**GROUP COUNSELING**

Tuesdays 5:15-10:30

DE 202

*“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”*

-Hellen Keller

**Instructor Information**

Chris Chapman, Ph.D.

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435-797-1012

**Teaching Assistants**

                Holly Horman

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**Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to the theories of group counseling as well as group dynamics, group leadership, group procedures, and group counseling skills.  Students will engage in didactic and experiential learning related to the group counseling process with a special emphasis on the role of group counseling in K-12 school settings.

**Course Objectives**

1. Develop foundational knowledge related to the group counseling process
   1. Understand theories of group counseling, stages of group growth and development, and the purpose and function of didactic and process groups
   2. Awareness of ethical standards and issues related to group counseling
2. Demonstrate proficiency in group counseling skills
   1. Practice and display competency in motivational interviewing skills.
   2. Learn to conduct a group screen, begin a group, identify group dynamics, and successfully close a group.
3. Advance critical thinking and professional development
   1. Engage in self-reflection regarding experiential components of therapeutic training.
   2. Examine the research and develop a conceptualization related to therapeutic change and how it applies to group counseling

**Required Readings**

The readings for this course come from a variety of different sources to help diversify your training in group counseling.  Instructions for weekly reading assignments are posted on Canvas.

Greenberg, K. (2002).  *Group Counseling in K-12 Schools: A Handbook for School Counselors*

Selected Readings from peer reviewed articles and other authoritative sources on group counseling will be posted on Canvas and noted on the reading schedule below.

**Class Format**

Class sessions will include two components:

1. Lecture - Class Discussion of Content (approximately 2 hours). A tentative schedule of discussion topics is provided below. You are expected to have completed all readings prior to the class meeting and actively participate through informed discussion.
2. Most class sessions will have 2 hours of experiential group practice. Outside of the first two demonstration groups, class members will lead these groups.  Student leadership will rotate among the counseling group participants. The task of the counseling group is to model approaches to group and to practice leadership skills. You can model anything from an Elementary-level Social Skills Group to a High School level Grief Recovery Group.  As group members, you don’t have to “role-play” the intended age group- be yourselves and participate as appropriate.  Students will be given opportunities to sign up for leadership opportunities during the first week of class.  The groups will last 45 minutes, to be followed by a 15 minute group feedback session.  We will hold 2 groups each week.

In addition to rotating group leadership opportunities, each group member will have a turn to lead a critique of the group experience.  The designated member will lead group discussion based on the Group Leadership Rubric (see under ‘Files’ in Canvas).  The purpose of this exercise is not to “pick apart” your classmates’ performance, but to provide feedback on strengths and areas of possible improvement.  It is impossible to grow as a clinician without open and honest feedback on your work.

Objectives of the counseling group experiences:

* To experience/observe the processes and issues pertinent to the establishment of a new growth group.
* To experience/ observe the development of the group as a modality for achieving the goals of the group members.
* Become explicitly aware of the different aspects of group process and group dynamics.
* Provide a format for members to experiment with and understand new perspectives.

**Course Requirements**

Group Personal Journal (10 points): Counseling group participants are required to keep an ongoing journal of their group experiences.  Entries should include the following: (a) a brief (1 paragraph) summary of the group and their reaction to it; (b) 2 things they liked about the group and would consider using in their own groups (c) 2 things the group leader could have done to improve the group experience.  In all, your journals should be 1/2 to 1 page long. Among the 8 group experiences in which students are participants, students will write 6 personal journals and will submit them via Canvas by the Friday following class.

 Group Leadership Experience Journal (20 points): Students will be asked to lead one group during the semester.  You will be asked to make an agenda for a 45-minute group session with your small group.  In your journal you will include the basic notes for your group agenda, along with your own reactions to leading the group.  Follow a similar format to the group personal journal- (a) “what I am learning about myself”; (b) “what I am learning about others”; (c) “what am I learning about leadership” and (d) “what I am learning about groups?” Along with your agenda notes, this should be 1-2 pages each, worth 10 points.  You will complete 1 Group Leadership Experience Journal.

