

Social Group Work Process

I. In-take (The Planning Phase)

Pre group planning - Here the worker has to focus his thinking on the individual member i.e., consider their motivations and expectations for joining the group. This phase is subdivided into the following activities:

- ⇒ Recruiting Members - Through the agency, contacting members directly, accepting referrals, through mass media, meeting people at church or hall, contacting other social service agencies, etc.
- ⇒ Composing the Group - Planned group formation, considering the homogeneity and heterogeneity of the members.
- ⇒ Orienting the Members - By means of interviews and discussions, clarifying the client's expectations; allowing members to ask questions during the orientation process; familiarizing the members with the group procedure.
- ⇒ Preparing the Environment - Three aspects should be considered here:
 - Physical Setting - Room size, seating arrangements, furniture, carpet, lamps, work tables etc. These physical arrangements convey the agency's recognition of its clients' or agency's regard for its members.
 - Financial Support - Expenses incurred for the arrangement of meetings or programmes, rooms and other physical arrangements, etc. In case of group therapy we can collect fees from the members.
 - Special Arrangements - Minimizing the barriers which prevent members' attendance, for example, meeting place, transportation, safety of the meeting place, comfortable seating etc.

II. Study & Diagnosis (The Beginning Phase)

This phase is most important because an impression gets created in this phase. The first meeting stimulates the members' and they all have their own expectations based on their previous group experience. The tasks involved in this stage are:

- ⇒ Introduction of Members

The introduction should not be artificial. It should make the members comfortable and it should be in a creative manner, so as to leave behind a lingering interest for its members. Common expectations may form through this introduction.

⇒ Stating the purpose and functions of the group

It should include, presenting a positive and hopeful image of what can be accomplished in the group; narration of successful experience and thus stating the purpose of the group; giving information about the agency; linking the agency's functions, workers' function etc. and if possible make a mention about the limitations of the group.

⇒ Creating a climate or opportunity for members feed back

Praise the member's feelings and thoughts. Consider them seriously. Give values for their word attitudes etc. Make it clear that group is meant to serve their needs.

⇒ Facilitating member's motivation

Even while stating the purpose of the group, the motivation would have taken place; narrating successful events will facilitate this motivation.

⇒ Setting goals

Set common goals and individual goals and if the group is a matured one then the goals can be discussed with them.

III. Treatment (Middle Phase)

The actual social work process takes place in this phase, it involves:

a) Leading the group

⇒ Preparing for group meetings - Providing the agenda and deciding the programme.

⇒ Structuring the group's work - It implies beginning and ending meetings in time. Making use of the end of the meeting for summarizing. Not including any new agenda at the end. However, too much emphasis on structure may decrease member commitment and initiative.

⇒ Helping members to achieve goals - Create awareness of goals or agency's purpose. The group worker has to analyze or check or identify member's obstacles to their development.

⇒ Monitoring and evaluating the group's progress - This implies concurrent evaluation. It requires feedback to the worker and is useful in developing and changing treatment plans.

b) Intervention

Intervention may be at intra-personal level, or inter-personal level or environmental level.

⇒ Intra-personal level: Here interventions are focused on members' values, beliefs, thoughts, emotions etc.

⇒ Inter-personal level: Here the focus is on members' relationship with others.

⇒ Environmental level: Helping with material resources or providing some aids. Sometimes referring them to some other persons. Behavior modification on the part of the family members.

c) Problem-solving approach

⇒ Minimizing irrational beliefs about problematic situations

⇒ Creating a willingness to work on the problem

⇒ Wiping out inhibiting tendencies

⇒ Using members perceptions and experiences on the problem

⇒ Brain storming and freewheeling and avoid criticism-quality emphasis.

⇒ Re-arranging and improvement of ideas for deciding the treatment.

IV. Ending Phase

It includes termination and evaluation stages.

a) Termination

Termination may be of two types: Planned termination and Unplanned termination.

Conditions for termination:

⇒ End the group when objectives are fulfilled

⇒ When mutual aid and trust are strong among the member (cohesiveness)

⇒ Termination can take place when member's independent functioning is promoted to certain level.

⇒ Termination may result in making referrals.

b) Evaluation (The ending Phase)

According to Trecker, "Evaluation is that part of social group work in which the worker attempts to measure the quality of group's experience in relation to the objectives and function of the agency". Evaluation may be centered upon:

1. Individual growth,
2. Program content, or on
3. Worker's performance.

Purpose of Evaluation:

⇒ Evaluation is essential because it enables the worker to discover to what extent group has achieved its objectives.

⇒ Evaluation enables the group to see both strengths and weaknesses and it helps to discover points at which group members need to alter their procedures.

⇒ Evaluation helps to formulate new objectives and to renew unsuited objectives.

⇒ Evaluation helps the group worker to adjust and modernize his methods of working with group.

⇒ Evaluation can be stimulation to greater professional growth.

⇒ Evaluation can be an extension of the learning process because its very nature is scientific and its aim is educational.