based on decades of actual practice in group and family setting. The model emphasizes the theme-based relational needs behind maladaptive behaviours, rather than the behaviours themselves. ABC means 'acquisition and behaviour change' which may be applicable to a wide public within the field of psychotherapeutic care of clients engaging in group, couple and marriage therapy. The present model is an integrated therapeutic approach that combines observation, elucidation of client and group process, using concepts also described in cognitive-behavioural, motivational, narrative and emotion-focused model (caplan, 2008).

Neuro–Linguistic Model: This model is a systemic imaginative method of psychotherapy with an integrative-cognitive approach. It aims at goal-oriented work with a person paying particular regard to his/her representation systems, metaphors and relation matrices. The model helps to position the selectively good intentions underlying the symptoms of illness and/or dysfunction so that old fixations about inner and outer unproductive behaviour

and beliefs can be dissociated and sound behaviours and beliefs can be established and integrated. This approach, as a method of personal development and communication training, is also used in other fields: education, counseling, supervision, coaching, management training and health psychology (www.nlpzentrumat/nlptarteng.html).

Conclusion

We have understood, in this chapter, theories and models used in social group work. Theories are the scientifically acceptable body of facts that help to understand individual behavior as well as to carry forward the group process. Though this group process itself is a greatest teacher, group members sometimes feel puzzled and can not set any direction. It is then that the group worker enters in the scene and helps through his/her knowledge on theories. With regard to models, there are many classical as well as contemporary models. The war on poverty and demands of group work in therapeutic settings during 1960s, 1970s and 1980s has propounded numerous new models in this field. Therefore, the final consideration in selecting a single model for practice with groups is very important and the same depends on the competence of the practitioner. Simply knowing the model is not sufficient competence. Worker must examine, before selecting any model, whether they possess adequate knowledge and skills to make maximum use of the same model. Many practitioners feel, in order to resolve this problem, it is always better to use an eclectic model i.e. multiple models for best interest of the client system.

References

Barsade, S.G. (2002), 'The Ripple Effect: Emotional Contagion and Its Influence on Group Behaviour', *Administrative Science Quarterly,* 47, 644-675.

Brandler, S. and Roman, C. (1999), *Group Work: Skills and Strategies for Effective Intervention,* New York: Haworth Press, P-8.

Brown, A. (1986), *Group Work,* England: Gower, P-74 to 80.

Cohen, M.B. and Mullender, A (1999), 'The Personal in the Political: Exploring the Group Work Continuum from Individual to Social Change Goals', *Social Work with Groups,* 22(1), pp3-31.

Cole, M.B. (2005), *Group Dynamics in Occupational Theory: the Theoretical Basis and Practice Application of Group Intervention,* New Jersey : SLACK Incorporated, P-33.

Caplan, T (2008), *Needs ABC: Acquisition and Behaviour Change Model for Group Work and Other Psychotherapies,* Whiting & Birch Ltd: London.

Friedlander, W.A. (1976), *Concepts and Methods of Social Work,* Prentice Hall of India: New Delhi.

Fatout, M. (1992), *Models for Change in Social Group Work,* New York: Aldine de Gruyter, P-12-13.

Harstad, C.D. (1976),'Guided Group Interaction: Positive Peer Culture', *Child and Youth Care Forum,* Vol-5, No-2, P-109-120.

Konopka, G. (1963), *Social Group Work: A Helping Process,* Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Kropotkin, P. (1903), *Mutual aid: A Factor of Evolution,* Indy Publish.com: Mclean, Virginia.

Poole, M.S. (1981), 'Decision Development in Small Groups I: A Comparison of Two Models', *Communication Monography,* 48, 1-24.

Papell, C and Rothman, B. (1966), 'Social Group Work Models: Possession and Heritage', *Education for Social Work,* 2 (Fall), 66-77.

Sullivan et al. (2003), *Social Work with Group: Social Justice Through Personal Community, and Societal Change,* New York: Haworth Press, P-67.

Skidmore et al. (1988), *Introduction to Social Work,* New Jersey: Prentice Hall, P-84.

Schwartz, W. (1961), 'The Social Worker in the Group'. In B. Saunders (Ed*.), New Perspectives on Services to Groups: Theory, Organisation, Practice,* National Association of Social Workers: New York, P-7-29.

www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/group_development, www.nlpzentrum.at/nlptarteng.html

6

Stages/Phases of Group Development

*Ranjana Sehgal

Introduction

Today, the importance of group work as an effective method of social work intervention is being increasingly realized. More so when professionals from other fields, such as Psychology, Psychiatry and Management have also become appreciative of its value. The need for satisfactory group life is a fundamental need of human beings. All of us are in search of meaningful relationships in our social milieu, irrespective of our age, religion, class or caste. The modern day living is characterized by a sense of alienation and isolation where one feels lonely amidst the sea of humanity. This can be a frustrating experience, further accentuating our need for a sense of belonging. Social Group Work fills this vacuum by providing not only the pleasure of association, but also giving an opportunity to the members to utilize and enhance their capabilities and to develop themselves.

While Social Group Work, is a method for the group worker, for the members it is a significant new experience designed to give them an opportunity to come together and fulfill their needs and desires through a group process. From its inception to its termination, a group goes through various stages of development, and experiences on which the

—————
*Dr. Ranjana Sehgal, Indore School of Social Work, Indore

members put their own interpretations. While for some it may be the first opportunity to carry out any responsibility, for others it may be an important means of giving expression to their needs and for still others it may be a way of development of some skill.

Let us now understand the concept of group development and its various stages.

Group Development and its Stages

What is Group Development?

Group development is a process of the growth and progress of a group towards full maturity over a period of time with primary focus on the relationships in the group. In Social Group Work through guided group experience, the group is helped to develop responsibly and with maturity. From the stage of forming the group, to its termination, through carefully and well planned programme activities, the group is helped to achieve its potential. "Regular meetings of the group, a wider interaction among the members, a free flowing conversation, laughter, general spirit of cooperation and accommodation, are signs of a positive environment in a group, reflecting a clear sign of group development" (Siddiqui, 2008) Group development, thus, is an index of the specific level of growth, task accomplishment and emotional integration of the members which goes through different stages. Understanding the stages of group development helps in developing appropriate ways of intervention in the group process so as to bring about group's growth and induce behaviours that help in achieving group goals.

Indicators of Group Development

1) Attendance
2) Punctuality

3) Definite meeting time and attendance

4) Development of a formal organization

5) Willingness on the part of the members to undertake initiative and responsibility

6) Increased innovation and motivation

7) Controlled behaviour of the members

8) High level of participation

9) Emergence of leader

10) Shift from 'I' and 'Me' to 'We' and 'Us'

Stages of Group Development

The achievement of the goals is the objective of any professional encounter; the tasks are done with a purpose. The Social Group Work process is conceived of as one that is systematic and proceeds through stages also referred to as phases. A group can pass through various stages of development; from the initial stage where it may appear as a mere assembly of individuals, it can go on to become a group with a strong 'we feeling'. The stages and the activities associated with it provide structure and direction to the process. The different stages are but a reflection of the process of maturity of the group. Theoretically, we may segregate different stages of group development for conceptual clarity but in reality they are intertwined. Throughout the stages there are two concerted concerns of the Social Group Worker, namely, building and sustaining a collaborative relationship and working on the tasks directed at achieving goals. The tasks and activities chosen reflect the Social Group Worker's ideas about what is necessary at different points in time to bring about change.

Different theorists based on their interpretations have given their own models of the stages of group development as depicted in the chart below:

The Stages of Group Development

Bales (1950)	Tuckman (1963)	Klein (1972	Trecker (1972)	Garland, Jones and Kolondny (1976)	Northen and Kurland (2001)
Orientation	Forming	Orientation	Beginning	Pre-affiliation	Inclusion-Orientation
Evaluation	Storming	Resistance	Emergence of group feeling	power and control	uncertainty-exploration
Decision making	Norming	Negotiation	Development of Bond	Intimacy	
	Performing	Intimacy	strong group	differe-ntiation	Mutuality and Goal Achievement
	Adjourning	Termination	Decline in Group Feeling Ending	Separation	Separation-Termination

Source : Group Work: Theories and practices, H.Y. Siddiqui, 2008

Another author Ken Heap (1985) has described the stages of group work as comprising of group formation and planning; the first meetings; the working phase; use of activities and action; and the termination of group. Toseland and Rivas (1985) have more simply described the stages as planning phase, beginning phase, middle phase, and ending phase. On the basis of the classification by different experts we can say that a group can have maximum six stages as discussed by Trecker or a minimum three stages of development, as explained by Bales. The various models describe the progressive stages in group development which may range from three to even six

stages. Drawing from the various models, for our purpose, we have classified the stages as follows:

First stage: Forming the group (Beginning)

Second Stage: Exploration   (Initial sessions)

Third Stage: Performing   (Action Phase)

Fourth Stage: Assessment   (Evaluation)

Fifth Stage: Termination   (Separation)

Before we present a discourse on the different stages of group development, we need to understand that group work as practiced in the Indian context may be at variance with practice in the western countries. As the idea of joining a group voluntarily for therapeutic or recreation purposes may be an alien concept to the target population, the social group worker practicing this method in the Indian settings following the Western theoretical framework may find it an uphill task. The importance of group work as a therapeutic method of social work intervention is being gradually realized in our country. In our discourse on the various stages of development of group, we shall make a conscious effort not to lose sight of the Indian context of practice.

First Stage: Planning and Forming the Group (Beginning)

Social agencies, in conformity with their objectives help people form groups so as to provide them opportunities for a satisfying group experience. Individuals join groups to seek avenues of self expression and social creativity besides satisfying their needs of being loved, wanted and accepted by others. The first stage of this process comprises efforts of the group worker that primarily focus on the planning and the forming of the group.

The Beginning

This phase marks the beginning of the process of group development and is also called the pre-group or pre-affiliation stage by some experts. In India the groups have to be formed by the group worker in most cases. S/he may form the group from among the existing clientele of the social welfare agencies/NGO's or from among the open community settings. Before forming a group, the group worker must study the target population along the following points:

- Geographical location
- Age/sex
- Socio-economic background
- Needs
- Interests
- Reasons for joining the group
- Any other relevant details

This information helps the group worker to form the group on some common ground and accordingly determine the group goals. Careful planning should precede the formation of the group which includes decision about the target population, needs and goals, the resources available etc. An accurate understanding and analysis of the needs of the target population is important at this stage so that there is no gap between the member's and the worker's perception of the felt needs of the group. However, the process of the study and planning is a continuous one; it enables the group worker to steer the group through the different stages of development.

