

Principles of Social Group Work

While group work shares with other methods of social work, generic principles such as respect for the individual, non-judgemental attitude and objectivity, out of its own philosophy and skill evolve basic principles specific to this method which guide the worker. Change is brought about through the establishment of purposeful growth-producing relationships between the worker and group members and among the members themselves. Sometimes this may require an appropriate modification of the group interactional process and its components (such as bond, leadership, isolation, scapegoating, sub-groups, conflict, hostility and contagion) to create a conducive atmosphere. The group worker encourages each member to participate according to the stage of his capacity thus enabling him to become more capable and confident in the process of problem solving. The worker also makes judicious use of limitations to direct and control the behaviour of members to obtain the optimum interaction. Most important is the differential and purposeful use of a programme according to the diagnostic evaluation of individual members, the group purpose and appropriate social goals. Well-chosen programme media provide opportunities for a new and differing experience in relationships and accomplishments. Group work demands an ongoing evaluation of the progress made by each individual and the group and, finally and most important of all, a warm and disciplined use of self on the part of the worker.

Trecker's 10 Principles of Social Group Work

1. The Principle of Planned Group Formation

Group is the basic unit through which the service is provided to the individual, consequently, the agency and the worker responsible for the formation of group or the acceptance into the agency of already formed groups must be aware of the factors inherent in the group situation that make the given group a positive potential for individual growth and for meeting recognizable needs

2. The Principle of Specific Objectives

Specific objectives for individual as well as group development must be consciously formulated by the worker in harmony with group wishes and capacities and in keeping with agency function

3. The Principle of Purposeful Worker Group Relationship

A consciously purposeful relationship must be established between the worker and the group members based on the worker's acceptance of the group members as they are and upon the groups willingness to accept help from the worker because of the confidence the members have in him and in the agency

4. The Principle of Continuous Individualization

In group work it is recognized that groups are different and that individuals utilize group experience in a variety of ways to meet their differing needs; consequently, continuous

individualization must be practised by the worker. Groups and individuals in the group must be understood as developing and changing.

5. The Principle of Guided Group Interaction

In group work the primary source of energy which propels the group and influences the individuals to change are the interaction and reciprocal responses of the members. The group worker influence this interaction by the type and the quality of participation

6. The Principle of Democratic Group Self Determination

In group work the group must be helped to make its own decisions and determine its own activities, taking the maximum amount of responsibility in line with the capacity and ability. The primary source of control over the group is the group itself

7. The Principle of Flexible Functional Organization

In group work, the group worker guides the group by setting up an organization to meet the group needs. The organization thus established should be understood by the group members, should be flexible and encouraged only if it meets the felt need of the members. The organization should be adaptive and should change as the group changes.

8. The Principle of Progressive Programme Experiences

In social group work, the program experiences in which the group engages should begin at the level of the member interest, need, experience and competence and should progress in relation to the developing capacity of the group.

9. The Principle of Resource Utilization

In social group work, the total environment of the agency and the community possess resources which should be utilized to enrich the content of group experience for individuals and for the group as a whole.

10. The Principle of Evaluation

In social group work, continuous evaluation of process and programmes in terms of outcomes is essential. Worker, group and agency share in this procedure as a means of guaranteeing this greatest possible self fulfilment.