



S.W. 624: Interpersonal Practice with Groups

Spring Summer 2017

Tuesday 2-5 PM Room B684

Professor Tony Alvarez

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Office hours: Only by appointment (I will be in the office starting at 10 AM on Tuesdays for informal drop-in's)

Course Description

The course briefly reviews the history of social group work practice in the United States, and discusses the various kinds of task and individual change groups (e.g. teams, committees, consciousness raising, support, treatment, developmental, social action/social change, self-help, internet, etc.) found in contemporary social work practice. The course will also discuss how groups can be used to promote well-being, to prevent social problems, to treat existing problems, and to rehabilitate clients with severe conditions that are not amenable to more time limited interventions. The various factors associated with group effectiveness in both task and individual change groups will be presented, as well as those factors that have been designed to reduce the potentially negative and deleterious consequences of group interventions.

Various models of stages of group development in both task and individual change groups and in both open- ended and closed-ended groups will be presented. The implications for leadership styles, the kinds of group dynamics, and the kinds of group interventions in each stage will be discussed. Various structural properties of groups such as sociometry, communication, norms, roles, status, power, and geography will be presented as they relate to the stages of group development. Group processes such as decision-making, task achievement, conflict resolution, tension reduction, and contracting will also be related to stages of group development.

All phases of the intervention process from recruitment and composition to assessment, goal formulation, evaluation, intervention and termination will be presented. Special consideration will be given to how these phases may be modified to account for the various diversity identities racial, class, gender, ethnic, sexual orientations, and abilities of clients.

Evaluation procedures, designed to determine the effectiveness of various interventions, that can be incorporated into small groups will be presented. Course content will include ethical issues that relate to the practice of social work with groups, and those elements of the NASW code of ethics that especially impact on group practice.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the differences between task, individual change, promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation groups and how these groups are employed in contemporary social work practice.
2. Assess the effectiveness of various kinds of groups and the various interventions that group leaders and facilitators utilize.

ADV PRAC BEHAVIOR: Critically use evidence informed practices specific to group work practice.

3. Critically apply in a practice setting a minimum of two empirically supported group work approaches.

ADV PRAC BEHAVIOR: Apply a minimum of two evidence informed interpersonal practice theories specific to group work practice.

4. Implement specific evaluation measures that can be integrated into monitoring and evaluation of group work.

ADV PRAC BEHAVIOR: Evaluate the efficacy of interventions specific to group work practice.

5. Operationalize various models of group development in both open and closed groups and recognize how these various stages impact on group dynamics.
6. Identify common problems that emerge in group practice and intervene to resolve these problems.
7. Plan and carry out various structured activities and group interventions that take into account the phases of group development and the special needs of group members.
8. Describe the impact of the key diversity dimensions such as ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation on the dynamics of group structure and process in small groups.

ADV PRAC BEHAVIOR: Identify and assess the effects of race / ethnicity, national origin, gender, age, height, weight, marital status, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, immigration status, faith / spirituality, veteran status and the joint and interacting effects of these identities on the client, worker, and client-worker relationship specific to group work practice.]

9. Identify ways to match group intervention methods effectively and ethically with client problems, across diverse populations, cultural backgrounds, and sociopolitical contexts. ADV PRAC BEHAVIOR: Match intervention methods effectively and ethically with the client system problems across diverse backgrounds specific to group work practice.
10. Operationalize ethical codes (i.e. NASW Code of Ethics and other codes such as those espoused by AASWG, Inc.) as they apply to value dilemmas that arise in social work practice with groups.

ADV PRAC BEHAVIOR: Apply and articulate social work values, ethical standards, and principles unique to interpersonal interventions involving diverse populations and settings specific to group work practice.

11. Conduct an assessment of coping resources and strengths; biophysical, emotional, behavioral and cognitive functioning; intra-personal and environmental systems.

ADV PRAC BEHAVIOR: Synthesize information on clients derived from multi-dimensional, comprehensive assessment specific to group work practice.

12. Identify the factors that influence group members' motivation to pursue change.
13. Demonstrate their ability to form worker-group member alliances and collaborations, communicate empathically, and help enhance the motivation for change, cultivate hope, and address ambivalence and internal and external barriers to change.

ADV PRAC BEHAVIOR: Demonstrate the ability to form worker – client alliances, communicate empathically, help enhance the motivation for change, cultivate hope, and address ambivalence and internal / external barriers to change specific to group work practice.