The members may have to be convinced to join the group as they may be ignorant of the usefulness of being a part

of a group and may not have had any such experience in the past. "Groups in India are initially conceived by an organization or welfare agency, as people themselves generally do not take such initiatives. Both the voluntary and the government organizations have found working with the group a useful strategy. The worker in India therefore, has to carry the idea of forming a group for an already defined objective to the people. S/he has to educate the potential members about the needs and issues the group will address and how it is likely to benefit them. The worker generally meets the members for the first time and many members have little or no experience of working with such groups. The formation stage thus, will require careful planning. There are two sets of plans that a worker must prepare. The first part of the planning concerns how the formation of the group will be accomplished, and second, what issues will arise once the group gets going and how these will be dealt with."(Siddiqui, 2008, 98)

The other details that have to be focussed while planning and forming the group are:

1) **The size of the group**

   The decision about the size of the group is dependant on various factors such as the needs of members, purpose of group, nature of group membership etc. for instance self help groups may be large in size but therapeutic groups work best when they are small. Though there is no ideal size, a group size ranging from eight to fifteen members may be a good size.

2) **Composition of the group**

   Planning about the composition of the group has to be in keeping with its purpose. Whether it is a self-help group, task group or treatment oriented group, it may be either homogenous or heterogeneous.

Before deciding the nature of membership, the group worker should familiarize herself with the client group along the points already mentioned above such as their socio-economic background etc.

3) **Frequency of the sessions and their duration**

Though there is no hard and fast rule, frequency of the sessions may be decided in accordance with the needs and purpose of the group. There should not be too long gaps between the sessions, lest the group gets disintegrated. Recreation groups, therapeutic groups, task groups should meet at least once or twice a week.

4) **Time and place of meetings**

The place where the group is to meet at the designated time has to be decided in consultation with the members. The guiding factors are the convenience of the members, availability and adequacy of space and resources.

5) **Duration of the group**

Whether the group will exist for a long or short term may again have to be in keeping with the needs and goals of the group. The group can be terminated after achieving its objectives and a tentative time may be earmarked for it. There should however be an element of flexibility in deciding the time-frame.

Second Stage: Explorations (Initial Sessions)

Exploration

In the initial sessions the group may appear more as a constellation of different individuals than an organized entity. This stage is usually characterized by a low group

consciousness. There may be shyness, hesitation, indecision and lack of participation. Some members maybe hyper active, and some may be insecure and nervous, not having had such an experience in the past. However, this phase marks the beginning of the development of a feeling of belonging and oneness among the members. Tuckman has used the term 'storming' to explain this process of exploration. In the initial meetings a semblance of order has to be restored so as to ensure a free flow of ideas and actions.

This stage involves the following steps:

Orientation and Induction

The initial stage is important as it lays the foundation of the success or failure of the group work program. The worker should introduce the members to the group by outlining her/his role and the purposes for which the group has been formed, the members should be encouraged to speak about themselves, their hopes and aspirations. In the initial sessions the members have to be inducted into the group with a certain sensitivity so as to raise their level of comfort and sense of ease. The members may be unfamiliar with each other and may be interested in finding out about the agency, the worker, other members and the purpose of the group.

The group worker helps members become part of the group. This does not happen overnight but is a gradual process as in this process the members may have to give up some of their individuality as also their biases and prejudices. They may have to exercise more self control and discipline. Some people relate more easily than others, all nevertheless, start making efforts to adjust which may not be always easy. Some may be easily accepted and accept the group, others may take more time. Gradually the members start speaking the same language as the other

members and accept the group goals and consider them as their own As the individual starts developing a sense of belonging there may be a change in his/her behaviour patterns.

Preparation of the Profile of the Members

Just as there is a need for the members to know each other, the worker too should study and observe the members closely. The worker should prepare a profile of each member giving his/her age, family background, physical characteristics, habits, interests, level of confidence , any peculiar habits or traits etc. It would help if this is based on the facts gathered and his/her observations in the initial sessions. This would not only help her/him understand the group relationship levels and interaction patterns better but also begin from where the group is. Further this may help her/him map the development over a period of time, especially at the stage of evaluation.

Setting Specific Objectives

While there may be larger goals which a group may strive to ultimately achieve, specific interim goals also need to be explored, which can form the basis of program planning. Here the worker has to help the group determine the desired level of behaviour or social change. Although in the first stage the group has been formed keeping in mind some purpose, It is at this stage that goals have to be specifically delineated. Here the group worker encourages the active participation of the group members and helps the group assume the responsibility to determine the level of change they desire to achieve in their behaviour or social situation. e.g. kicking up the habit of smoking/ chewing tobacco, giving up using abusive language.

Objectives are nothing but statements of what the group worker is trying to achieve through the group work process. They give meaning to the process. "Objectives serve the same purpose as a compass; they guide the agency and the worker to a determined destination". (Trecker , 1955, 57) They should be clear and specific and later reviewed at the stage of evaluation in terms of their accomplishment. At this stage there is a need to spell out the specific objectives which delineate the actual outcomes expected from the group worker's intervention. For instance in the case of a group of school dropouts, some of the objectives could be

- To develop an interest in studies by simplifying the methods of teaching and learning

- To motivate them to resume studies by making them understand the benefits of formal schooling

- To remove the fear of subjects like maths, etc.

Here the worker should pay attention to the feasibility on one hand and the needs and aspirations of the members on the other. S/he should focus on the specific benefits the members are likely to get and refrain from imposing her/his point of view. The objectives have to be interpreted to the members, and their doubts and queries are to be encouraged.

Developing a Structure

As the group is now ready to settle down, it can be structured at this stage. The members must now be prepared and encouraged to assume roles and responsibilities. They are to be told about the expectations of the group from them in terms of tasks, on the basis of their capabilities and talents. In the Indian context the members may have to be closely assisted till they learn to

assume responsibilities on their own. Some may need constant help of the group worker to carry out their roles. The worker at this stage must constantly encourage the members to use their latent talents and capacities. A functional organization must emerge at this stage so as to enable the members to assume an active role and make responsible decisions. "Every group that aspires for independence and self-determination must arrange its constituent members in such a way that they can said to be "organized." The form of organization is in itself of minor importance ….if a group is to develop and carry out its program, it must have ways of assigning or delegating responsibility, ways of getting the whole group to participate in the planning, carrying out, and evaluation of the activities that make up the program and ways of handling routine relationships with the agency and other groups." (Trecker,1955, 150) With the emergence of a formal organization the group starts giving evidence of its flexibility and maturity. After the group is geared to assume responsibility, it is ready to move into the next phase.

Third Stage: Performing (Action Phase)

Action Phase

After some sessions, the signs of group development start emerging as the group progresses into its active phase. The focus of this stage is on the provision of program experiences designed to offer opportunities for adjustment and growth. The programs may be of a long or short term depending on the immediate and long term objectives.

This stage is the peak time in the group process as the members start taking the group seriously. The sessions become regular, the attendance is likely to be high and so is the involvement and participation of the members. This phase is likely to be characterized by a flurry of activity as

considerable time is devoted to program planning and implementation, e.g a group of youth in a community, who may have been spending their leisure time aimlessly are formed into a group. The group worker after observing their talents for singing and acting encourages them to put up a musical drama. The group is encouraged and helped to write its own script, compose the songs and choreograph the dances .Then with the help of the community support the group puts up the first show and gradually becomes an established theatre group. In the active phase the scripting, composing followed by continuous frantic rehearsals for the show may consume the maximum time and efforts of the members. Side by side they may also be busy mobilizing and utilizing the resources to put up the show. This is but one example, there may be several others.

During this stage the development gets more pronounced and may be reflected in high attendance, regular meetings, and members taking more responsibility. More and more responsibility is transferred by the worker to the group. The group starts surging ahead; setting its programs, moving constantly to its destination. The accent is now on 'we' and 'us'. The members get comfortable with each other, anxiety declines, leadership emerges, and members start taking initiative and are ready to assume leadership roles and responsibilities. They may be more forthcoming with their talents and more ready to take on challenging and complex programs. This is the most active phase of the group work process and spans over a major part of the working life of the group. The group may now well be on its way to achieving its goals. Planning and development of the program, its execution and monitoring are the defining features of this stage.

Program Planning and Execution

Program is a series of activities based on the discovery of interests and needs of the members and an important

component of Social Group Work process; the way it is planned even more important. It may range from art and craft to music, dance, social events to picnics excursions. At this stage the program interests are likely to emerge from within the group. The members who may be initially be at a loss from where to begin must now be encouraged to take over. The members are stimulated to discover and use their own resources. The program planning and development process by itself is an important tool in helping the group to realize its potential

"Program should evolve from simple to more complex, with movement coming as a result of group growth in ability and readiness. Movement from initially 'personal' to 'social' or 'community concerns' should be an ultimate objective if our programs are to have greater social significance" (Trecker, 1955, 162)

Task accomplishment

"When the group begins to show signs of readiness to move ahead, the worker should help the members realize their wishes for different and more demanding experiences. When group members begin to express desires to correct inadequacies and improve their work, they have reached an advanced point in their development. Programs that may have been self-centered shift in emphasis to the larger agency and community concerns. Specialized interests may be revealed, and there may be an interest in a variety of small group activities within the larger group. Here the worker is called upon to use his knowledge of agency and community resources. His role becomes that of an interpreter to the group, especially in regard to future possibilities. Evaluation occupies a larger share of time as the group becomes confident of its capacities" (Trecker, 1955)

As the group strives to accomplish its goals and related tasks, it may face many barriers which may obstruct change. Besides members' own anxieties and fears, there may be dysfunctional behaviours or dysfunctional processes within the group that may impede progress and pose barriers to goal accomplishment. Non-availability or restrictive access to resources or services may require the group worker to assume the role of a mediator or advocate.

Monitoring Progress

The group worker at this stage steps down and allows the group to take over. However s/he needs to constantly monitor and keep a track of the ways the program is being conducted. As work towards the group goals gathers momentum it is important to monitor the progress on a regular basis. The program can be monitored on the basis of specific indicators such as interaction patterns, self improvement, emotional integration with the group, leadership and communication skills etc. Based on the information gathered, programs can be modified and consolidated. If an intervention or program is not producing the desired effect, the worker after analyzing reasons can negotiate a different approach or strategy.

