A background image showing a group of business professionals in a meeting. A woman in the center is looking at a smartphone, while others around her are also looking at devices or documents. There are coffee cups on the table. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an office environment.

Group Counseling Lecture 11 Dealing with Problem Situations

Lecturer: Dr. Susan Gitau (PhD)

Introduction

Group therapy is a relationship-based practice that is prone to many ethical issues that may compromise the value and the quality of the group therapy.

In this lecture, we shall review different problem situations or case studies in group work and seek possible intervention.

Expected Lecture Outcomes

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

- Identify ethical issues from the selected case studies
- Apply ethical principles in resolving the issues identified from the case studies.

Case Study 1

Joseph and Judy are trained counselors who qualified with a first degree in counseling psychology. They are thinking of starting a support group for ladies who have lost their husbands in the last five years. Joseph has not done personal therapy though he lost his dear mother when he was 12 years old. Judy had taken 20 therapy sessions during her training and mostly focused on her life as a total orphan.





Ethical Intervention



Joseph and Judy need to:

Consider key factors before forming their group.



Identify challenges that they are likely to encounter as they undertake this group formation task.



Plan how to resolve issues that may arise.

Factors that Joseph and Judy must consider before forming the group.



RECRUITMENT AND
SELECTION CRITERIA



VENUE OF THE
MEETING



COST IMPLICATIONS



START AND END OF
THE GROUP
SESSIONS.



SESSION CONTENT



LOSS AND GRIEF
KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS,
AND PRACTICE



LEADERSHIP PLANS



Challenges



Competencies required to deal with loss and grief issues, trauma counseling and other unresolved issues or past unfinished businesses among the group members.



Cost implications – are they able to fund the group counseling sessions like facilitation fees, venue, and other related costs?



Licensure – are they authorized to do loss and grief therapy?



Personal issues getting into the way.

A small green seedling with several leaves is growing out of a crack in a dark, textured surface, likely asphalt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

Possible Solutions

Self - Disclosure

Joseph and Judy need to disclose about themselves and especially personal issues that come in between, see how they use their strengths to give the best in group therapy and work on any weak areas.

Supervision

They need to seek supervision services because of the issues that may arise while offering their support to the group members.



Cont....

Clear goals and Schedules

- When forming a group, clear goals and work plan to be followed must be adhered to. This is planning and knowing how to deal with any challenges that may arise.



Professionalism

Joseph and Judy need to be members of a professional body and licensed by the state to practice.

They should be clear about this to avoid future issues in their group work.

Case Study 2

John has been attending counselling sessions for several months seeking help with the difficulties he is finding in dealing with his relationship break-up. He and his partner were together for ten years and have two children, a boy aged 9 and a girl aged 7. John has access to them every other weekend and for part of each school holiday. This arrangement has been operating reasonably well for the past two years until he discovered that his partner has another partner who brings drugs to the house. They use these drugs in the presence of the children. John has joined your group therapy that you formed to enhance personal wellness and personal development for the group members.

During the group sessions, you become increasingly aware of building frustrations and stress regarding visitation and access to his children. His heightened display of frustration has raised several concerns for you about the stability of his mood and thought processes.

Aware of recent reports about parents taking the lives of their children and themselves in similar circumstances, you begin to become apprehensive about the children's welfare and safety (AIPC, 2008).

What would you do in this situation?

Guiding Steps

- *Identify the problem or dilemma*

issues like safety and health of the children, relationship with the wife, and his safety as well.

Identify Risk Factors

Premature termination of group

Poor attendance

Group therapy may be disrupted by the emotional issues John is battling.

Relationship conflicts

Poor teamwork



Review the Relevant Ethical Codes

This may include the duties and responsibilities of a counselor, group counseling practice and how to deal with children at risk, reporting procedures, who are the stakeholders, among factors.

Know the Applicable Laws and Regulations

Licensing rights and obligations provided and using them appropriately to address the issues in this case.