Group Critique Experience Journal (10 points): You will be asked to write a brief journal describing your experience leading the “feedback portion” of group.  Focus on the following- (a) “what are some challenges about giving honest feedback to peers”; (b) “How did I perform at leading a constructive and honest feedback session”; (c) “What can I do personally to improve my skills at giving and receiving honest feedback.”  These journals should be about 1/2 page.  KEEP IN MIND that on the week you lead critiques, you must complete BOTH a Group Critique Journal and a Group Personal Journal.

Reading Reaction Questions (10 points): Students will be asked to write 1 question on each of the assigned readings for the week.  Those questions may be posed to the class before lecture as a way to discuss the readings.  These will be worth 10 points each.  Out of 5 possible Reading Reaction question assignments, you will be asked to complete 4.  They are due midnight the night before class.

Topic Group Presentations (20 points): Over the semester we will have 10 5-minute “Topic Group” presentations.  These groups will select a topic and present information to the class on the topic in a brief presentation.  You are required to consult with at least 1 professional working in the field (I would advise seeking out a school counselor) and with at least 1 media resource in coming up with material for your topic.  The point of these “topic” presentations is to provide ground-level, practical advice for everyday group concerns.  Groups can select from a list of topics (below) or come up with their own.  YOU MUST CLEAR YOUR TOPIC WITH ME before presenting!

Possible Topics (reminder- you can modify or come up with your own)

1. Group recruiting- working with teachers
2. How to advertise group effectively
3. Pitching groups to administration effectively
4. Addressing fears about group with students
5. Getting parents on board with group: tips
6. Encouraging diversity in group: tips and challenges
7. How to craft attention-grabbing activities
8. Dealing with poor participation
9. Effective icebreakers- what works and what doesn’t
10. Correcting misbehavior in group: what is effective, what isn’t

-and whatever else you can think of!

 Group Proposal (75 points) and Presentation (25 points): You will create a fictional group that you might run as a professional counselor. This presentation will serve as your final grade and should demonstrate the culmination of your learning. Choose the type of group that you would be likely to lead or co-lead in your actual or anticipated work place.

This assignment will consist of two parts: (i) working as a task group to prepare a group proposal (75 points); and (ii) 10 minute presentation to class (25 points).

Students are required to develop a clear and convincing proposal for a psychoeducational or counseling group in a K-12 school. The group should be targeted toward a specific population and should reflect research related to that population. The description, rationale, and goals of the groups should be informed by the scientific literature. All group proposals are due: **August 10**

Proposals should include:

1. A comprehensive description of and rationale for the group
2. Thorough review of the literature related to the target population and group work. The literature review should include at least 5 references
3. A thoughtful consideration and incorporation of multicultural and social justice issues related to working with racial/ethnically diverse youth and other diverse students who may be possible group members
4. Clearly defined, attainable, and measurable goals for the group
5. A description of the logistics (e.g., selection and screening of members, length of group etc.)
6. The procedures and techniques to be used in the group
7. A plan for evaluating the behavioral outcomes of the group
8. Specific session outlines for at least eight (8) group sessions using the following format:
   1. Statement of purpose for the session
   2. Goals of the session
   3. Time Required
   4. Materials Needed
   5. Content and Process (questions, materials, activities, and procedures used at each of the following stages of the group session)
   6. Review Time/Introduction
   7. Teaching time/Didactic Component

**Grading**

Final grades are based on individual performance. Students who accumulate 92.5% to 100% of the required 230 points will earn an A; 89.5-92.4% = A-; 86.5-89.4% = B+; 82.5-86.4% = B; 79.5-82.4% = B-; 76.5-79.4% = C+ and so forth.