Fourth Stage: Assessment (Evaluation)

Evaluation

After the action phase is over, the group should be ready to evaluate the outcome of its efforts in a free, frank and objective manner. "Evaluation is that part of Social Group Work in which the worker attempts to measure the quality of a group's experience in relation to the objectives and functions of the agency. Evaluation may centre upon individual growth, program content or worker performance because all these aspects tend to influence the general achievement of the group."(Trecker, 1955) Evaluation is

continuously done during the group work process, but, after the group activities are over, before the termination phase; a comprehensive assessment of the entire experience is a must. This helps in improving subsequent group work experiences on the basis of the lessons learnt; a guide to future.

If you recall, during the exploration phase a profile of the members was prepared; at this stage a comprehensive summary report of each member and group as a whole, reflecting the individual and overall level of development and achievements is to be prepared. The overall purpose and objectives of the experience should not be lost sight of while making this assessment.

Imperatives of Evaluation

Evaluation helps the agency and worker to reorganize their practice and modify their objectives in the light of the outcome findings of evaluation. To make the process of evaluation a positive and conclusive exercise and in order to make an unbiased, objective evaluation it is imperative that there exist certain predetermined indicators on the basis of which the assessment can be done.

Indicators

To determine these indicators the following aspects may be taken into consideration, namely:

1) Individual growth

From the members' perspective, evaluation presents an opportunity to find out the outcome of their actions from the beginning to the end of the process. It aids the process of development and helps in assessing some of the following aspects:

- The level of growth in each member in terms of confidence, decision making, etc.

- The extent of the use of the opportunities provided to the members for the expression of their creativity and talents

- The level of their participation and involvement in the group programs

- The development of 'we feeling' and a sense of belonging

- Resolution of disabling conflicts and development of capacity to foster cooperation and sharing

- Development of a social consciousness and the ability to take up responsibility and leadership in the community.

- Enhancement of communication, organizational and interaction skills

2) Worker performance

Evaluation presents to the group worker a mirror of his/her professional competence or incompetence as the case may be. The worker can be evaluated along the following points:

- Ability to identify indicators for judging the growth and development of the group

- Effectiveness in planning and conducting the group sessions

- Extent of success in helping the group achieve its objectives and goals

- Mistakes and shortcomings

- Ability to use professional knowledge and skills.

3) **Agency's purpose**

Evaluation gives the agency the information it needs to maintain the quality of its services and bring about the improvements in its policies and programs along the following lines:

- Lay down objective standards for the appraisal of its personnel

- Ensure conditions under which effective group work can be done

- Improve its organizational and administrative procedures

- Reformulate objectives for groups and agency in line with its needs

- Review the program content and method

Record keeping

Another imperative of evaluation is proper **record keeping.** Carefully maintained records are a great aid to the evaluation process. Records are integral to the entire group work process but are most useful at the point of evaluation. The worker should maintain detailed records of each member and activity. Well maintained records help to objectively assess the growth of the members; their strengths and shortcomings. Among other things, it helps the worker understand which strategies worked and which did not. According to Trecker, it is doubtful whether evaluation of the program, individual growth or worker performance can be satisfactorily made without records. Evaluation is a kind of research or fact finding which involves data collection and data analysis. The source of data could be the records or progress reports made by the worker, any task files maintained by the members, other

agency personnel, feedback- verbal or written of the members, their family members, video tapes etc. For this s/he should develop some formats for recording the happenings in the group.

Although partial judgments can be made on the basis of memory, thorough evaluation is possible only if adequate records have been kept. The worker at this stage must go back to her records and prepare an analysis and summary. S/he should not only review the growth and development of the group but also his/ her role and relationship with the group; and how well s/he understood the changing interests and evolving needs of the members. Though not very popular in India, attitudinal and personality measurement scales to measure the changes in the member's behaviour, knowledge and attitudes could be put to effective use to make the assessment more authentic and scientific.

Feedback

Though some kind of feed back at the end of each session may be taken, a detailed exercise is usually done at this stage. Effective use of praise and constructive criticism are the defining features of the feedback exercise. The group worker can provide her feedback to the members on various aspects such as participation, program development and implementation, leadership, teamwork, how well the members adhered to and worked for the achievement of the group objectives etc. The worker too should solicit feedback regarding how her/his behaviour affected the process S/he must welcome criticism and respond to it positively as it illuminates the pathway to growth and makes the worker aware of her/his strengths and weaknesses. The resultant feedback helps the group worker to be more aware of their positives and negatives which they must keep in mind for future. The members

should be also trained by the group worker in giving and receiving feedback.

- Positive feedback should be given first

- It should be specific

- Criticisms should be given as a suggestive alternative

- Initially the members may be encouraged to give a written feedback

- The worker may prepare some formats for the purpose.

Fifth Stage: Termination (Ending Phase)

Termination

There comes a time/point in the life of every group when it comes to an end, which could be a positive or negative experience as the case may be. The group is deemed to be terminated on a positive note, when it is said to have achieved its goals and the group worker has ensured its smooth closure through a proper process. Sometimes the groups may have to close on a negative note, when the members drop out prematurely; fail to develop strong relationships; the relationships are marked by bitter conflicts or the worker cannot continue with the group any longer. When the Group worker leaves the group for whatever reason, the group may not sustain for long.

Should the date of termination be set in the beginning? Some experts are of the view that a termination date should be announced at the outset so that the members know the time at their disposal to achieve their objectives. The duration should however be long enough for the group to develop and allow behavioural change. The group should review its progress from time to time and accordingly take decisions for the future course of action.

Just as the group worker has done in the previous stages of development; at this stage she has to ensure that the group is terminated in a proper way. "Despite highly satisfactory experiences, groups sometimes reach a period in their natural life when interests diminish and decline is noticeable. The group seems to have "served its time" attendance falls off; members withdraw and become related to other groups…….this is a period which calls for careful thinking and analysis on the part of the worker . The agency…….should operate as a helpful agent for the proper closing of the group which has fulfilled its function in the lives of the members. By arranging satisfying terminal experiences with groups it is possible to make the conclusion of group life a vestibule for further group experience. Those members who wish to continue may be helped to form a new group" (Trecker, 1955)

Ending the Group

The group has to end in a planned manner. Members may react differently to the termination of the group. The worker has to keep the group informed about the ending time and should not break the news suddenly. While nothing much may be done when the group comes to an end abruptly, in other cases the ending of the group can be carried out in a planned way.

The last Sessions

Towards the end of the social group work process the worker has to help the members come to terms with the fact that there may be no more regular meetings and guide them how to face the challenge of filling up the vacuum that the termination might create.

The worker has to prepare the group

• For the termination stage

- Share with the group the final evaluation.

- Analyze how far they were successful in accomplishing some of the goals and failed to achieve others, as the case may be.

- give the members an opportunity to express their happiness, anxiety, fears, good/ bad experiences, talk about their accomplishments

- Discuss their future plans

"Developing leadership among the group members, capacity building of members and developing systems to carry on the functioning of the group can make the termination smooth" (Siddiqui,2008)

Role of Group Worker in Group Development

Factors Affecting Group Development

The development of the group is influenced by a variety of factors, depending on which groups develop at varying pace. This explains why some groups organize very well and are able to achieve their goals without facing many hurdles, while others fail to accomplish their tasks and achieve their goals. We have listed some such factors as examples, which we do not propose to discuss in detail as they are already explained under one heading or the other in the block.

1) Group structure

2) Communication and interaction patterns

3) group goals

4) expectations from the group

5) leadership

6) group norms and culture

7) group discipline

8) The role played by the group worker

Our primary focus here is on one important ingredient that ensures the development of the group through the successive stages, namely the role played by the Social Group Worker at each stage.

Role Of Group Worker

The role of the worker is very important and varies at each stage of development, the bottom line being that the worker has to understand the level of the group at each stage and proceed at the pace of the group. For this s/he must study and analyze to understand where the members are in their development. The worker plays a variety of roles, sometimes as an enabler, helper, guide and facilitator, sometimes as a trouble shooter, mediator and educator and at other times as an advocate or a leader. S/he provides direction to the group members in planning the group activities and then executing them. S/he enables the members to make choices and helps them to become self-directing as early as possible. Through all stages the worker has to develop and exhibit a professional behaviour.

It is not possible to have a standard blue print of the role and tasks of a group worker as it is affected by a variety of factors. Trecker (1955) rightly said that the worker's role will vary with different groups as the situations operating within groups are so different, that the worker has to first understand the group and the circumstances surrounding it before attempting to define the specific aspects of his job with it.

In the Initial Phase

At the initial stage the group worker helps the members build a sense of belonging, which is an emotional experience. The skill and understanding in initiating in them a sense of belonging is a crucial task of the worker. She has to foster those conditions under which this belongingness is fostered. For this s/he needs to accept as well as get acceptance from the group. " the greatest single element in the beginning stages of work with the group is the worker's ability to accept the group as it is, with both strengths and limitations, positives and negatives...... In the beginning the worker should place emphasis on warmth and friendliness rather than on group organization or planning." (Trecker, 1955, 31)

With the sense of belonging comes a feeling of pride, warmth, affection, sharing and commitment; a sense of respect for other members as well as a respect for group objectives. Real belonging builds up a sense of companionship and accelerates the psychological process of growth in human relations. The group may go through various stages of belonging. All members may not experience the same intensity of belonging especially at the early stages. Initial stages may need more worker time as well as an active role on her/his part.

In the initial phase, where exploration is central, the Social Group Work needs to focus her attention on the following:

1) Pay attention to the orientation and induction and give the members a clear idea of what the agency stands for.

2) spend time in trying to gain information about each member and the needs of each.

3) helps the group determine its objectives and goals

4) try to relate the purpose of the group to the overall purpose of the agency.

5) look for ways to strengthen the ties among the members.

The group worker can make the following efforts at this stage, among others:

1) establish rapport

2) help the members to get familiar with each other by organizing ice breaking sessions

3) take up simple activities with the object of helping the members open up and start talking and sharing

4) if the members already know each other, inform them about the purpose of the group

5) help the members deal with their anxieties, apprehensions or misconceptions, if any

6) explain the basic rules to be followed during the group activities.

In the Middle Phase

Subsequently the worker's responsibility is to help the group create a type of functional organization that will make possible the sort of program the group wishes to conduct. S/he does not structure the group but helps it to structure itself; the bottom-line is to keep the structure as simple as possible. The worker while helping the individuals in groups to create and maintain satisfying constructive relationships should encourage role allocations on the basis of merit.