14. Identify one's own social and cultural identities and group memberships, and how these relate to working with diverse group members, colleagues, and other professionals.

ADV PRAC BEHAVIOR: Demonstrate professional use of self with client groups and colleagues specific to group work practice.

COURSE DESIGN

Our format will include some lectures, with questions and discussion, as well as organized class discussion around engagement in select activities. There will be a frequent focus on the application of concepts and critical analysis based on real group situations. In vivo small and large group opportunities will be offered to develop and facilitate application of group planning; implementation and application of EBP knowledge and practice skills will occupy the latter part of the course.

Relationship of Course to Four Curricular Themes

- ***Multiculturalism and Diversity***: The key diversity dimensions have an impact on membership and composition, which in turn, influence various aspects of group dynamics. Leadership, status, sociometry, norms, conflict resolution, and communication in groups are dramatically affected by issues of diversity and must be accounted for by social workers in planning and facilitating various kinds of groups.
- ***Social Justice and Social Change***: The history of social group work emerges from that part of social work's history concerned various reform movements in the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Though therapy groups have emerged as the primary venue in the last two decades, there are efforts to redirect group work to its more traditional roots. We will examine contemporary conceptions of social justice practice in groups and the diverse ways this may be addressed.
- ***Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation***: Though methods courses tend to emphasize treatment models, this course will examine at least one promotion and prevention model of groups and at least one rehabilitation model of groups. This course will also describe the similarities and differences between these kinds of groups.
- ***Behavioral and Social Science Research***: This course will rely on group dynamic theory and on empirical research on the effectiveness of various group interventions and models. A goal of competency is evidence-based group work practice is emphasized.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values

Social workers must understand when groups are contraindicated for particular clients and must be able to assertively intervene in group processes when group experiences are harming group members. Ethical issues such as client confidentiality, forced participation, and involuntary treatment are considered as they impact social work with groups.

Accommodations

If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class

activities and the way that the course is taught can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. The earlier that you make me aware of your needs the more effectively we will be able to use the resources available to us, such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, and the like. If you do decide to disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential. Also, please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Safety & Emergency Preparedness

In the event of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 from any cell phone or campus phone.

All University of Michigan students, faculty and staff are required to familiarize themselves with emergency procedures and protocols for both inside and outside of the classroom. In the event of possible building closure (i.e. severe weather conditions, public health notices, etc.) you may contact (734) 764-SSWB(7793) for up-to-date School closure information.

Be Prepared. Familiarize yourself with the emergency card posted next to the phone in every classroom/meeting room. Review the information on the emergency evacuation sign (located nearest the door) and locate at least (2) emergency exits nearest the classroom.

If you are concerned about your ability to exit the building in the case of an emergency, contact the Office of Student Services and/or email ssw-ADAcpliance@umich.edu.

Office of Student Services, School of Social Work | Room 1748 (734-936-0961)

For more information view the annual Campus Safety Statement at <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site..

Register for UM Emergency Alerts at <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/emergency-management/alert/> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site..

Course Readings

Canvas will house all required readings.

Assignments/Expectations for the course

Active Engagement

(50 points)

In my classes, I use many adventure and experiential activities to teach the lessons to be learned. Hence, **class attendance is important**. If you are unable to come to class on a specific day, contacting me (via email or c-tool message to create a written record) with the reason for the absence is helpful. If you miss any class sessions, it will lower your grade. Whether the absence is for a good reason or not, you will not

earn the points for that class session. Although coming in late is better than not at all, it still could reduce the points you can earn for that session.

If you have to miss a class (sick with doctor's note, attending a conference or school activity and letting me know prior to its occurring, etc.), an opportunity for making the points up is possible and needs to be completed in a timely manner. Arrange a meeting with me to consider options at the earliest time.

Active participation in class is expected. This can be demonstrated in several ways like: participating in discussions, staying on top of readings, volunteering for in-class exercises, bringing experiences or problems from real life groups to class discussion, sharing group activities or techniques with class members, thoughtfully processing classroom experiences, taking risks in sustaining dialogue on difficult issues that arise in class, and sharing things you know that may help others learn about group work practice.

Completing assignments in a timely fashion is also part of participation. Although I often allow students to submit assignments after the deadline, points will be lost from doing so.