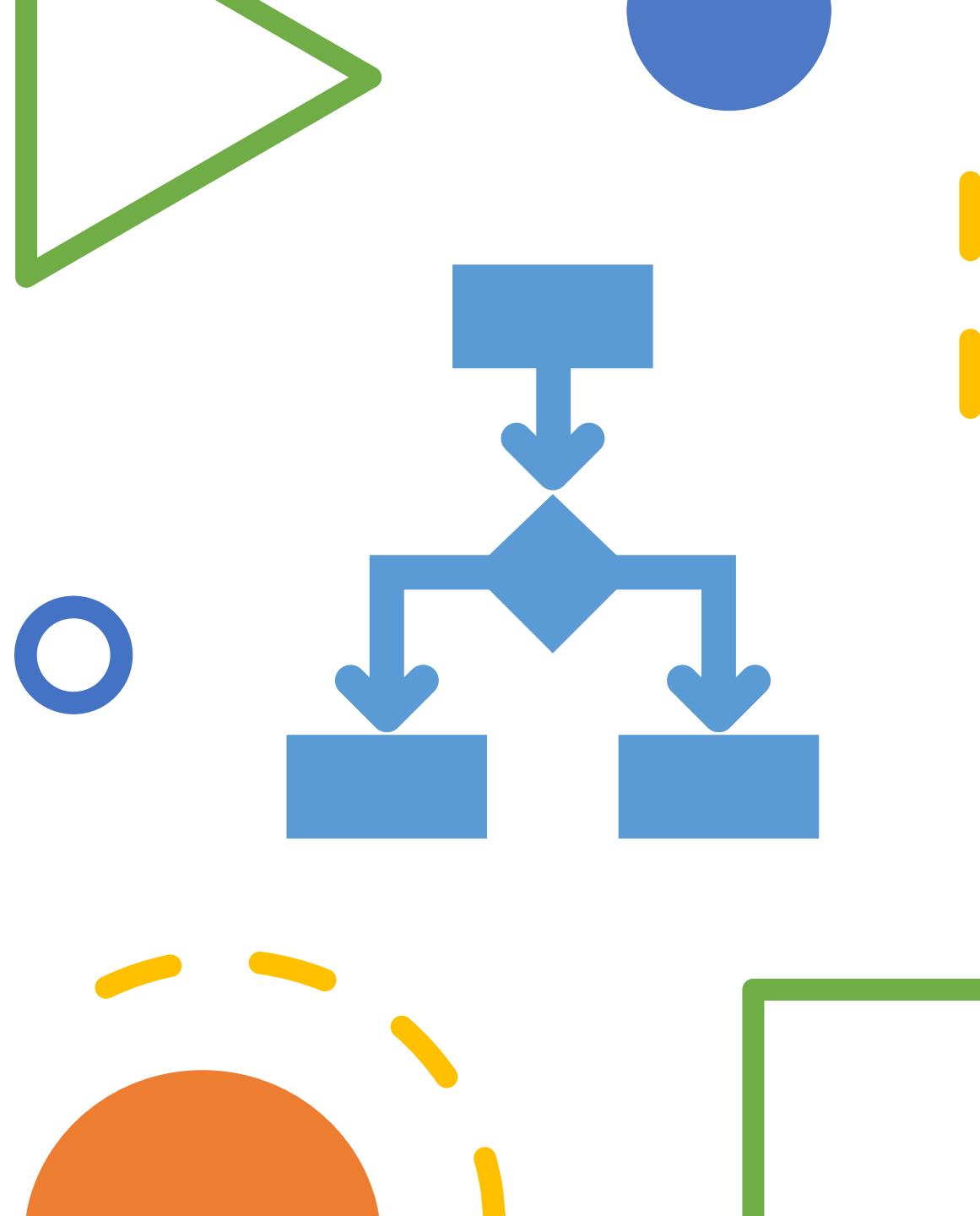
Consultation and Supervision

Before taking certain serious steps, consult relevant authorities and experts in child matters, dealing with illegal drugs and how to handle cases of minors in a drug addiction environment and how to rescue such children if need be if the parents are the ones abusing drugs.

How to deal with John is critical due to his emotional and psychological distress.

Possible Probable Course of Action

After serious consultation, receiving clinical supervision and considering many options, then choosing the best course of action is done.





Weigh Decisions

- Enumerate the consequences of various decisions
- It is prudent to consider the forces for and the forces against taking certain decisions.
- This may include relationship conflicts that may arise following the choice of this course of action.

Monitoring and Evaluation



It is important for the course of action to be accompanied by a good plan to monitor progress, impact and challenges.



Case Study 3

Miriam is one of the group counselors with over 50 youths who have several personal, family and community-based issues. Miriam is a foreigner in this country where she practices as a licensed practitioner. She is worried that the young people may not understand her during the group counseling sessions. She cites incidences of conflicts related to cultural differences, age differences, moral principles, sexual and gender identity crisis, among others. Miriam has come to you as a clinical supervisor for help.

How would you go about this case?

