

**Group Counseling
Lecture 2
Concepts of
Group Dynamics
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Introduction

Group dynamics refers to the socialization process a group undergoes and how members of that group interact with each other. The group process has its own unique pathway, and the members also interact in unique ways. The way group members interact is different from one group setting, type, leadership, and form. This background forms the direction of this lecture.

Expected Learning Outcomes

At the end of this lecture, you will be able to:

- i. Define the term group dynamics.**
- ii. Explain the concepts of group dynamics.**
- iii. Discuss healthy ways of managing group dynamics.**
- iv. Evaluate benefits of group dynamics**

Lecture Outline



In this lecture, you
will be introduced to:



Concepts of group
dynamics



Factors of group
dynamics



Navigating group
dynamics



Benefits of group
dynamics



What is going on here?



Intra and Interpersonal Interactions

The power to engage

Defining Group Dynamics

The term group dynamic refers to the way people in a group interact and how these interactions affect the group as a unit and the members as well.

It is a process by which people interact with each other. Sometimes the rationale behind forming a group may determine the group operation and interactions. For example, if in a group setting, members were forced to join and deal with discipline or behavior issues, there is a likelihood of strife and low motivation to interact unlike a group where members joined voluntarily and do not have to feel defensive.

These conflicts or hot issues arise because of many factors like personality differences, style and nature of leadership, group goals and other factors that will be discussed in this lecture (Proctor , 2008).



Factors influencing Group Dynamics

Leadership

Group Goals

Groups can be formal or informal and they can be initiated for a variety of reasons and for different members. Some groups in counseling can be defined by age (children, teenagers, young adults, and the senior members), others may be formed to deal with a certain behavior problem, build personal confidence among others.

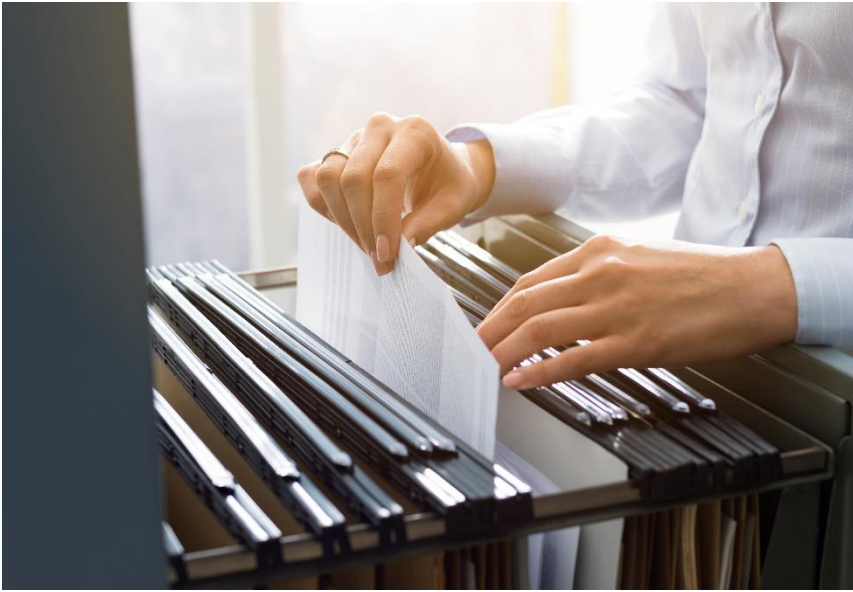
Some counseling groups are formed for clinical supervision and/or for self-care. This foundational reason, determine by and large the direction of the group process (Paleg & Jongsma Jr., 2015). Sometimes the members deviate from the core business of the group, and this can lead to conflicts of interest and loss of direction for the group.

Members Needs & Concerns

In counseling practice, members can request to form their own group to deal with unique situations in their lives and or/ their work engagements. For example students and counselors in training form their own academic, coaching and mentorship groups, behavior change groups, self-care groups, clinical and peer group supervision and professional development groups.

The request may depend on the needs of the potential applicants and if these needs are not met once they join the group, conflicts may arise and affect the group process and interactions.

1. Know what each member needs
2. Assess common needs and concerns
3. Try to meet these needs
4. Explain what cannot be achieved



Personality Differences

Different temperaments play out differently in a group process and this translates to group dynamism.

Traditional perspectives on personality in the workplace for instance emphasize its stable, dispositional quality in differentiating reliably among workers, predicting valued work culture behavior, and accounting for the continuity of self-identity like it happens in a group counseling context.

As group facilitator/leader or therapist, understanding these personality dynamics is key to evaluating the effectiveness of the group work, cohesion and processes (Robert & David , 2021).





Stress Coping Skills

When people are under stress, the motivations, personalities, survival responses, cognitions, and coping skills of those who manage the uncertainty of an adventure willingly and repeatedly differ from one member to another.

