

# PSY 6420 Summer 2023

## Group Counseling in the Schools

### Instructor Information

Chris Chapman, Ph.D.

[chris.chapman@usu.edu](mailto:chris.chapman@usu.edu)

435-797-1012

Corinne Hannan, Ph.D

[corinne.hannan@usu.edu](mailto:corinne.hannan@usu.edu)

801-618-8134

### Course Information

Office Hours: By appointment

*“Words are, in my not-so-humble opinion, our most inexhaustible source of magic. Capable of both inflicting injury, and remedying it.” – Albus Dumbledore (J. K. Rowling)*

### Course Description

This course introduces 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 group leadership 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 group of your own with week-by-week agenda and materials.

### Course Objectives- Specific

\*In this course you will be trained on specific competencies to help you develop your skills in multicultural counseling. These competencies have been outlined by CACREP as standard for

school counselors. These items will be addressed week by week as a fundamental part of your training as counselors in this class.

1. Theoretical foundations of group counseling and group work
2. Dynamics associated with group process and development
3. Therapeutic factors and how they contribute to group effectiveness
4. Characteristics and functions of effective group leaders
5. Approaches to group formation, including recruiting, screening, and selecting members
6. Types of groups and other considerations that affect conducting groups in varied settings
7. Ethical and culturally relevant strategies for designing and facilitating groups
8. Direct experiences in which students participate as group members in a small group activity, approved by the program, for a minimum of 10 clock hours over the course of one academic term

### **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.

Erford, B. (2016). *Group Work in Schools*

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 (first hour). 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 an hour (usually the second half of class) of experiential group practice. 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 10 minute group feedback session. We will hold 1 group each week starting week 5.

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 (20 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; and (c) 2 things the group leader could have done to improve the group experience. In all, your journals should be about 1 page long. You will submit them via Canvas by the Friday following class. You can drop 1 Group Personal Journal.

Group Leadership Experience Journal (40 points): All students will have the opportunity to lead a 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 your group agenda, and on a separate document, write about (a) “what did I feel went well with my group”; (b) “what could I improve on”; (c) “What am I learning about my own strengths and weaknesses as a group leader.” Along with your agenda notes, this should be 1-1.5 pages, worth 40 points. Please also include the feedback sheets you received for your group.

Reading Reaction Questions (10 points): Students will be asked to write at least one question on each of the assigned readings for the week. For example- if you have an article and a book chapter as assigned readings, you need to complete a question for each. Questions may be posed to the class before lecture to discuss the readings. They are due midnight the night before class. Out of 11 possible Reading Reaction question assignments, you will be asked to complete 10. You are allowed to drop one. In order to receive full credit, be sure to write questions that reflect thoughtfulness about what you read. Low-effort or generic questions will not receive full credit.

Participation (70 points): Professors will present in-class questions and brief assignments at various times in the semester. These will be graded for participation credit.

Group Proposal (100 points) and Presentation (20 points): You will work in a team to create a group that you could run as a school counselor. This presentation should demonstrate the culmination of your learning in this course.

This assignment will consist of two parts: (i) group proposal (100 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: **8/7 at midnight.**

Written proposals should include the following sections:

1. Description of the Problem: under this header, describe the issue you wish to address in your group. Why is it important? Who is it impacting? Use research to back your statements.

2. **Group Proposal:** Under this header, talk about how you plan to address the issue. What will your group focus on? What interventions will you use that have (at least some) evidence of effectiveness? Use research to back your statements.
3. **Multicultural and Diversity Issues:** How do these issues impact minoritized student populations (immigrants, LGBTQ+, people of color, etc)? How will you run the group in a way that is inclusive of these populations while being useful and relatable to them? How will you recruit these populations who often are underserved?
4. **Objectives:** Clearly defined, attainable, and measurable goals for the group
5. **Group structure and format:** A description of the logistics (e.g., selection and screening of members, length of group etc.)
6. **Outcomes:** A plan for evaluating the behavioral outcomes of the group. At the very least, provide a plan for pre-post measurement of outcomes with a specific assessment tool. It can be an assessment that already exists or something that you create yourselves.
7. **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. Agenda (questions, materials, activities, and procedures used at each of the following stages of the group session)
  6. Discussion topics/teaching topics
  7. Conclusion (wrap-up, homework, etc)

## 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.

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Required</b>
Group Journals (7 or 6 possible depending on group size; you can drop 1)	140-120 (based on group size)	120-100
Leadership Journal	40	40
Group Proposal	100	100
Group Presentation	20	20

Reading Reaction Questions (11 possible; 10 required)	110	100
Participation	70	70
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>480-460</b>	<b>460-440</b>

### **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](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.)Links to an external site.

### **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

DAY	TOPIC	READINGS
5/11/2023	Introduction to class/Why groups?/Intro Concepts	
5/18/2023	Types of groups/Group evaluation forms/Curative factors/Ethical considerations/Group demonstration	Chapter 2, Article 1
5/25/2023	Group basics (prep for initial training groups). /Planning group/Assessing group/recruitment/Pre-group meetings	Chapter 5, Article 2
6/1/2023	Counselor Panel/Group structuring/Breaking the ice/Forming	Chapter 4, Article 3
6/8/2023	Group Project overview/Creating cohesion/Facilitating member interactions/Group 1	Chapter 7, Article 4
6/15/2023	First group reaction and feedback/Mastering experiential exercises and activities/Group 2	Chapter 8 Article 5

6/22/2023	Working Phase/Building deeper group process/Group 3	Chapter 9 Article 6
6/29/2023	Building a supportive emotional climate/Group leader tasks/Group 4	Chapter 15 Article 7
7/6/2023	Break	
7/13/2023	Populations (elementary, middle school, high school)/Group 5	Chapter 6 Article 8
7/20/2023	Groups for emergency and trauma response/Group 6	Chapter 16 Article 9
7/27/2023	Troubleshooting and dealing with problems/Group 7	Chapter 3 Article 10
8/3/2023	Termination and conclusion/Multicultural competence/Group 8	Chapter 10
8/10/2023	Proposal Presentations	