Engaging in distracting and disrespectful activities (texting, other phone activities, inappropriate use of computers or technological instruments, sleeping, reading a newspaper, etc.) will most certainly count against earning points.

Effectively communicating with me about the functions behind your actions or inactions will help keep us from assumptions and judgments.

1. **Observe an ongoing group in the community (15 points)**

For this assignment, arrange for a visit to an agency and sit in on an ongoing group. Take advantage of this opportunity by looking for something different from what you are already doing at field, or one that you have experience with. (If you already attend AA meetings, for example, observe a City Council meeting or a DBT group meeting facilitated by someone else.)

The group could be a task group (committee meeting, Board meeting, Staff meeting, City Council meeting) or a treatment group (AA, NA, Social Skills group, Support group, etc.)

Observe the following:

- Logistics (setting, membership, purpose, frequency, etc.)
- Process (communication patterns, record keeping, power dynamic, group culture, roles, refer to Toseland et al's chapter on group dynamics.)
- Strengths and areas for improvement (Include here thoughts on actions you might take if you had the power to help this group become more functional)
- Write a 5-page paper and upload into Canvas by Session 6 (May 30).

2. Facilitate a session of the class (15 points)

- Find others in class to work on this assignment with
- Choose a date when your group will facilitate about 30 minutes of our class time
- Create a plan or an agenda. Factors to consider include-
 - Which session is it? Are we in the beginning, middle or ending of class? What is the topic assigned for this session?
 - Take advantage of the reading resources for that specific session
 - You can choose to run the whole experience as a large group (the whole class) or in smaller groups; you can choose to make the experience a therapeutic experience or a skills building one; you can use adventure activities or role plays
- **Run it by me.** Upload your plan/rationale/agenda/purpose into Canvas a week before you facilitate. This will give me time to provide feedback to your ideas. We can determine when, during the 3-hour class, your team will take over the facilitation. Also let me know whether you will need help with tools and/or resources. **Worth 4 points**
- Plan it. If you are intending to engage in an activity, make sure at least someone in your team has experience with it; otherwise make sure to practice it prior to facilitating it. Upload your plan and any supplementary materials you will use and/or share with the class onto Canvas
- Do it! Implement your plan. Demonstrate effective facilitation techniques; manage the physical setting; attend to all the actions in the room. Engage the group in your plan. **Worth 5 points**
- Individually reflect on your experience and submit a 3-page reflection paper that considers lessons learned from the experience, including what it was like to co-facilitate with your peers, how the group managed the distribution of tasks, etc.; speak also to the learning you experienced in engaging in this exercise. Submit the week following your facilitation. **Worth 6 points.**

More on dates and such under **Assignments**

3. Curriculum for an 8-week group

(45 points)

Learning how to run a group involves many skills and procedures. For this assignment, you will engage in the process that one goes through when developing a group curriculum. Some theoretical approaches offer a set curriculum with specific activities assigned for specific sessions; others flow according to the needs of the group.

For this one you will pick a preferred population, one that you might already be working with this term, or one that you are passionate about spending much of your professional life involved with. Identify critical information about this client population- adolescent females managing eating disorders, black men transition out of the prison system, GLBT high school students dealing with bullying, veterans diagnosed with PTSD, older adults housed in assisted living centers facing end-of-

life issues, children managing anger or grief or a divorce in their family, a youth council addressing educational policies, etc.

Imagine that you will be working with this group for 8 weeks. What might be your purpose for working with them in this type of group? What type of group might you offer them?

Create an 8-week curriculum for this population and with this purpose in mind. Support your design with readings, class lessons, research, etc.

Now choose three specific sessions that you will highlight in your curriculum; one has to be a beginning session (session 1 or 2), another a middle session (session 4-6), and the final one, an ending session (session 7 or 8). Using our readings and discussions about those stages of group, offer a detailed agenda for the sessions you selected; make sure you explain why you have chosen the specific activities for these sessions. Keep in mind guidelines for what generally happens during those stages of group development.

This assignment will be uploaded in 3 segments:

Segment 1: includes the paper's introduction, preferred population, group structure and purpose, any assessment information you offer about the group (developmental, diagnostic, cultural, etc.). Upload into Canvas by Session 7 **(6.6)**

Segment 2: Detailed agenda/flow for your chosen beginning and middle sessions. Upload into Canvas by Session 9 **(6/20)**

Segment 3: Detailed agenda/flow for your chosen ending session as well as your concluding comments and takeaways. Upload into Canvas by **7.11**

I expect this paper to be about 10-12 pages in length, divided in such a way that the bulk of the pages go to Segment 2 (for example 3-4, 5-6, 2-3 pages).