The group leader needs to explore the psychological processes and skills needed to navigate the unknown (what is likely to happen to the group's cohesion, achievement of set goals and members interactions).

The group leaders need to promote positive emotions and states that enable members to achieve optimum psychological performance, thus enabling effective group processing and termination (Pickett & Reid, 2022).



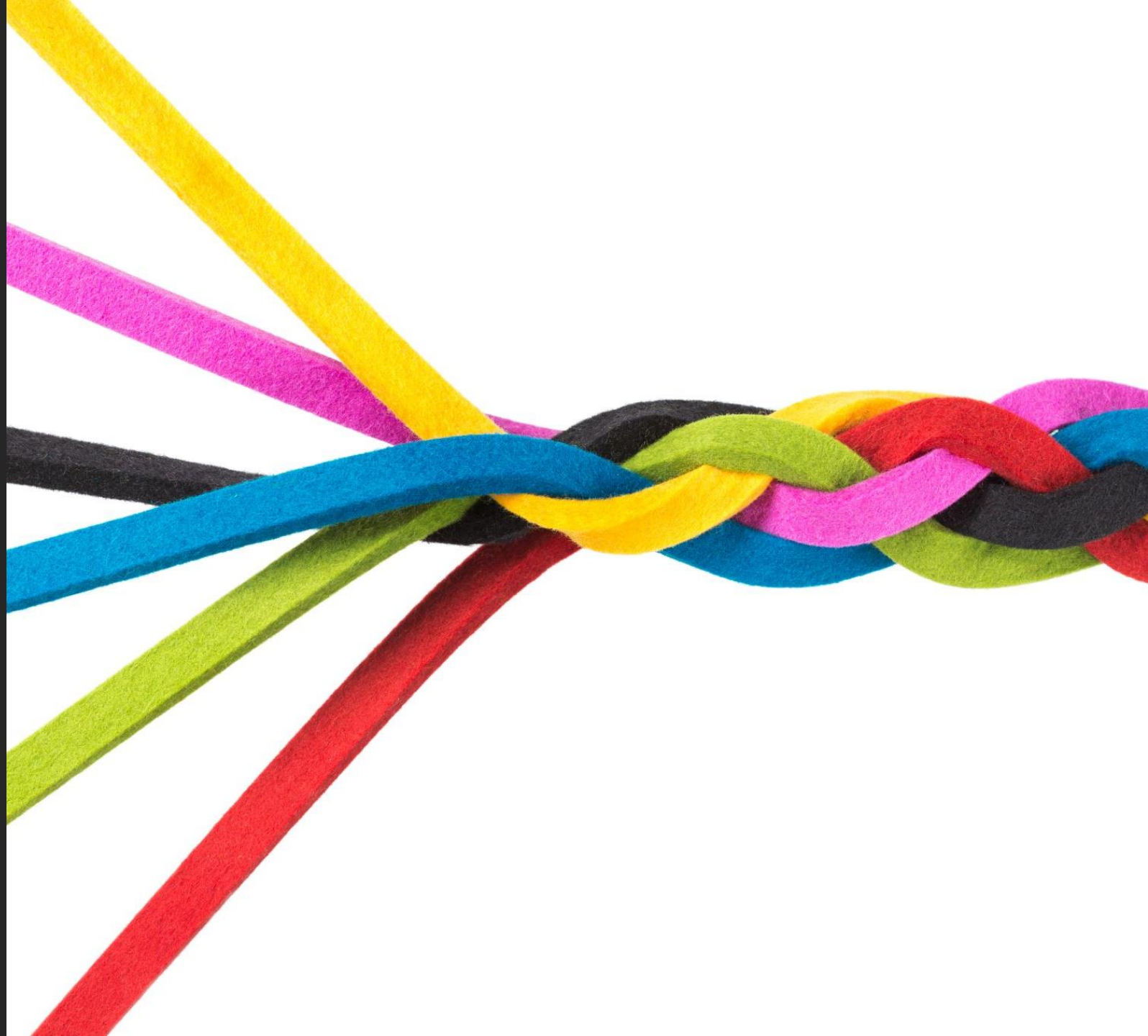
Past Experiences

Leader's perspective and members' perspective

- ❑ Biases
- ❑ Stereotypes
- ❑ Blocks and barriers
- ❑ Transference and counter transference

NB: My own experience with groupwork have taught me to give a free and open mind to each group that I lead or join as a member.

Processing Group Dynamics



Clear Goals and Responsibilities

Having a clear list of group counseling goals and members assigned roles and responsibilities according to their abilities helps reduce confusion, conflicts, and misunderstandings in a group.

Each member is clear of what is expected of them thus motivating them to active participation

Effective Communication

Encouraging effective communication skills in a group helps members develop common understanding and empathy for one another.