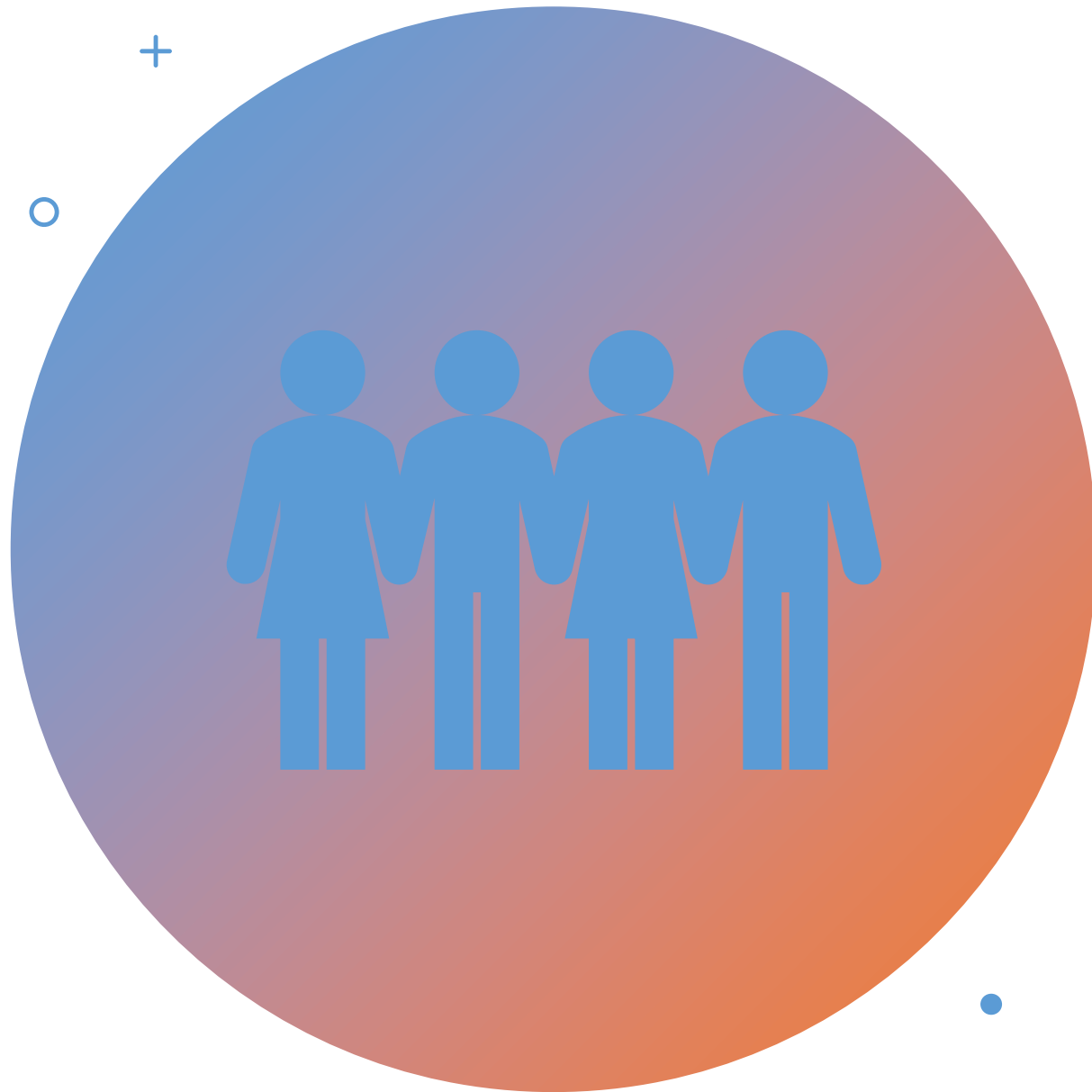
- Miriam needs to be helped to nurture the qualities of a multicultural counselor.
- Factors that are to be identified here range from age, culture, ethnicity, values, and training background.
- Another issue that has been cited is conflict resolution.
- As a supervisor, there is need to educate Miriam on offering counseling that respects cultural diversity and inclusivity.



MCT Relationship

- Miriam also needs to embrace best practice qualities of a good multicultural counselor during the group process.



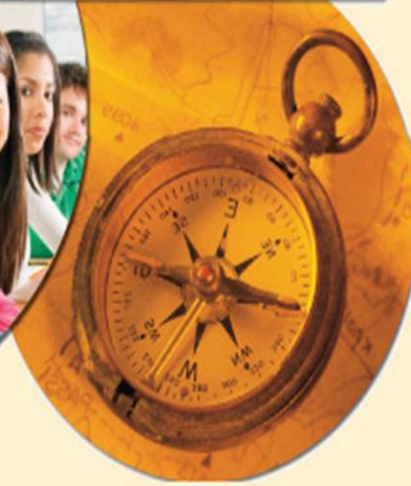


Inclusivity and Diversity

knowledge and values of diversity and inclusivity.



- National
- Religion
- Ethnic Group
- Generation
- Social Class
- Workplace
(Corporate Culture)




Boundaries

Clear boundaries are important to consider avoiding value-based

conflicts in the group process.

Respect

A decorative graphic consisting of a large teal oval and a smaller dark blue circle overlapping it, positioned above the main text area.

"Psychological safety
at work doesn't mean that
everybody is nice to each other all the
time. It means that people feel free to
"brainstorm out loud," voice half-finished
thoughts, openly challenge the status quo,
share feedback, and work through
disagreements together."

MCT Qualities



These qualities include empathy, active listening, confrontation, compassion, silence, focusing, disclosure, mindfulness, sensitivity



Safety for all is important unless there is a very big concern or danger to the wellbeing of both the counselor and the group members.



Miriam should be also encouraged to educate and facilitate multicultural competent relationships among the members

Conclusion

We have covered three case studies demonstrating problem situations in group therapy or group counseling. In our follow up lecture 12, we shall review ethical issues in group therapy and seek ethical principles, code of ethics, steps and guidelines that a group counselor ought to consider in such cases.

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