Program is an important tool in the hands of the worker and at this stage, the worker has the task of helping the

group to plan, develop and execute the program. Her/his main role in program development is to consciously stimulate and guide the process of interaction for individual and group development. S/he helps the group to understand its capacities and limitations and guides the interaction in relation to the process of group development. S/he not only helps to stimulate the group to action but also helps it to discover and use the agency and community resources and those within the group. S/he constantly encourages the members to take initiatives in performing the group tasks and develop leadership in the group by identifying the potential leaders and creating opportunities for them to take up leadership roles. The group worker may at this stage be called upon to address the power issues that arise in the group. Some members may try to dominate and control the group which may not just lead to conflict and groupism albeit generate hostility among the members and even towards the group worker. The worker has to deftly resolve the power issues which s/he can do by encouraging and developing a sense of co-peration, partnership and a mutual respect for each other. The worker will be especially helpful in working with the leadership that has grown out of the group.

In the active stage of group development the worker should modify her role. Rather than being active she must now allow the members to assume responsibility. Remaining in the background, her primary task should be to monitor the changes and progress that are taking place in the group. S/he will guard against too rapid progression and ensure that the groups do not take on more than they are prepared to handle successfully. During this phase, programmes of longer duration and more involved organization may be encouraged

In the Last Phase

The role at the final stage begins with reviewing the group experiences and dealing with feelings of separation. It is important that the worker plans for this phase and handles it skillfully and sensitively. The manner in which group process is concluded will strongly influence how the members continue to maintain the progress they have achieved. The worker should develop proper formats for recording all the happenings in the group. Records have both short term and long term goals and usage. An important task of the Social Group Worker is to maintain the records with keen observation and sensitivity. S/he should maintain full records of the behaviour of the members and their responses and in doing so be careful in the selection, organization of the material, and analyze and summarize from time to time.

The last phase calls upon the worker to primarily assess whether individual and group goals have been successfully obtained and plan for the maintenance of change and continued growth after termination.

Though the actual write up and interpretation and utilization of the records is done at different stages of development, it assumes special significance in the concluding stages. Records are most useful at the point of evaluation and termination as realistic judgments cannot be made on the basis of memory. The worker at this stage has to make realistic evaluation of the program, individual growth and how her/his role has changed and evolved through the various stages of group development. S/he has to review the entire process and understand all that has happened in the group and retrace the role played by her/him in bringing about the group development. S/he has the crucial task of carefully and objectively evaluating the outcomes of interventions and share this information

with the group; helping them to assess their achievements and failures. This review is particularly important if the group is terminating or being handed over to a new worker. If the group decides to end, the worker should ensure a smooth termination and if it decides to continue sans the worker, s/he can continue to monitor the functioning of the group and keep the contact alive.

In the last phase the worker should create situations within the group where the members can act out the changed behaviours independently. This helps the group to come to terms with the scenario where the group support may be no longer available. Successful termination involves preparing the members adequately for separation from the group and enhancing the transition of the members from being dependant on the group to being on their own.

Conclusion

Social Group Work, whereas a method for the group worker, is a significant new experience for the members, designed to give them an opportunity to come together and fulfill their needs and desires through a group process. In Social Group Work through guided group experience, the group is helped to develop responsibly and with maturity. From the stage of forming the group to its termination, through carefully and well planned programmes, the group is helped to achieve its potential. The stages and the activities associated with it provide structure and direction to the process. Theoretically we may segregate different stages of group development for conceptual clarity but in reality these stages are intertwined with each other.

On the basis of the classification by different experts we can say that a group can have maximum six stages as discussed by Trecker or a minimum three stages of

development, as explained by Bales. We have discussed the stages as follows:

First stage: Forming the group   (Beginning)

Second Stage: Exploration   (Initial sessions)

Third Stage: Performing   (Action Phase)

Fourth Stage: Assessment   (Evaluation)

Fifth Stage: Termination   (Ending phase)

Before forming a group the group worker must study the target population.

The details that have to be focused while planning and forming the group are the size of the group, its composition, frequency of the sessions and their duration time and place of meetings and duration of the group. The exploration stage involves the following steps, namely orientation and induction; Preparation of the profile of the members; setting specific objectives; developing a structure. Planning and development of the program, its execution and monitoring are the defining features of the performing stage which is the most active phase. After the action phase is over, the group is ready to evaluate the outcome of its efforts in a free, frank and objective manner. In the last sessions the worker prepares the group for the termination stage. Here s/he shares the final evaluation with the group and analyzes how far they were successful in accomplishing some of the goals and failed to achieve others, as the case may be. The role of the worker varies at each stage of development, the bottom line being that the worker has to understand the level of the group at each stage and proceed at the pace of the group.

Though the importance of group work as a therapeutic method of social work intervention is being gradually realized in our country, the fact remains that it is still

primarily practiced by the students of social work as a part of their field work training and thereafter the scope of using this method is generally limited. In India the groups have to be formed by the group worker in most cases. S/he may form the group from among the existing clientele of the social welfare agencies/NGO's or from among the open community settings.

References

Garvin, Charles D. et al (eds.) (2008) Handbook of Social Work With Groups, Rawat Publications, New Delhi.

Konopka Gisela. (1963) Social Group Work: A Helping Process, Englewood Cliffs , N.J. Prentice Hall

Siddiqui, H.Y. (2008) Group Work: Theories and Practices, Rawat Publications, New Delhi.

Trecker, Harleigh B. (1955) Social Group Work- Principles and Practices, New York: Association Press

Wilson, Gertrude and Gladys Ryland. (1949) Social Group Work Practice. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

7

Process of Group Formation

*Manju Kumar

Introduction

You have already learnt about nature of groups and the meaning of group dynamics. You may recall that groups have a life span of their own, i.e. they come into being; go through different phases of development including conflicts, threats of disintegration, and / or achievement of cohesiveness; and then come to an end. Studies on group work practice have demonstrated that group experiences influence considerably the persons constituting its membership and in a significant manner. A professional Social Worker using group as a vehicle to help people has, therefore, to be very careful whether use of group as a medium of help is clearly indicated. Social Work is defined as a 'planned' change activity. Planning, therefore, is crucial element of all social work interventions, including social group work.

The discussion on the stages of development through which a group passes highlights the importance of the processes that a group worker has to engage in before the persons joining a group ever come together. Planning and actions that a social group worker undertakes at the **pre-group** stage have a far reaching impact on the success of the group, in terms of the cohesiveness a group achieves; in the context of its performance in achieving group goals; or

*Ms. Manju Kumar, Dr. B.R.A.C. University of Delhi

with reference to the satisfaction its members experience. In fact, group formation is the starting-point of all group development and performance.

Group Formation

An Assembly of the Elements

"Assembly is the deliberate combination of parts to form an envisioned whole, according to an implicit or explicit plan or plans. The primary challenge of assembly is ....to select and combine people and resources keeping in mind how different combinations of elements with different arrays of attributes are likely to fit together." (Arrow, et al, 2000)

Group formation can be viewed as resulting from the 'planned assembly of elements' plus dynamics emerging from the process of this collection. The most important "elements" in a group are people with their resources, and intentions. The other elements are external and contextual.

Before we move forward, let us recall some descriptions of a group. **Group** is a collection or assemblage of persons having common characteristics, interests, goals, or objectives; two or more persons who are interacting with one another in such a manner that each person influences and is influenced by the other. They both recognise themselves as a group and are seen by other people as a group.

The formation of a group is driven in part by the motivated action of their members. The structure of new groups is also determined in part by constraints, opportunities and demands in the contexts in which the groups are situated. People who are not group members are often instrumental in forming new groups. External and internal forces contribute to both assembly and dynamic patterns

emerging due to the transformation of people, resources, and intentions in the context of the whole.

Group formation is not a single process with minor variations. Distinctly different sequences of events can result in the formation of new and different groups. Cartwright & Zander (1968) identified three distinct circumstances under which groups come into being:

- Deliberate formation - formed by one or more people in order to accomplish some objective.

- Spontaneous formation - Formation of the group is based on voluntary interpersonal choices. The group is formed because people expect to derive satisfaction from associating together, for example, friendship groups, gangs and professional groups.

- External designation - formed because they (individuals) are treated in a homogeneous manner by other people. These external designations can lead to the deliberate formation of groups.

In 'deliberately formed' or 'concocted' groups, agents external to the group deliberately assign people to groups and typically designate the group's purpose as well. Many work groups, problem-solving groups, therapy groups, social action groups, and advocacy/ mediating groups; and the vast majority of groups in Social Psychology, and groups formed for educational purposes fall in this category.

Besides spontaneous groups mentioned above are circumstantial groups, where events throw people together and give them a reason to interact and form groups for collective action. In self-organised groups, a new collective arises out of interaction amongst a sub-set of people in a larger social setting. These people are not actively trying

to form a group, it just happens. High levels of inter-member coordination because of interpersonal interaction prior to group formation influences this.

Factors Affecting Group Formation

Many factors come into play in the creation of groups. According to Tosi, Rizzo and Carroll (1986) important variables which influence group formation include:

- *Personal characteristics,* which include shared beliefs, values, attitudes, security needs and affiliation needs.

- *Interests and goals* in common.

- *Influence,* since a group can exert more power and influence to get proper attention and action.

- *Opportunity for interaction,* which helps in developing affinities and relationships.

- *Other factors* are similar functional departments, cooperative physical activities, intellectual pursuits, emotional needs or protection, and attention and friendship

Wilson and Ryland (1949), highlighting factors which needed to be kept in mind while forming groups said, "Every social worker who works with groups need to be aware of such factors such as – the size of the group; the setting-both agency and community, in which the group is meeting; the personality and health of the members, their cultural, social, and economic backgrounds; and the relationship of this group to other groups in the agency and the community. Factors of likeness and difference – religious, ethnic, political, economic, social class, and generation – play a large role in even those groups that are smallest in numbers and youngest in point of members' ages." (p. 36)

In nutshell, three main factors which influence group formation and subsequent group development and performance are individual- group – society, that is, individual and group goals; resources, expectations and motivations of individual members; group structure including composition and size (internal factors); environment and resources of agency, socio-economic conditions, social context of groups (external factors).

External and internal forces, planned assembly, and emergent processes play a part in the formation of all groups. However, the balance of forces that shape their formation differs markedly across groups.

Theories of Group Formation

A number of authors and researchers have put forth different theories and perspectives to explain why and how people come together to form groups. An understanding of these perspectives is useful while matching the purpose of the group with prospective membership.