At times teaching communication skills in group work helps to unite the group because some of the members may have a challenge communicating effectively in a social setting.

Sharing relevant information is also crucial to the whole group to avoid conflicts and unnecessary misunderstandings.

Life Skills



Members may join a group with a burden of socializing, creative thinking, problem solving, decision making and self-awareness gaps among others.



A group leader can notice these challenges during pre-entry assessment and during the process of group interactions.



It is advisable to train and coach the members through life skills competencies to enhance group cohesion and performance.

Can members Do This?



**Pay attention
to each other**



**Unite with
others**



**Listen to each
other**



**Solve small
problems**



**Use emotional
intelligence**



Be creative



**Receive
feedback**



**Willingness to
change**

Ethics

This refers to the application of counseling ethical principles in group work. The main ones include confidentiality, the duty to protect, safety and privacy of the group affairs and avoidance of harm.

Ask members to volunteer to share but do not force them.

Always encourage active participation with group safety.

Give a caution to members that group confidentiality is not absolute.



Safety in Groups

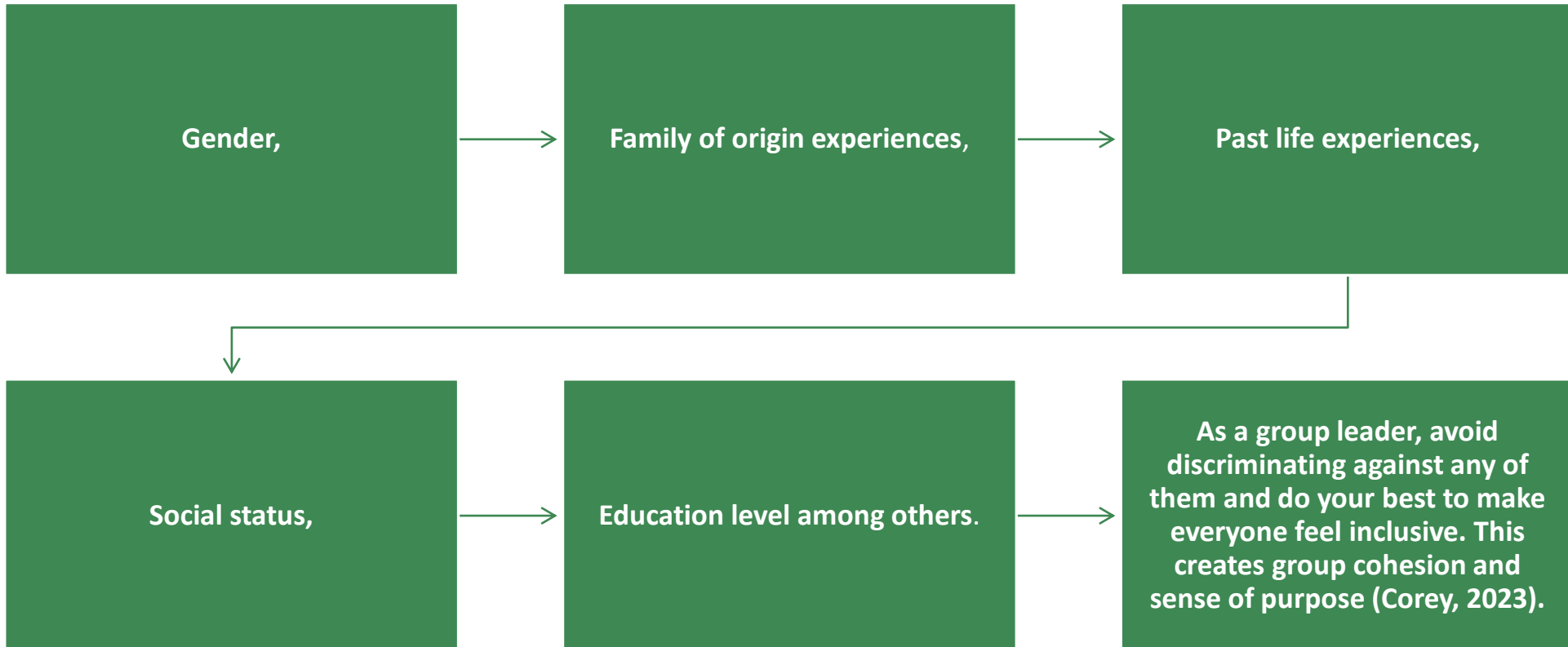
Remember



To keep it :

- Safe
- Private
- Respectful
- Open
- Inclusive
- Free

Inclusivity and Diversity



A large number of dark blue umbrellas are arranged in a dense, overlapping pattern. In the center-right of the image, one umbrella is a bright yellow, making it stand out significantly from the rest. The umbrellas are all open and viewed from a slightly elevated angle, showing their curved tops and central ribs. The lighting is soft, creating subtle gradients of blue and highlighting the texture of the fabric.