4. Class takeaways (5 points)

Come up with 5 lessons/takeaways from the class experience. Consider anything and everything that occurred this semester in the class, something that perhaps made a big difference to your knowledge about group work; perhaps an experience that taught you things about yourself or others. No more than 3 pages. Bring to last class **(7.18)** and also upload to Canvas

Notes on Grading

I strive to give substantive feedback on each assignment, and to use my comments as a way to continue to have a dialogue about what you are learning in the class. I may not give specific feedback about why an assignment didn't get a perfect score, say a 13 of 15. A paper needn't have any major flaws to earn less than a perfect

mark. But if you ever have any questions or concerns about the grading, please contact me to talk more about it.

What is important in your assignment submissions is your ability to clearly express your thoughts about what you are learning in class. The depth of your understanding can be demonstrated in many ways, including-

- The integration of class readings and resources into your discourse
- The integration of readings and resources that you have learned elsewhere
- The curiosity demonstrated by the asking of questions
- The application of the lessons in your current professional or personal experiences

If I see errors in grammar and punctuations and such, I will often correct them so that there is some potential for improvement and learning. When many of these occur, points could be lost. So be mindful about checking spelling and all that before submitting your paper.

All assignments earn points, which means you could earn up to 130 possible points.

Attendance/Participation:	50 points
Observing a group: Session 6	15 points
Class facilitation: Sessions 5-10	15 points
Group Curriculum:	45 points
Class Takeaways: Session last	5 points

The final grading scale is:

A+ = 130, A = 125-129, A- = 120-124, B+ = 115-119, B = 110-114, B- = 105-109, C+ = 100-104, not passing = <100

SESSION OUTLINE

Note: As a general rule, required readings for the session will be marked with an asterisk (*). There may be additions to this required list. The rest are there for your perusal. Also, because of class flow and need, this outline will be refined as the semester progresses.

Session 1- May 9 Introduction; History, Dynamics

This session will provide us the opportunity to learn more about who we are and what we expect from participation in this course. Also our opportunity to begin the process of creating the desired environment for us to do our best work!

Required:

- Alvarez (2016) The Experiential/Adventure Approach
- Alvarez (2017) Adventure/Experiential Facilitation

Let us explore the history and tradition that is group work! Let us also begin to converse about the factors of group work that drive it!

Required:

- Furman & Rowan & Bender (2009) The group work tradition in SW
- Drumm (2008) Essentials of Group Work
- Ringer Chapter 1: Constructing Reality in groups
- Toseland et al (2011) Chapter 1: Group Dynamics

Session 2-May 16 Models; Purposes; Structure, Ethical Considerations

Why group? For what reason? Let's explore the different models available to practitioners as well as reasons when a group is the intervention of choice

Required:

- Kurland & Salmon: Purpose
- Rose: CB GW Ch. 7
- Roffman: Psychoeducational groups
- Wright- Use of Purpose in activity groups

Ethical Considerations

What are some of the ethical issues that come up when engaging in group work?

Required:

- Gumpert, J. & Black, P. (2006) Ethical issues in group work: What are they? How are they managed? *Social Work with Groups*, 29 (4), 61-74.

- Brabender, V. (2006). The ethical group psychotherapist. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 56 (4), 395-414.

Session 3/4-May 21 A Day of Adventure in the Park

Required:

- ACLLC (2015) Adventure Facilitation Manual
- Alvarez (2014) Facilitation Tips
- Alvarez (2014) Facilitation Techniques
- Adventure Group Contract
- How Metaphors help
- Gianino & Glick (2008) Wearing Two Hats: Clinical and Ethical Implications of Combining Individual and Group Treatment
- Alvarez (2003) Adventure Group Structure

Session 5- May 23 Beginning of Group

Facilitation Starts: Team 1 facilitates

Required:

- Jacobs, E. E., Masson, R. L, and Harvill, R. L. (2009) Group counseling. Strategies and skills. Chapter 5. Getting started: The Beginning Stage and Beginning Phase. Pg. 85-120.
- MacGowan (2008). *A guide to evidence-based group work*. Chapter 3 and 4.
- Turner (2011) Concepts for Effective Facilitation of Open Groups
- Toseland & Rivas (2009) Chapters 4 (Leadership) and 6 (Planning)