Researchers have yet to develop a comprehensive theory to explain how and why groups form, but there are two perspectives that offer some answers: functional perspective suggests that groups form because they serve a useful function or fulfill a need for their individual members. The interpersonal attraction perspective suggests that groups form because its members like one another and seek to spend time together. (Cottam, et al 2004, p 66-68)

Functional Perspective states that groups are formed to fulfill survival needs, including feeding, defense, nurturance, and reproduction; psychological needs like need for affiliation; need for power – need to control others. According to FIRO (Fundamental Interpersonal Relations

Orientation) given by Schultz (1958), joining a group can fulfill three basic needs – inclusion (desire to be part of a group); control (the need to organize an aspect of the group); and affection (the desire to establish positive relations with others).

Another category of needs that can often be served well by groups is informational needs. People often have a need to determine if their own view points are correct and accurate. This perspective suggests that people join groups to better understand social reality.

Groups can also meet people's interpersonal needs. Many groups can provide social support, giving emotional sustenance, advice, and valuable feedback. Social support can be a valuable function of groups – protect us from harmful effects of stress; protect us from being lonely.

Finally, groups can fulfill important collective needs – groups can be more productive and efficient than an individual working alone, that is, by pooling the efforts of multiple people. Some of the collective goals sought by groups include engaging in the performing arts; enriching the leisure time of its members; changing the opinions of the persons outside the group; and making routine individual tasks more tolerable.

Interpersonal Attraction Perspective

Sometimes, groups form because individuals discover that they like each other and want to spend more time together. Many factors that influence our liking of another include the following:

- We tend to be attracted to those who are most similar to us in attitudes, beliefs, socio-economic status, physical appearance and so on.

- We tend to form relationship with those who are physically closer to us - those living next door, those we sit next to in class, and those we work with closely.

- We like people who like us

- We are attracted to people who are physically attractive.

Within the twin perspectives mentioned above various theories have been developed to explain why people form groups. One of the most fundamental theories of group formation is propinquity or proximity which asserts that people tend to affiliate with one another because of spatial or geographical closeness. Another comprehensive theory of group formation is the social systems theory which states that individuals tend to interact in a group to solve problems, reduce tension, attain goals, and achieve balance. Still another theory of group formation is the balance theory that asserts that individuals are attracted to one another because of their identical attitudes towards some common objects and goals. Attempts are made to maintain a symmetrical balance between the attraction and the common attitudes.

The exchange theory, which is based upon rewards-costs results of interaction, also deserves attention. A minimum positive level (i.e. rewards exceeding costs) of a result must be maintained so that attraction occurs. Here, rewards from interaction satisfy needs while costs cause tension. (Dwivedi 2001, p.265-269)

There are two other theories that assert that homogeneity has primacy in forming of groups. Research on both similarity-attraction theory and self-categorization theory suggests that people are likely to be attracted more to those who are similar on demographic characteristics such as race, age, and gender. Thus, it has been suggested that self-organized groups will tend to be homogeneous.

Planning Group Formation in Social Group Work

Group workers form groups frequently in social agencies, court services, clinics, hospitals and schools. Groups may be formed around specific symptoms (epilepsy, bed-wetting); certain behaviours (groups of hyperactive or withdrawn children); or specific forms of treatment (patients undergoing by-pass surgery). Groups may be formed around common concerns of people for others: parents seeking or needing help with problems of their children; relatives trying to understand their mentally sick spouses, parents or children; citizens working on specific community problems such as housing, playgrounds, better schools or health facilities, sanitation or provision of other civic amenities. (Konopka, 1972; p.42) Support or "self-help" groups are formed by people who share common concerns. The groups may be participant-initiated or sponsored by a health care institution, social services agency or nonprofit organization.

Various definitions of social group work highlight the fact that it is a purposeful activity; it is planned; and it covers within its purview individuals, groups, group worker, social agency and the community in which the group and social agency operate.

Primary purposes of social group work include "helping individuals with their social functioning" (Konopka, 1963) as also providing a context in which individuals help each other; it aims at helping groups as well as individuals; and it can enable individuals and groups to influence and change personal, group, organizational and community problems. (Brown, 1986)

Planning a Group

All social work activity is a planned and purposeful. Very often, in a rush to get a group going, adequate attention is

not given to planning. As stated earlier, a thorough planning is essential for the success of a social work group. According to Northen and Kurland (2001, p.109-111) planning comprises the 'thinking, preparation, decision making, and actions of the social worker prior to the first meeting of a group'. Within the social and agency contexts of service, the following interrelated components of planning need to be considered for the formation of the group:

1) Need – what are the problems, issues and areas of concern of the prospective group members

2) Purpose – Purpose flows out of the previous component of Need. What ends and objectives will the group pursue collectively? What are the goals of the group members individually?

3) Composition - How many members will there be in the group? What are important points of similarities and differences between them?

4) Structure – Specific arrangements to facilitate the conduct of the group, especially in terms of time and place.

5) Content – What will actually take place in the group?

6) Pre-group contact

If the group membership is predetermined, the process starts from composition, for example, all female students studying in a particular class of a school or an entire floor of a residential institution. The worker then tries to ascertain the needs, capabilities and motivations of the persons mandated to be in the group; determines the purpose, structure, and content and engages in pre-group contacts.

Components of Purpose and Composition listed above are explained further.

Purpose: There is need to find the best fit among different perceptions of purpose of the proposed group – the purpose envisaged by the agency, the group worker, the individual member and the group as a whole. Purpose defines the type of the proposed group (Northen and Kurland, 2001, p.126):

a) Socialization and growth-oriented groups- to develop members' competence in area of common need, to enhance personal growth and to cope with challenges of developmental tasks;

b) Support and self-help groups: to provide peer support and mutual aid in relieving stress related to difficult life situation, to fight discrimination and enhance self-esteem when persons are stigmatized as a result of other persons' lack of understanding or prejudice concerning their ethnicity, situation, illness, or behaviour.

c) Task groups, teams and social action groups: to accomplish a particular task. The boundaries of purpose in Growth-oriented and task groups may often get blurred overtime.

Composition: Composition refers to the number and characteristics of both members and the worker who will participate in the group. An understanding of need and a tentative formulation of purpose are key determinants of composition. (Malekoff, 2004, p.70)

A widely accepted principle of composition is that the group should be *similar* (homogenous) enough to ensure commonality of need / interest and compatibility but disparate (heterogeneous) enough to ensure that members

will contribute to each other's benefit. Referring to number of studies, Benson (1987, p.23) states that a group is more effective if members have *similar descriptive attributes* (age, caste, gender, residence or geographical proximity, marital status, disability or difficult social situation, occupation or socio-economic status, etc.) as this encourages cohesion, interactiveness and compatibility. On the other hand, *different behavioural attributes* (ability to communicate, motivational levels, ability to relate to others, degree of disturbance etc.) will be useful to the group in fostering interest and responsiveness. Knowledge of interests (assumed, expressed or implicit), needs, motivations and aspirations and their social milieu helps worker to make reliable assessment of potential members to anticipate members' behaviour and responses in the proposed group.

In the therapy groups, extensive formal intake interviews are required to identify the members likely to benefit most from the proposed group.

Decisions to be taken

Much before the group is brought into existence or formed and the method of group work applied, the professional social worker has to find answers to some important questions and take certain decisions.

1) What are the aims, mission and programmes of the social agency or any other auspices within which social worker is operating?

2) Who constitute the target groups of the social agency?

3) Is group work the best way to help the target group? Can individuals better be helped through use of case work? Are there some needs, problems or concerns which are shared by a number of people for whom some common aim can be identified? Is the group likely

to be a useful and efficient device for helping the target population? To decide to use groups because it is comparatively economical (vis-à-vis case work) is a mistaken notion. Group work has its own demands on the worker and the members which require serious consideration.

4) Is using groups to help people feasible in terms of required resources in terms of time, space, equipment, finances or skills, necessary support and social environment? What are the likely costs and benefits of joining the group for the prospective members and for those outside the group?

5) Since usually the professional social workers are not trained in the use of specific methods of social work (especially in generic courses), the worker planning to form the group needs to ascertain his / her own expertise and comfort level in working with groups.

6) What is the specific purpose of the group under consideration? Who decides the purpose for the group – the agency's service delivery system, the worker's perception or judgment, some social group or an individual in the community?

7) What benefits can the worker hope to procure for the persons drawn from the target population? The purpose of the group may develop from the client group of the social agency or from the agency's decision itself.

8) Who are the prospective members of the group? How will they be selected and enlisted in the group?

9) Are you acquainted with the population group from where the members will be drawn? Often, while working in a community, a residential institution, hospital or school, the worker may be familiar to the persons in the target group. However, the decision to

form a group will require deeper insight into potential members' personal characteristics and their capacity to benefit from group experiences.

10) Will the selection of the members be on the basis of -

- self-selection where individuals are free to come together on their own, such groups tending to be of people known to each other, having affinity in some area of common interest.

- the worker deliberately selects prospective members according to their interest, skill, need, problem or concern keeping also in mind the purpose of the proposed group;

- membership is mandated by some authority as in the case of delinquents / probationers mandated by the Courts; or the Principal of a school directing students engaged in indiscipline to report in a group;

11) The group worker needs to make detailed planning decisions about the structure and character of the group.

"Thinking out a suitable group structure for a population of persons is a fairly complex task which requires an understanding of the population, information about the range of groups which can be designed, and an appreciation of the demands which different structures make on group members and of the experiences which different structures are likely to generate" (Whitaker1985, p 12)

- What is the expected duration of the group in terms of number of sessions (say, 10 to 20 sessions) after

which the group is expected to disband or terminate, or it will be open-ended as it very often happens in groups in the open community, or in residential institutions where the inmates' population is fluid because the inmates may get discharged and new inmates join in.

- What will be the duration and frequency of the sessions, for example, weekly sessions of one or one-and-half hour each.

- What will be the size of the proposed group? How many members will be enrolled? Social group work is more effective in small groups as it facilitates interactions, communication and efficient role performance. Usually the 'preferred size is 7-8 members but the range of 5-10 members is acceptable' (Yalom quoted by Northen & Kurland, 2001, p.136). However, depending on the purpose, a relatively larger group also may work well. Another determinant of the size is the prospective members' capacity to interact in groups. For members with limited interactional skills, the size of the group could be limited to 4-5 persons (e.g., in case of mentally challenged children)

- Decision about the composition of the group has to be made right at the planning stage. We have already referred to the issue of homogeneity and heterogeneity among the members (i.e., similarity or dissimilarity along social categories like age, gender, minority status, ethnicity, social problems, etc) as also the factors which may influence members' willingness to join in the proposed group. In therapy oriented groups size and composition are of vital significance.

- What 'programme' will be followed in the group – discussions – open or topic oriented; activities – games, art & craft work, drama, role plays, simulation, community service etc.; get-togethers or combination of these?