Unique but Equal

Mindfulness

Members are human beings and are bound to hurt one another in a group process.

Encourage day to day paying of attention to communication within and with each other during group work.



Self Compassion

For situations that hurt, encourage self-compassion; acknowledging that it is human to hurt self and others too. Encourage self-forgiveness as well as other forgiveness sharing moments of empathy and compassion together



Benefits of Group Dynamics



Team - work



Enhanced self awareness



Cohesion



Goals achieved



Purpose



Enhanced performance



Leadership skills



Life skills (social, problem, decision, creative etc)

Take Aways

1. Seek feedback
2. Reflect on performance
3. Explore new techniques
4. Set personal goals
5. Adapt to group dynamics
6. Move the members from one to a TEAM)



Conclusion

A group process without issues of dynamism is not a real situation. Group dynamisms are good grounds to learn from each other and from the group process itself.

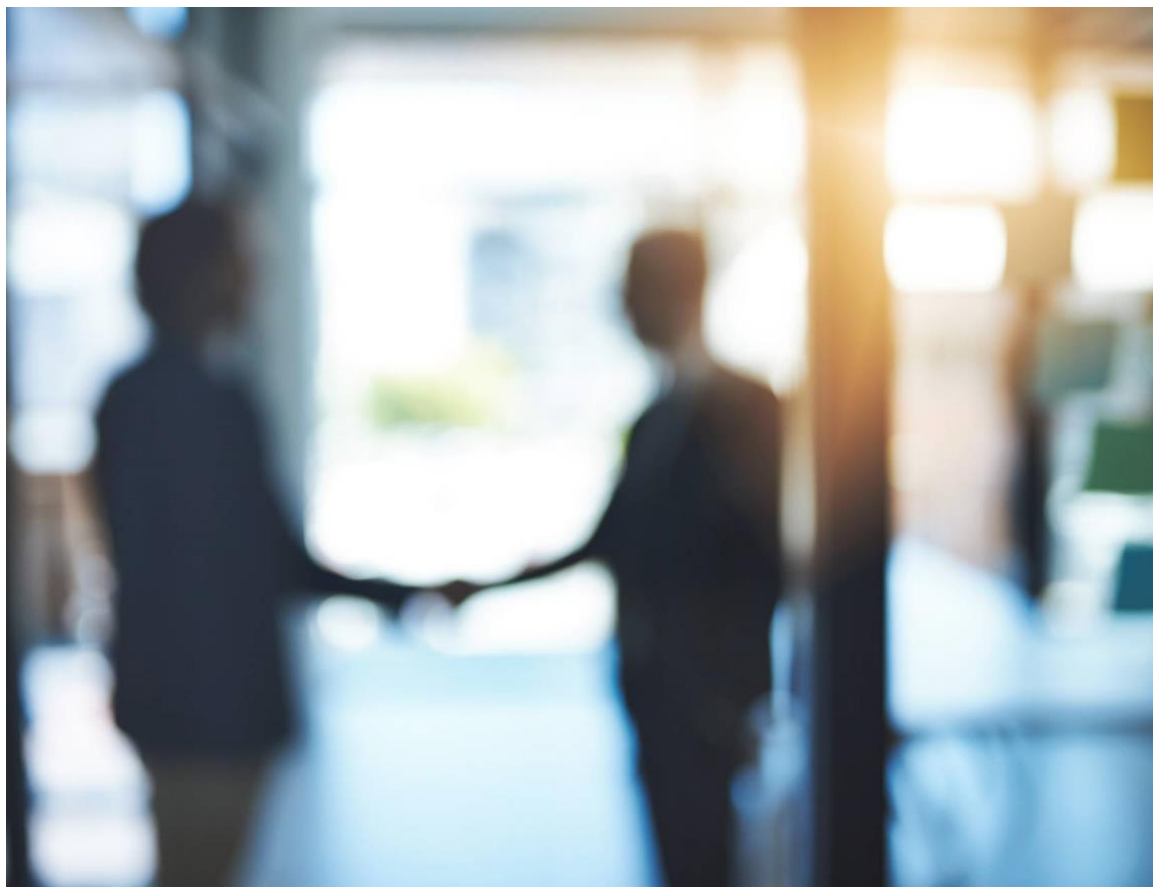
In this lecture we have looked at group dynamics in group counseling, factors influencing group dynamism and ways to mitigate group dynamism and benefits from group dynamics.

In our follow up lecture, we shall learn more about leadership in group counseling.

References

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7. Robert, P. T., & David , M. F. (2021, April Monday). Personality dynamics in the workplace : An overview of emerging literatures and future research. (J. F. Rauthmann, Ed.) *The Handbook of Personality and Processes*, 1061-1086.





Thank you