Session 6- May 30 The Group evolves

Team 2 facilitates; Group Observation Paper due

Required:

- Ringer Chapter 2: Internal Working Models
- Cohen, B. and Graybeal, C. T. (2007). Using solution-oriented techniques in mutual aid groups, *Social Work With Groups*, 30: 4, 41 — 58.
- Gitterman, (2005). Building Mutual Support in Groups. *Social Work with Groups* Vol. 28, No. 3/4, pp. 91-106;
- Alvarez & Stauffer (2004) Facilitating the Challenge
- Walsh & Aubry (2007) Behavior Management through Adventure

Session 7- June 6 Squiggles!

Later stages of groups/Problem Behavior in Groups

Team 3 facilitates: Curriculum Segment 1 is due

Required:

- Alvarez (2011) Squiggles
- Doel, M. (2005). Difficult Behavior in Groups. *Social Work with Groups*, Vol. 28(1), pp. 3-21.
- Wayne, J. and Gitterman, A. (2003). Offensive Behavior in Groups. *Social Work with Groups*, Vol. 26(2) pp. 23-34.
- Corey & Corey, Ch. 7 Working Stage
- Lindsay, J., Roy, V., Montminy, L., Turcotte, D. and Genest-Dufault, S. (2008). The emergence and the effects of therapeutic factors in groups, *Social Work With Groups*, 31: 3, 255 — 271.

Session 8- June 13 Social Justice

Team 4 facilitates

Required:

- Cohen, M. B. and Mullender, A. (2005). The Personal in the Political: Exploring the Group Work Continuum from Individual to Social Change Goals." *Social Work with Groups*, 28, No. 3/4, pp. 187-204;
- Donaldson, L. P. (2004). Toward Validating the Therapeutic Benefits of Empowerment-Oriented Social Action Groups, *Social Work with Groups*, Vol. 27(2/3), pp. 159-175.
- Breton, Margot (2011) Citizen Consciousness, Nonbounded Solidarity and Social Justice
- Jacobson, M. and Rugeley, C. (2007). Community-based participatory research: Group work for social justice and community change. *Social Work with Groups*, 30(4), 21-39.
- Miller & Donner (2008) More than just talk: The use of Racial Dialogues to Combat Racism

No class session on June 20, but Curriculum Segment 2 is due

Session 9 –June 27 Groups for Children and Adolescents

Team 5 facilitates:

Required:

- Bratton, S. C., Ceballos, P. L. and Ferebee, K. W. (2009). Integration of structured expressive activities within a humanistic group play therapy format for preadolescents, *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 34: 3, 251 — 275
- Tucker, A. R.(2009). Adventure-Based Group Therapy to Promote Social Skills in Adolescents', *Social Work With Groups*, 32: 4, 315 — 329

- Malekoff, A. (2007) 'A Flexible Organizing Framework for Group Work with Adolescents', *Social Work With Groups*, 30: 3, 85 — 102
- Duncan & Klinger (2010) ASD: Building Social Skills in Group, School and Community Settings
- Smith & Hall (2010) Implementing Evidence-Based Multiple-Family Groups with Adolescent Substance Abusers
- LeCroy, W. (2004). Experimental Evaluation of “Go Grrrls” Preventive Intervention for Early Adolescent Girls. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 457-473.

Session 10- July 11 Ending the Group; Transitions, Final rituals, Evaluations

Team 6 facilitates; Curriculum Segment 3 is due

Required:

- Corey & Corey, Ch. 8
- Mangione, L., Forti, R. & Iacuzzi, C. (2007). Ethics and endings in group psychotherapy: Saying good-bye and saying it well. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 57 (1), 25-40.
- Birnbaum & Cicchetti (2008) The Power of Purposeful Sessional Endings in each Group Encounter
- Furman, Rowan & Bender (2009) Chapter 6 from *The Experiential Approach to Group Work*

Session 11- July 18 Final Rituals; Evaluation

Class Takeaways Paper is due

Required:

- Rebmann, H. (2006). Warning—There’s a lot of yelling in knitting: The impact of parallel process on empowerment in a group setting. *Social Work with Groups*. 29 (4) 5-24.
- Hallas, V. (2006) You don’t always have to pick up your mess right away: How being messy can be really neat! *Social Work with Groups*, 29 (2/3), 175-194