- What resources in terms of space, time, finances and technology will be required by the group? Are the same available in the agency / community or do they need to be generated?

12) Does the worker need to make pre-group contacts with prospective members or engage in some preparatory work with them?

13) Deciding how to open the group, how to monitor the group through its life span, how to evaluate the group's performance and development, and when and how to terminate the group is equally important for efficient planning of a group.

14) In many of the non-social work institutions like schools, hospitals, prisons the social worker needs co-operation and support of staff belonging to other disciplines. It is important to ensure that the proposed group will receive necessary support from other staff of the agency.

15) The worker has to ascertain whether s/he needs permission of some authority for launching the proposed group. In case of community based self-help groups, support and sanction of community leaders is often vital for the success of the group.

Process of Group Formation – Tasks Undertaken by the Social Group Worker

We mentioned in the forgoing discussion that the worker has to find answers to certain important questions while

embarking on the use of a group to help the target group. Now we will outline the actual tasks the worker has to engage in to initiate the process of group formation.

1) Once the use of group has been accepted as the best possible option (after considering different alternatives) for helping the designated population group, the group worker has to formulate a **tentative purpose** for the group. The worker identifies a common need or concern of the target group and translates that need into a tentative purpose of the prospective group. The following situations may illustrate the rationale for selecting group work as a better option to help:

   a) several people facing similar situation can benefit from sharing their experiences (parents of mentally challenged children);

   b) persons belonging to same stage of development like adolescents who can benefit from positive group experiences;

   c) when individuals have problems with authority figures, in relating to others or having problem of isolation;

   d) when the target for change is in the social environment like sanitation, educational or health services and the need is for enhanced civic amenities;

   e) when people wish or need to avail of the benefit of some beneficiary-oriented scheme of the govt. which requires formation of a group, like self-help groups for procuring microcredit.

2) If the worker is required to work with an already existing group, s/he needs to comprehend its purpose before s/he begins work with the group.

3) Achieving optimally effective **composition** of the group
    is a crucial task during the formation process.

    Will the group constitute only of women or young girls,
    only of men or male youth, of children, of able-bodied
    or differently-abled persons; will it be a mix of persons
    belonging to different regions, religions, languages and
    cultural background, with different educational and
    socio-economic status? This decision will largely be
    based on the tentative purpose formulated, anticipated
    member behaviour and emotional response to
    prospective members and the knowledge of the
    patterns of habitual social intercourse prevailing in
    the larger population group. For example in Indian
    society, groups with the mix of genders are socially
    not very acceptable, unless the group's purpose is
    task-oriented (for example in the corporate sector)
    which may benefit by a combination of diverse skills
    and perspectives; or a group composed of all aggressive
    or all withdrawn persons may not benefit from
    interaction with each other.

    Who is selected to be the member of the proposed group
    has lasting impact on the individual member and the
    group as a whole. If persons are placed in groups that
    are unsuitable for them, they may be harmed by the
    membership or may drop out of the group. Different
    results flow from different combination of people. What
    is important is to see that there is a good fit between
    any one person and the other group members.
    (Northen & Kurland, 2001, p.129)

    The size of the group should be determined by the
    nature of interaction among the members and their
    participation necessary for achieving the purpose of
    the individual members and the group as a whole.

4) The worker identifies potential members from the designated population group on the basis of different criteria mentioned earlier.

a) The worker may select members from students of a class; from a list prepared on the basis of a survey of the families below poverty line or of children afflicted with some specified disability; from the census report; from membership of previous groups; from the list of persons who may have applied for a particular course or training; or the official records of courts, hospitals, therapists, psychiatric clinics etc.

b) The worker may need to advertise (by word of mouth, leaflets, posters, ads in the newspapers, letters to the institutions like schools from where the potential members can be drawn), state the purpose of initiating the group and invite members to join.

(i) In a community-based agency, the worker talked to the community leaders, local MLA and Municipal Councillor, visited the potential members personally and explained the purpose of the group and its likely benefits for them.

(ii) In an epilepsy clinic for children, parents accompanying their wards were contacted by the social worker and the purpose, content and structure of the proposed group was explained to them personally.

iii) In a residential 'Home' for destitute children, the worker, though known to the inmates on account of her different responsibilities, explored the strengths and liabilities of the prospective members in terms of the purpose

envisaged, the contribution expected of the members for the proposed group and informed all potential members about the group to be launched and its purpose and structure.

5) Pre-group contacts form a significant part of the worker's tasks during the group formation process. The aim of these contacts is to secure appropriate members for the group being planned and their preparation for participation in that group. Through these contacts, the people in the target population get to know the availability and nature of the group-based service, their eligibility for that service, ascertain if their goals are similar to others to be met through the group and prepare them for entry in the particular group. (Northen & Kurland, 2001, p.155). The above-mentioned tasks may require more than one visit or meeting. The worker informs the potential members the tentatively planned group structure, the duration and the frequency of the sessions. In case of a group of children or young adults, pre-group contacts also entail meeting the parents / family members to apprise them of the proposed group, its purpose, the benefits it will offer and its structure. Pre-group contacts may occur during a meeting of the community residents and community leaders or during some social / religious event during which the worker gets an opportunity to introduce the group to be launched.

6) Pre-group interview (one or more than one) with potential member helps clarify and alleviate member's anxiety about the group's structure, expectations of the group in terms of his role, response of other members towards his membership. It brings out valuable data about the member's attitudes, perception of his need, life situation or difficulty; and his capacity to relate to and to communicate with others;

In therapy groups, Intake interviews are held with individuals to arrive at an in-depth assessment of the nature and severity of the problem, difficulty or situation; on the basis of which their compatibility or incompatibility to group membership may be decided.

7) Even when the potential members are convinced of the purpose of the group, they may be anxious to know as to what exactly is expected of them, how will the group work and what will the other members be like.

8) Pre-group contact also initiates worker – member relationship, whether conducted through an individual interview, a visit to the locality of the potential members, or in a meeting held in the community.

9) Certain rules and norms that the members are expected to observe initially, the issues of confidentiality, democratic participation, anti-discrimination, and the manner of modifying the norms need to be shared with the potential members during pre-group contacts.

Right from the point of worker / agency agreeing to plan the group; spelling out its purpose, structure, membership; undertaking publicity; selection and recruitment of potential members, worker has to perform numerous important tasks which have long lasting impact on the group's success in terms of achievement of its goal – individual member's and the group. Planning the entire process of group formation before the group has its first meeting is vital for the group's success.

Practice Principles: Guidelines for Group Formation

A number of practitioners and authors have formulated Practice Principles for effective and efficient group work

practice. Some of these are particularly concerned with the group formation phase of group work. These principles offer guidelines to the worker for securing effective formation of the proposed group.

1) Comfort level of the worker - Since the professional social workers are usually not trained in the use of specific methods of social work (especially in generic courses), the worker planning to form the group needs to ascertain his / her own expertise and comfort level in working with groups. Whether the worker needs to enhance his / her knowledge and skills before embarking on group formation or to enlist the help of a more experienced co- worker is an important issue to be resolved.

2) Planning for a group's formation is a most vital step in the group based service to the target population. To avoid its conflict with the 'value' of client's right to self-determination the plan should not be rigid. In fact, flexibility and creativity are two essential attributes of planning undertaken for group formation.

3) Secure organizational support and sanction for group, and address organizational resistance to groups if needed.

4) The purpose of forming the group in view should be clearly for the benefit and service of the target population and not merely to receive aid and grants from some financing organization, to collect data for an undisclosed purpose, or to project certain image in the community. This kind of hidden agenda involves manipulation of the target groups and is unethical practice.

5) Develop and articulate verbally and/or in writing a clear statement of group purpose that reflects member

needs and, where appropriate, agency mission. (AASGW) According to Newstetter, "the deliberate formation of a new group should be encouraged only after the careful review of three considerations: a) the interests, abilities, experiences and needs of each prospective individual member, b) the agency's purpose, c) the availability of suitable facilities, leadership and supervision". (1980, p.101)

6) The workers often feel uncomfortable in honestly admitting of the purpose envisaged by them or by the agency. They feel that the purpose as it appears in the blue print of the plan may not sound too attractive to the prospective members and, therefore, speak of the purpose in terms which they think may be acceptable to the prospective members. This is likely to create mistrust, confusion and anxiety among the potential members.

7) Particularly in the case of involuntary groups (mandated membership like in groups under court order or students under suspension for indiscipline), the clarity in the statement of purpose, the proposed group structure and content is very vital to win prospective members', participation, interaction and trust.

8) Develop and articulate clear statement of worker role that reflects the group's purpose.

9) Use preparatory empathy to tune into members' feelings and reactions to group's beginning.

10) Tuning-in helps the worker anticipate members' needs and feelings and develop preliminary empathy. The worker also tunes-in to one's own feelings, attitudes and thoughts about the ensuing group encounter.

11) Establish meeting place, time, etc. that promotes member comfort and cohesion.

12) Negotiation and contracting with the members in the context of purpose, structure and norms of the proposed group contribute significantly to future stability and cohesiveness of the group.

13) Groups need to be formed in a way that enables them to do the work that they will be asked to do. This involves minimizing barriers to group cohesiveness and then giving them the resources they need (in terms of talent, time, etc.).

14) For the formation to be efficient, group workers need to take into account any constraints that can influence the performance of the group as a whole and that of the individuals within the group, such as their previous experience, gender, ethnicity, and interests.

15) The worker needs to pay special attention to composition issues to achieve a balanced group.

16) The worker is accountable for his /her professional expertise which is made available for the service of the people. While formulating Standards for Social Work Practice with Groups, AASGW recommended the following areas of knowledge for the group worker at the pre-group stage:

   A) Organization's mission and function and how this influences nature of group work service

   B) Social and institutional barriers which may impact on the development of group work service

   C) Issues associated with group composition

   D) Human life cycle and its relationship to potential members' needs

E) Cultural factors and their influence on potential members' lives and their ability to engage in group and relate to others

F) Types of groups and their relationship to member needs

G) Specific types of individual and social problems that lead to a need for group

Conclusion

Getting a group formed takes time and skills. Called variously as the group formation stage, pre-group or pre-affiliation stage, it requires thoughtful and serious planning and its rigorous and patient execution before the first meeting of the group is ever conducted.

Group formation constitutes of a series of interconnected activities, which are based on a judicious and well thought out plan. Society, social agency, the social group worker and the people availing of the group-based services together determine what kind of group is planned and launched; who join the proposed group and why; and what is going to happen in the group in the forthcoming period.