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| **Assignments** | **Possible Points** | **Required** |
| Group Personal Journal (8 possible; 6 required) | 80 | 60 |
| Group Leadership Experience Journal: (1 possible; 1 required) | 20 | 20 |
| Group Proposal | 75 | 75 |
| Group Presentation | 25 | 25 |
| Reading Reaction Questions (5 possible; 4 required) | 50 | 40 |
| Group Topic Presentation | 20 | 20 |
| **Total Possible Points** | **270** | **240** |

**Assignment Make-Up Policy**

This course is designed to allow for flexibility in the expectable unexpected events that all of us experience over the course of our lives (e.g., partial credit, “skippable” papers). For this reason, I do not allow make-ups or extensions of assignments. If you are having a particularly difficult semester and cannot complete most assignments, please see me immediately to discuss a possible incomplete or withdrawal.

**Classroom behavior**

The Golden Rule can be described as an “ethic of reciprocity”.  Students will be presenting to the class in informal and formal ways. Visualize yourself presenting to the class and consider how you would answer these:

* Where would you like students to be looking when you’re talking?
* How would you like cell phones set?
* How would you like computers to be present in the room?
* When would you like others to arrive and depart from class?

Whatever those answers are, they will also apply to how others will want you to behave when they are presenting. You can read more about the University’s Classroom Civility Policy which can be found on the web at: [http://www.usu.edu/provost/faculty/student\_conduct/classroom\_civility.cfm (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](http://www.usu.edu/provost/faculty/student_conduct/classroom_civility.cfm)

**Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty is maintained when students generate original work and acknowledge the sources of existing work (whether published or not) in their written or oral communication with others. Academic honesty allows us all the freedom to express our ideas with excitement and without fear. It is the foundation for trust between professionals. I expect students to engage academic honesty thoughtfully and deliberately. Because academic dishonesty shakes the foundation of trust, I consider it a very serious offense. If I understand a student is engaging in academic dishonest behavior, I will approach that student (see APA standard on informal resolutions to ethical violations) and discuss my concerns. Consequences can vary from a verbal reprimand to an “F” for the course grade. In extreme cases, I may report the incident for university-level disciplinary proceedings (see section VI-1 of the Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University: http://www.usu.edu/studentservices/pdf/StudentCode.pdf).

**Accommodations**

Students with documented disabilities who need accommodations in completing requirements or taking part in class in any manner should speak with me during the first week of class to arrange these accommodations. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) at Utah State University (a) evaluates requests for reasonable accommodation from University students to ensure adherence to the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act, (b) provide academic, personal, and career counseling to assist students in the development of personal and financial independence, and (c) provide supportive services to individuals with disabilities, including academic assistance, adaptive equipment, counseling, readers, transcribers, interpreters, and advocacy to ensure equal access to education, employment, and other University programs, among many other things. Students who suspect they may have a disability, or who have a disability should contact the DRC for further information and support: (435) 797-2444.

**Course Outline**

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| DAY | TOPIC | GROUPS | READINGS |
| 6/26/2018 | Introduction to Class/Adobe Connect/Ethics & Small Group Planning. | Chris Demo 1/2 |  |
| 7/3/2018 | Group Development, Leadership & Starting Groups/ Therapeutic Change. Topic Groups 1-2 | Student Led | Chapters 9-11, Article #1 |
| 7/10/2018 | Stages of Change/Motivational Interviewing/Group Basics. Topic Groups 3-4 | Student Led | Chapters 1-2, Article 2, Article 3 |
| 7/17/2018 | Group Counseling Skills/Elementary Groups/Experiential Groups/Middle School Groups/ Specific Populations. Topic groups 5-6 | Student Led | Chapter 3, Chapter 6, Article 4, Article 5 |
| 7/24/2018 | Pioneer Day.  NO SCHOOL |  | You may want to read because there’s a ton for next time! |
| 7/31/2018 | Transition/Working Phase & High School Groups/ Final Phase/Closing Groups. Topic Groups 7-8 | Student Led | Chapters 4-5, Chapter 7, Article 6, Article 7, Article 8 |
| 8/7/2018 | Troubleshooting/Problems/Proposal Presentations. Topic Groups 9-10. | Student Led/Proposal Presentations | Chapter 8; Article 9, Article 10, Article 11 |