Prior to the first meeting, a conception of the necessity and utility of group experience has to be framed in the contexts of the worker / agency perceptions, which in turn, is based on the worker's personal and professional experiences, knowledge of human development and social systems. Other relevant factors follow from this initial conceptualization. The major components of the group formation plan embedded in the social and agency contexts are need, purpose, structure, content and pre-group contacts.

Worker has to engage in a number of tasks to recruit and prepare potential members for the proposed group. How balanced a group membership is managed by the worker will ensure, to a great extent, the success of the group in terms of achievement of individual / group / agency goals. You have learnt practice principles particularly relevant to pre-group or group formation. These principles go a long way in guiding group formation process along effective and ethical pathways.

References

1) Malekoff, Andrew, Group Work with Adolescents: Principles and Practice, The Guilford Press, New York, 2nd Edition, 2004

2) Wilson, Gertrude, Ryland, Gladys, Social Group Work Practice: The Creative Use of the Social Process, Houghton Mifflin Co., The Riberside Press, Cambridge, USA, 1949.

3) Brown, Allan, Groupwork, Gower Publishing Company Ltd., Aldershot 2nd ed. 1986

4) Johnson, Louise C., Social Work Practice: A Generalist Approach, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 6th Ed.1998

5) Northen, Helen & Kurland, Roselle, Social Work with Groups, Columbia University Press, New York, 3rd Ed.2001

6) Benson, Jarlath F., Working More Creatively with Groups, Tavistock Publications, London, 1987

7) Konopka, Gisela, Social group Work: A Helping Process, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1972, 1963

8)	Balgopal, Pallassana R. & Vassil, Thomas V., Groups in Social Work- An Ecological Perspective, Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., New York, 1983

9)	Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups, Inc., Standards for Social Work Practice with Groups, AASWG, Alexandria, VA, 2nd ed., 2006

10)	Whitaker, Dorothy Stock, Using Groups to Help People, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1985

11)	Newstetter, Wilber, Regulatory Principles, in Albert S. Alissi (ed.) Perspectives on Social Group Work Practice: A Book of Readings, The Free Press, New York, 1980.

12)	Dwivedi, R. S., Human Relations and Organisational Behaviour: A Global Perspective, Macmillan India Ltd., Delhi, 2001, 5th Ed. Pp 265-269

13)	Tosi, H.L., Rizzo, J.R., & Carroll, S.J. 1986. Managing Organizational Behaviour. NewYork, NY: Pitman (Quoted in Management of agricultural research: A training manual. Module 4: Leadership, http://www.fao.org/docrep/W7504E/w7504e05.htm

14)	Cartwright, D., Zander, A. (eds.), Group Dynamics, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1968.

15)	Cottam Martha L., Dietz-Uhler Beth, Masters Elena M., Preston Thomas, Introduction to Political Psychology , Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, New Jersey, London 2004

16)	Roth, Jeffrey D., Dynamics differ when group is mandated to participate, Addiction Professional, 2005

http://www.encyclopedia.com/printable.aspx?id=
1G1:134274628

17) Baugher, Dan, Varanelli Jr., Andrew,.and Weisbord, Ellen, Gender And Culture Diversity Occurring In Self-formed Work Groups, *Journal of Managerial Issues Volume XII Number 4 — Winter 2000*

18) Ounnas, Asma, Semantic (Group Formation), PhD Research Proposal, 2007 University of Southampton, UK

8

Values and Principles in Social Group Work

*Ranjana Sehgal

Introduction

'No man is an island unto himself' said John Donne and rightly so. Human beings were not meant to live alone. The process of growing up takes place in one or the other group; be it family, peers, neighbourhood or community. Man is a social being and cannot survive alone. Group life is thus, basic to human life. A group is a collection of human beings who enter into social relationships with one another involving mutual give and take.

Social Group Work is focused around a group; it emphasizes the intellectual, social and emotional growth and development of the members of the group. It is a process in which a qualified social work practitioner helps individuals in a group to have a satisfactory group experience through different programs aimed at enhancing their psycho-social functioning. It is through different activities in a group situation that an individual is able to discover her/his hidden strengths, talents and abilities. Social Group Work plays a vital role in the all round development of an individual, thereby contributes to the better functioning of the community and society as a whole.

---

*Dr. Ranjana Sehgal, Indore School of Social Work, Indore

Social Group Workers have an ethical obligation to function within the confines of a theoretical base comprising of tested interventions and principles of practice. The Social Group Work as a method of social work has embraced a set of values which have been translated into certain principles which seek to govern the conduct of practitioners. We shall now take a look at the values and the principles that define the Social Group Work practice.

Values in Social Group Work

Observations pertaining to the fact that groups influence the psycho-social and psychological makeup of man have been the bedrock of the theoretical and value base of Social Group Work. "All professions have value preferences that give purpose , meaning and direction to people who practice within them…….Professional values however do not exist separate and apart from societal values; rather professions espouse and champion selected societal values." (Hepworth and Larsen, 1992,) According to Northen (2007) values are abstract propositions about what is right, desirable or worthwhile. Values of group work refer to how the practitioner should view and treat people, their goals and how these goals should be reached during the process. In a profession, the values are translated into ethical principles of practice. According to the National Association of Social worker's (NASW) code of ethics "broad ethical principles are based on social work's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of individual, importance of human relationships, integrity and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire."

The basic values of group work deal with human relationships. These basic values as conceptualized by Northen (2007: 77) are given below:

Dignity and Worth

Like in case work and community organization, an important value of Social Group Work is the belief in the inherent worth and dignity of each person. All persons should be accepted as they are and their special strengths recognized. They should be treated with respect irrespective of their differences and similarities and their integrity is of paramount importance. Every individual is unique and has an inherent worth, interactions with them as they use resources and opportunities should not hurt rather should enhance their dignity and individuality. Without fear of negative sanctions, they should have the freedom to express themselves. The group worker should recognize the value that every member no matter whatever are her/his drawbacks and handicaps has worth and deserves to be respected and treated as a dignified member of the society.

Social Justice

Inherent in all social work is the value of promoting social justice wherin all should have equal access to resources and opportunities. Everybody has the right to civil liberties and equal opportunity without discrimination as to race, ethnicity religion, social class, gender, sexual orientation, and capacities. They should have access to resources that are essential to meet their basic needs. They have the right to self-determination and to participate in making group, family, or organizational decisions within the limits imposed by the individual's culture and status. Individuals may sometimes need resources that are not available, the worker has to then take on the role of an advocate and take up their cause. S/he may organize support groups and self-help groups to help people cope with the difficult problems of their living.

Mutual Responsibility

The value of mutual responsibility is based on the conviction that people are interdependent for survival and fulfillment of their needs. Neither the individual nor the society can be conceived without each other. As individuals interact, they influence and in turn are influenced by each other. They are capable of helping one another. Group work builds on this interdependence, which can become a potent force for development and change. The worker is responsible for helping members to develop patterns of communication and norms of behaviour that foster mutual aid. Members should fulfill their responsibility to society by actively participating in the democratic processes.

Northen (2007) is of the view that though social workers are bound by ethical principles set forth in the codes of ethics, they need also to understand and differentially apply these principles, when working with groups.

Principles of Social Group Work

Principles are the fundamental truths tested by observation and experiment which guide action. Over the years from social group work practice, have emerged certain principles which provide a theoretical framework to the practitioners while working with people in groups. They provide a set of guidelines which help them achieve a certain level of competence by guiding practice. 'Social workers with groups have a responsibility to practice within the realm of the accumulated theoretical base, tested interventions, and ethical principles.' (Northen, 2007)

Social science theory is always in a fluid state, as it keeps changing and evolving. The principles of Social Group Work too will keep changing in tandem with our progressive experience and discovery of new insights into social group

work as a method of social work. Different authors have outlined different principles of working with groups from time to time, conceptualizing the important areas of focus for the Social Group Worker. It is not possible here to discuss all the principles put forth by different authors, therefore we shall outline the principles propounded by only two authors, reflecting the earlier and the modern day thinking, respectively.

In 1948 Harleigh B. Trecker wrote at great length about the principles of Social Group Work in his famous book 'Social Group Work: Principles and Practice' which is still read widely. The ten principles of Social Group Work as conceptualized by Trecker are briefly discussed below outlining the main points:

The Principle of Planned Group Formation

The Social Group Work process uses group as a medium for providing services to the individual, hence the formation of a group is a prerequisite for a group worker. Whether a group worker works with groups already functioning or forms her own group, s/he should be aware of certain factors while forming a group so that the group becomes a positive potential for individual growth.

A group has to be formed in a planned way before initiating the group work process. From what is explained by Trecker we can say this principle comprises the following fundamentals:

- Groups like individuals are different, evolving, developmental and ever-changing and tremendously influential upon the behaviour of individuals.

- The group in Social Group Work must possess elements of conscious design and plan.

- The group worker should not seek to require all groups to be alike nor expect them to meet identical needs.

- The group worker's skill will be evident in the way s/he consciously gives aid at the point of group formation.

In India group formation can become a difficult exercise as the people may lack the motivation to join a group and may do so after much persuasion. So the group worker must have the skill to deal with the resistance of such members. The group worker should be equipped with an in-depth understanding of the client population, and pay attention to inter- personal compatibility and other factors such as age, caste, gender, socio-cultural background etc.

The Principle of Specific Group Objectives

Specific objectives of individual and group development must be consciously formulated by the worker in harmony with group wishes and capacities and in keeping with agency function. The group worker should help the members achieve the overall objectives of social work through its own specific objectives, which are to assist individuals to grow and change; supplement emotional and social nourishment; promote democratic participation and remedy individual and social disorganization.

- Agencies and their workers must be aware of what people want from group experiences and help them to get it.

- The group worker who recognizes the need for consciously formulated specific objectives for individuals and groups becomes a purposeful, rather than an unfocused worker and makes the group work in a planned than haphazard exercise.

- Objectives, thus, become a controlling force in the life of the group and the group worker should have clarity about the specific goals s/he wants to achieve along with the benefits s/he is hoping the members would get.

- When the worker focuses on individual and group objectives, s/ he reduces the likelihood of permitting her/his own needs to get in the way of the group.

- S/he helps the members to see their strengths and limitations and set their objectives accordingly, in alignment with the agency's formulated purposes.

- The expectations and the aspirations of the members should also be given due weightage while formulating the objectives and activities planned accordingly.

The Principle of Purposeful Worker Group Relationship

A consciously purposeful relationship must be established between the worker and the group members based on mutual acceptance. This principle is based on the premise that it is both possible and necessary to create an effective working relationship with a group before the worker can be of any help.

- Before the worker helps the group members to develop meaningful relationships with each other, s/he should first create a meaningful and purposeful relationship with the group.

- The worker's relationship with the group is a major tool, and the quality and strength of this relationship determine the extent to which the group can be helped to the fullest realization of its potentialities.

- When the group workers adopt the procedures suggested by this principle, they begin their work

motivated by an initial desire to understand the group as a basis for helping it.

- By encouraging the group to "be itself" and accepting it as it is, the worker becomes accepted and helpful to the group.

The Principle of Continuous Individualization

Groups are different and individuals utilize group experiences in a variety of ways to meet their differing needs; consequently, the principle of continuous individualization must be practiced by the group worker. Each group has to be seen as unique, different from any other group, like the members in the group.

- When the group worker individualizes a group, she accepts the fact that human beings are naturally different.

- To work with groups in awareness of their differences as well as similarities is a reinforcement of the belief that people have a capacity to change, when given adequate opportunities for and help in changing.

- The worker should be ready for a variety of individual responses rather than a uniformity of response.

- S/he should accept the differences in individual ability and growth; strive to help individuals understand themselves and help them modify their behaviour towards those who have special needs.

- Individualization should be a continuous process on the part of the group worker who accepts the certainty of change.

The Principle of Guided Group Interaction

Social Group Work is a method through which individuals in groups in an agency setting are helped by a professionally trained worker who guides their interaction in various program activities. The idea is that they relate themselves with others and experience growth opportunities in accordance with their needs and capacities.

- Interaction is a process whereby two or more persons are in a meaningful contact, whereby their behaviour is modified.

- When people are in groups, the possibility of interaction and inter-stimulation are always present.

- The main source of energy which propels the group is the interaction of the members and the group worker influences this interaction by the quality of her/his participation.

- As the possibility of inter-stimulation through interaction is always present in a group, the Social Group Worker must harness and consciously direct and utilize this natural social process.

- The presence of the worker whose role is to actively influence the type and the degree of interaction, converts the social process into the social group work process.

- The worker is primarily interested in helping to bring about individual growth and social development for the group as a whole as a result of guided group interaction.

- S/he enhances the potential for interaction by helping members to assume participating roles.

- The Social Group Worker uses methods that stimulate the group to the fullest possible analysis and understanding of their own situation and thereupon influence the social interaction of the constituent members of the society

The Principle of Democratic Group Self-Determination

The Principle of self-determination is a core value of the social work philosophy and has to be practiced, irrespective of the method of working. In Social Group Work method, as in other methods of social work this principle is of great significance. The idea is to inculcate in the members an ideology of democracy.

- The group must be helped to make its own decisions and determine its own activities, taking the maximum amount of responsibility in line with its capacity and ability.

- The group has a right to make its own choices and the capacity to make satisfactory decisions.

- The aim of the group worker is to encourage an ever-increasing capacity on the part of the group to take responsibility for its actions.

- This principle assumes that groups can develop only when they are given opportunity to behave responsibly but it is to be consciously judged as to how much responsibility a group can be asked to assume at any point in its development.

- The group worker must first help the group to develop a conscious group-self before it can become responsibly self determining.

- The worker should give up any need to dominate the group and instead work with the group on the basis

of her/his ability to share her/his wide experience and competence.

The Principle of Flexible Functional Organization

Every group has some informal organization of its constituent members that enables it to function. As the group is formed for specific objectives, it should also have a formal organization to help it achieve these objectives. This formal organization should meet a felt need, be flexible, adaptive and should change as the group changes.

- The principle does not imply that group worker should organize the group; rather she should help the group organize itself.

- The group should be encouraged to explore its needs, set its objectives and determine specific functions and helped by the group worker to make its own decisions.

- The worker should help the group to determine who should take the leadership assignments along with the qualifications and expectations, so that the members are aware of what the group expects from them.

- Not only the structural details of this formal organization, but the process through which the worker guides the group to have a formal organization is equally important.

- Group efforts which may be scattered and haphazard become focused when formal organization is made available, as it allows the energies of the group members to be properly channelized.

- Tasks and duties should be identified and allocated in an orderly manner and members helped and encouraged to assume responsibilities. The process to organize itself is an excellent vehicle for growth.

- The formal group organization should be simple, stable yet flexible, open to changes as per group needs.

- The experiences of the group members in solving the organizational problems are no less valuable than the other program experiences.

The Principle of Progressive Program Experiences

Program in Social Group Work does not only mean the activities or events but is a broad concept that includes the entire range of   individual and group relationships, interactions and experiences   deliberately planned and carried out with the help of the group   worker to achieve the group goals.

- The group worker should not impose her/his program plan on the group but help the group to develop its own program by extending to the group a variety of choices. S/he may only make suggestions as to possible programmes.

- The program development is a continuous process and grows out of group potentialities.

- This principle implies that there is starting point for all group programmes. Small beginnings can culminate into bigger and more challenging tasks as the group progresses.

- The program experiences in which the groups engage should begin at the level of member interest, need, experience and competence and should develop in tandem with the developing capacity of the group.

- The worker should help the group to enjoy a progressive series of program experiences in consonance with the group's potential and capacities. The group cannot be expected to do the same thing all the time.

- After success in simple activities, the group can be encouraged to move to more complex experiences.

The Principle of Resource Utilization

This principle guides the group worker to utilize the available resources to enrich the content of the group experience for individuals and group as a whole. For this it is imperative that the Social Group Worker should possess knowledge about the resources available in the group, agency and the community. S/he should use her/his skill in locating and then acquainting the group with the various resources which can be utilized by the group for different programs.

- The worker serves as a liaison between the group and the community and her/his ability becomes apparent in the skill with which she draws upon the environment.

- S/he not only helps to stimulate the group to action but also helps them to discover and use the agency and community resources and those within the group. She must ensure that the members procure the required material for the smooth conduct of the group sessions.

- S/he should take initiative in mobilizing both material and human resources and oversee the utilization of the available resources by the members for the common good.

The Principle of Evaluation

Continuous evaluation of process and programs in terms of outcomes by the worker, agency and the members is not only desirable, albeit essential. Carefully maintained records can facilitate proper monitoring and evaluation.

- The social group worker should carry out the evaluation of the outcomes in a carefully planned manner.

- Maintaining records in a systematic and orderly way aids the evaluation process.

- Evaluation carried out in an objective and neutral way helps in revealing the extent to which the group has been successful in achieving the group goals.

- A feedback from the members along with the observation and assessment of the worker help the group members develop insights into their strengths and weaknesses.

- Evaluation should be done at the end of each session and at the time of the termination.

According to Siddiqui, the evaluation of the group work generally focuses on the following points:

- What group goals have been achieved?

- What individual needs have been met?

- What programme and activities have been successful?

- What are the shortcomings?

- What changes will help improve the effectiveness of the intervention?

"Without continuous evaluation objectives become outmoded, programs become static and groups fail to meet needs. It is the fundamental obligation of every worker and every agency to rethink and reorganize its practice in the light of thoughtful evaluation." (Trecker, 1955) p. 219

Reflecting the modern perspective, different from the earlier conceptualization focusing on the therapeutic power of the group, we have Sharry who in his book 'Solution Focused Group Work' has put forward some principles of Social Group Work which we have listed below:

1) Focusing on Change and Possibilities

2) Creating Goals and Preferred Futures

3) Building Strengths, Skills and Resources

4) Looking for What's Right and What's Working

5) Being Respectfully curious

6) Creating Co-Operation and Collaboration

7) Using humour and Creativity

The principles as underlined by Sharry show a shift in focus from problems to solutions, self-help and competence. He emphasizes the therapeutic objective and power of group, which he calls solution focused brief therapy.

Conclusion

Social Group Workers have an ethical obligation to function within the confines of a theoretical base comprising of tested interventions and principles of practice. The aim of this chapter was to make the learner understand the values and principles a professional social worker should follow in group work practice that help in achieving the goals of profession. Social group work as a method of social work has embraced a set of values which have been translated into certain principles that govern the conduct of practitioners. According to the National Association of Social worker's (NASW) code of ethics "broad ethical

principles are based on social work's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of individual, importance of human relationships, integrity and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire."

The basic values of group work deal with human relationships. These basic values profess belief in the dignity and worth of the individual, social justice and mutual responsibility. Everybody has the right to civil liberties and equal opportunity without discrimination as to race, ethnicity, religion, social class, gender, sexual orientation, and capacities. The value of mutual responsibility is based on the conviction that people are interdependent for survival and fulfillment of their needs.

From Social Group Work practice over the years, have emerged certain principles which provide a theoretical framework to social group worker while working with people in groups. They provide a set of guidelines which guide practice. Different authors have outlined different principles of working with groups from time to time, conceptualizing the important areas of focus for the Social Group Worker. Trecker has listed the following ten principles:

The Principle of Planned Group formation

The Principle of Specific Group Objectives

The Principle of Purposeful Worker Group Relationship

The Principle of Continuous Individualization

The Principle of Guided Group Interaction

The Principle of Democratic Group self-Determination

The Principle of Flexible Functional Organization

The Principle of Progressive Program Experiences

The Principle of Resource Utilization

The Principle of Evaluation

Reflecting the modern perspective, focusing on the therapeutic power of the group, Sharry in his book 'Solution Focused Group Work' has put forward the following principles of Social Group Work :

Focusing on change and possibilities

Creating goals and preferred Futures

Building strengths, skills and resources

Looking for what's right and what's working

Being respectfully curious

Creating co-operation and collaboration

Using humour and Creativity

As social science theory is always in a fluid state and keeps changing and evolving, of Social Group Work too will keep evolving in tandem with our understanding of Social Group Work as a method of social work.

References

Friedlander W.A (ed.) (1958) Concepts and Methods of Social Work, Prentice Hall MC, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

Garvin, Charles D. et al (eds.) (2008) Handbook of Social Work With Groups, Rawat Publications, New Delhi.

Konopka Gisela (1963) Social Group Work: A Helping Process, Prentice Hall Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

Hepworth, Dean.H. and Larsen, Jo Ann (1992) Direct Social Work Practice: Theory and Skills, Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, California. 4th ed.

Siddiqui, H.Y. (2008) Group Work: Theories and Practices, Rawat Publications, New Delhi.

Trecker, Harleigh B (1955) Social Group Work- Principles and Practices, New York: Association Press

Wilson, Gertrude and Gladys Ryland (1949) Social Group Work Practice. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.